

Study

ISRAEL AS JEWISH EDUCATION : AN ANALYSIS OF THE SHORT-TERM STUDY PROGRAM IN ISRAEL

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Introduction

Israel is a central force in contemporary Jewish life, and a visit to Israel has become one of the important experiences which contributes to shaping the identity of the modern Jew. Jewish organizations throughout the Diaspora have increasingly been utilizing trips to Israel as a way of educating and enhancing the Jewishness of their constituents. Such visits have generally had dramatic impact on the participants, and they highlight the deep if not always conscious ties which the Jews of the world have with Israel.

Some experience and information *vis-à-vis* the planning and implementation of such trips has now accumulated¹; however, there have been few attempts to analyze and explicate the dynamics of short visits and study programs in Israel.²

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What is clear is that the mere shipping of people to Israel for a one to eight week stay, without any concern for a rationale, program, or plan, is a hazardous procedure. As potentially powerful as the experience of Israel may be, a blind throwing-together of Diaspora Jew with Israel may prove counter-productive. Our concern in this paper is to attempt to advance the analytic material on the subject of short-term programs in Israel by focusing on the theory and practice of one such program. Our assumption is that such analytic case studies may be valuable in leading to a more systematic approach to experiencing contemporary Israel.

The Brandeis Program

The Philip W. Lown Graduate Center for Contemporary Jewish Studies at Brandeis University offers a graduate program for professional work in the American-Jewish community, in the areas of Jewish education and Jewish communal service (the Benjamin S. Hornstein Program for Jewish

is generally one to eight weeks in duration; and second, in terms of an avowed educational objective. This includes the vast majority of trips to Israel organized by national Jewish youth groups, synagogues, and Jewish fraternal and civic organizations.

¹ Dov Shefatia, "Educational Summer Programs in Israel," (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1974).

² We define short-term study programs in terms of two criteria: one is the time period, which

Communal Service). In 1970 it was decided to include a five weeks study seminar in Israel as an integral component of the curriculum of both concentrations. The Israel Seminar takes place in the late spring, at the end of the student's first year of a two year master's degree program. All students are required to participate in the Seminar, irrespective of previous visits to Israel. In fact, over 90% of the students have formerly been in Israel, most typically within the framework of a junior year at an Israeli university. The Seminar curriculum was designed with the recognition that the student group had previously been to Israel and also had engaged in formal study of Israel and Zionism.

The size of the Seminar group ranged over the years from 12 to 24 students with an average group size of 16. The curriculum and administrative arrangements are planned jointly by three co-sponsoring groups: the Brandeis Lown Center; the Department of Education and Culture of the World Zionist Organization; and the Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Regular staffing of the Seminar in Israel includes two faculty members (one from Brandeis University and one from the Hebrew University) and an administrator-*madrish* from the Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. A liaison staff member of the Department of Education and Culture is involved in the planning of the program, and also participates in several Seminar sessions.

The Seminar is based at Brandeis University's Hiatt Institute in Jerusalem. Students room with Israeli families in the vicinity of the Hiatt Institute and have meals and class sessions at the Institute.

Objectives

The Seminar in Israel is built upon the underlying premise that professional leadership in Jewish life requires committed and knowledgeable Jews, and that part of being such a professional involves a genuine confrontation with the Israeli experience.³ Three categories of objectives emerge from this premise.

1. Substantive: Understanding Israel and Contemporary Jewry

This is a two-pronged learning objective; one having to do with learning about Israel and the other focusing on Israel as a means of developing a deeper understanding of contemporary Jewish life.

The responsibilities of Jewish leaders today require that they be knowledgeable teachers and spokesmen on behalf of Israel. Given the central position Israel occupies in the lives of Diaspora Jews, professional staff must be able to teach about and interpret the needs of contemporary Israel. A direct involvement with the dynamics of Israel today provides the Jewish professional with insights and perspective which enable him to communicate more effectively about Israel with both his Jewish constituency and the non-Jewish community.

³ Both the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Hebrew Union College, the Rabbinic Seminaries for training Conservative and Reform rabbis, now include an educational program in Israel as an integral component of their curriculum. Among schools of Jewish communal service, in addition to the Hornstein Program at Brandeis University, the program at Hebrew Union College in California and the combined program of the Baltimore Hebrew College and the School of Social Work of the University of Maryland include an Israel seminar in their curricular requirements.

On another level, Israel is a microcosm of the many different ways of defining oneself as a Jew in the twentieth century. From an educational standpoint we might view Israel as a laboratory in which a range of alternative responses to being Jewish are worked out, including national, ethnic and religious conceptions of Jewishness. Alternative notions of the nature of Jewishness are also to be found in the Diaspora. However, in Israel they are uniquely accessible to study. They appear in concentrated form, have eloquent spokesmen, and are often expressed in institutional frameworks. Thus, there is a sense in which the various contemporary styles of Jewishness appear in Israel as "ideal types". The educational result is that a student of contemporary Jewry is able to come in immediate contact with and to analyze the plurality of Jewish life styles within the context of Israeli society.

2. Professional Enrichment

Just as Israel serves as a valuable learning laboratory for studying modes of Jewish life, so too it offers valuable opportunities to study a range of contemporary social problems and their dynamics in a Jewish environment. This is of particular value to young people preparing for careers as Jewish communal workers and educators. Such students are able to examine the ways in which a Jewish society responds to (or neglects) pressing social issues of contemporary life.

In this context, the Seminar enables the student to visit Israeli social institutions and to meet professional colleagues. This opens up the possibility of future collaborative work between Diaspora and Israeli professionals. Such visits enable both parties to

recognize common interests and explore areas of mutual assistance. As a result of experiencing the commonalities of their work, both the Israeli and the American professional see a tangible demonstration of the concept *Am Yisrael* (the people of Israel).

3. Personal Jewish Focus

In the past decade it has become apparent that in addition to technical knowledge and skill, professional competency in Jewish communal service also requires a personal Jewish commitment. Clients and members who come to Jewish communal agencies learn and grow not only from exposure to objective professional skills, but also from exposure to enthusiastic, Jewishly committed individuals who represent a set of personal values and beliefs. In addition to the substantive and professional learning objectives of the Seminar in Israel, the program also serves as a force in the clarification and enhancement of the participant's own Jewish identity. Thus, the Seminar is concerned with contributing to the participant's understanding of the Jewish experience generally, and specifically of his own Jewish experience and identity.

One personal tension which often affects committed diaspora Jews is the question of *aliya*, immigration to Israel. The same forces which lead young people to choose a career in Jewish communal work are likely to lead them to want to settle in Israel. This presents a dilemma: how can one invest fully in Jewish communal work in America if one is unsure about the importance of the American Jewish community? Often this issue is avoided. The young person prepares for a career of Jewish service in the Diaspora, but feels he has

compromised, making a less principled choice by not settling in Israel. Obviously, such an attitude is hardly likely to generate a sense of full conviction for his emerging career. The Seminar confronts this dilemma straightforward. The intent is to challenge students to define their own position and to understand its rationale. The process of seeking a personal resolution of this important dilemma is often difficult and the deliberations are intense. In almost all cases, the process is as important as the specific resolution, and the process constitutes an important personal educational objective of the Seminar.

The Conceptual Frame:

The Contemporary Jewish Situation

Israel may be viewed in several different sorts of conceptual frames, e.g. as: homeland, refuge, spiritual center, bastion of democracy, historical museum, symbol.⁴ Conceptual frames are often avoided—either unconsciously or with intent—in the planning of Israel programs. The Brandeis Seminar is based on a clearly enunciated conceptual frame which is presented to students before their arrival in Israel. At the heart of this framework, is the notion of Israel as a microcosm of contemporary Jewry and the contemporary Jewish situation. That is, there are a host of questions and situations which confront the modern Jew and which are most strikingly observable in Israel, e.g.: universalism versus particularism; secularism versus religiosity, normality versus uniqueness; ethnicity versus spirituality. Questions and answers

about these sorts of issues are important themes of the contemporary Israel experience. The Seminar program is an attempt to examine these questions and the responses to them which have emerged in Israel. This framework is chosen because it is felt that the meaning of Jewishness in contemporary society should be one of the major content areas in the training of Jewish communal workers and educators. This area, along with Jewish studies and professional skills, constitute the key components of professional training for Jewish communal leadership.

The choice of such a conceptual frame has direct implications for the program of the Seminar in terms of the type of experiences included and those excluded from the program. In terms of the latter, it means that Israel will not be toured in its entirety by students, not only because most participants have already been in Israel, but because the tour experience is extraneous to the Seminar theme. Thus, the conceptual frame gives order and direction to the program; leading to the selection of certain experiences rather than others.

Contents

The specific contents and subjects studied in the Seminar are defined by the conceptual frame just described. Operationally, the following seven themes are dealt with in the curriculum:

1. Israel as Jewishness

This area encompasses the position that being Jewish is defined by living in a Jewish State, defending it, and creating and maintaining its social, political, and defense institutions. To be Jewish, according

⁴ For an elaboration of these positions, see: Barry Chazan, "Texts and Contexts: Israel in the Jewish Curriculum," *Conservative Judaism*, XXV, 2 (Winter, 1971), 42-51.

to this position, is to live with Jews in a Jewish polity and to contribute to its perpetuation.

2. Jewish Culture as Jewishness

This subject encompasses the contention that contemporary Israeli and Jewish culture are major expressions of Jewishness. To be Jewish is to either contribute to, participate in, or be committed to Jewish culture. One of the major dimensions of such a culture is the Hebrew language; hence, the question of the role of the Hebrew language in contemporary Jewishness is a central and provocative aspect of this unit.

3. Zionism Then and Now

This covers the dynamics and transformations of the Zionist Movement from its original situation until today. The emphasis is on the current dilemmas and reformulations of Zionism as an ideological system and a contemporary Jewish institution.

4. The Problematics of Jewish Identity in Israel

This theme encompasses issues related to the sense of Jewishness of Israeli youth today, and the efforts of formal and informal educational agencies to respond to this situation.

5. The Impact of the Holocaust on Judaism in Israel

In this unit, the place of the Holocaust on the Jewish collective conscience is examined. Specifically, attention is focused on its manifestation in Israeli life, observances, and education.

6. Ideology as Life-Style: the kibbutz and religion

This unit focuses on two attempts to live a daily lifestyle which reflects a clearly enunciated ideological stance: the *kibbutz* and religious life. The emphasis in this unit is on its uniquely Jewish dimensions and on the manner in which the ideology is translated so as to have a total effect on one's living pattern.

7. Israel-Diaspora Relations

This unit deals with the nature of the relationship between Israel and the Jews of the world. Specifically, the unit examines those forces which link and those which divide the contemporary Jewish world.

An additional content area of the program is developed according to the individual interests and needs of the participants, and encompasses the realm of social and educational services in Israel. Opportunities are made available for students to visit social agencies and meet individuals in related professional areas.

Methodologies

Three educational methods are employed to transmit the content of the Seminar: analytic, experimental, summational. The three methods are utilized in the sequence in which they are listed.

1. *Analytic*: The analytic session introduces the conceptual components of the subject in question. The emphasis is on clear and comprehensive elucidation of the facts, issues, and problems related to the topic. For example, the unit on Israel as Jewishness begins with a lecture "Six Contemporary Models of Jewishness." This lecture presents a typology of models of

Jewishness, from the neo-orthodox to the secularist, and their expressions in the Israeli context. Usually, the analytic method takes the form of a 40 to 50 minute opening presentation by a guest speaker, followed by an hour discussion. Such sessions are often rooted in a text or document which is distributed in advance to students for reading.

2. *Experiential*: This method is rooted in the actual observation and confrontation, in the day-to-day life of Israel, of the subject in question. It is implemented through both formally planned field visits and through informal contacts occurring in the streets, on the bus, listening to the radio and T.V., etc. That is, the student goes out into Israeli settings and sees, hears, and talks. The purpose of such a method is to enable a total interaction with the issues: intellectual, emotional, and behavioral. Such sessions are closely co-ordinated with analytic sessions. For example, in connection with the unit on Israel as Jewishness, students spend two nights at an army officer training school and at a *kibbutz* teacher training college to live and interact with young Israeli Jews. In dealing with the subject of social problems in Israel, following an introductory discussion on the function of the newly emerging community centers, students spend a day visiting community centers and meeting with the staff as well as those served by the institute. Moreover, the experiential is not understood simply as observing phenomena in the field (e.g., seeing a community center or the Knesset), but as an intimate and live interaction with the institution and its people.

3. *Summational*: This method refers to one to two hour sessions held at the com-

pletion of a unit (usually every 4-5 days) in which personal responses and implications of the analytic and the experiential component are discussed. These sessions have two purposes: 1) to give some sense of synthesis or closure to the issue which has been examined, and 2) to delve into the meaning and implications of the issue for the individual student as a Jew and as a professional. Thus, these sessions are both reviews and analyses of substantive issues, as well as very personal and intimate expressions of response and meaning. This methodology is based on the assumption that the Israel educational experience will be maximized when it is filtered through the inner being of individuals. Such sessions often become involved and even difficult, since they are rooted in very individual spheres, and frequently set into motion intra and interpersonal tensions. At the same time, they constitute an important educational dimension of experiencing Israel.

The Program

The actual daily program of the five week Seminar emerges from the interaction of the three methodologies applied to the seven content areas. Designing the program of the seminar then involves filling in the intersections of methodology and content. See Chart One.

At this point, the task of the staff is to "fill in the squares;" i.e., to map out appropriate speakers, discussions, texts, experiences, and visits for each area. Such an approach means that finding a good speaker or a worthwhile experience is not enough, since the integration and orchestration of the program is also of prime im-

portance. Chart Two presents the detailed program of the 1976 Seminar. (The actual day-to-day schedule with the names of speakers appears in Appendix I).

An Example: Culture as Jewishness

In order to clarify the integrative effect of methodology and content, we shall focus in more detail on one of the seven units, Jewish culture as Jewishness.

This unit examines the position that Jewishness is inherently related to the rhetoric of a culture, e.g., language, literature, historical experiences and motifs. The cultural argument is particularly important for and difficult to teach to American Jews, who have traditionally defined their Jewish distinctiveness in a religious rather than cultural Jewish sense. Thus, the study of this unit implies the confrontation with a radically different and probably alien notion of Jewishness.

The 1976 version of the unit opened with a session on the subject, "Is There a Jewish Component in Modern Hebrew Literature?" conducted by Amnon Hadary. The speaker examined major motifs of contemporary Hebrew literature, and argued that they clearly reflect a Jewish component. One of the writers dealt with in his analysis was Yehuda Amichai. The afternoon session was a meeting and discussion with Yehuda Amichai. Students had prepared for this session by reading several of his writings. This session, then, was an experiencing of the work and person of a noteworthy creator of Hebrew culture. The next two sessions in his unit dealt with the mass media in Israel. The group first saw two documentary films on American Jewry prepared by Mr. Chaim Yavin of the Israel Broadcasting Authority (and Israel's pop-

ular newscaster). The group then met with Mr. Yavin to discuss both his conceptions of American Jewry and his thoughts on the media in Israel and Jewish culture. In addition, students saw selection from Israel's (now defunct) prizewinning satire program *Nikui Rosh*, followed by a meeting with its producer-director, Motti Kirschenbaum. Students questioned Kirschenbaum on the Jewishness of his work ("What's Jewish about *Nikui Rosh*?"). He responded by saying that he was a Jew producing films for a country in which Jews live. His response was frustrating for the students, whose thinking leads them to expect a distinctive Jewish consciousness on the part of the creative artist. The exchanges dramatically highlighted a different perspective of the Israeli and Diaspora Jew. It is the personal confrontation with such differences which sets the tone for a deeper level of learning.

At the summary discussion session, Hadary's and Kirschenbaum's positions were viewed in the perspective of the introductory lecture on Models of Jewishness. The relationship between this and the Yiddishist school in the U.S. was discussed. The rejection of the cultural approach by American Jewry was examined. In the process students expressed their own reactions and hesitations as they wrestled with the issue. Some came to the conclusion that Jewish culture ala Yavin and Kirschenbaum reflected a modern, secular Israeli culture and had little to do with Jewishness. Others felt that being Jewish had cultural dimensions, albeit different from those prominent in Israeli or American Jewish life. Also noted was the importance of an understanding of Hebrew language to cope fully with Jewish cultural expressions.

Planning

An important part of this Seminar is the planning process. Initial planning for the program begins in late October–early November. Feedback from the past summer is received and reviewed (students, faculty advisors, speakers—see student reactions in Appendix 3). Each year, the entire program is “stripped down” and the staff plans the program anew. The original conceptual frame is reviewed, as well as the daily schedule. This is not a *pro forma* activity; there have been several revisions and even radical changes in the conceptual framework and daily schedule over the years. Those events which were especially successful and unsuccessful are examined. The reasons for success and failure are discussed. This process takes several months. By late January, a draft program is sent to the participating agencies. Reactions and comments are made, and a revised program is prepared by March. Invitations to speakers, coordination of dates, travel arrangements in Israel are made in late March–early April. Students receive a copy of the program before their departure for Israel in May.

One aspect of the planning process which has proven essential is the close interrelation between the three sponsoring agencies. Despite geographic distances, effective coordination between the three agencies has been achieved. In addition to mail communication, visits by Israel staff in the U.S. and *vice versa* are utilized for meetings to discuss the program. The two distinctive factors of the planning process, then, are a long planning period which allows for patient and thoughtful programming, and close and genuine co-operation between Diaspora and Israel sponsoring agencies.

Staff

There are two types of staff roles in the program: academic advisors and administrator-counselors. The function of the former is to facilitate the conceptual analysis and synthesis of issues studied, and to relate such issues to the intellectual and professional development of the students. The latter role is responsible for day-to-day arrangements, and the personal dynamics of the program—the emotional needs of individual students and the morale of the group. The mix of academic and educational staff has proved to be a crucial additional educational resource. It is especially important that a close working relationship be established between the two types of staff—one in which there is no sense of separation or demeaning of the responsibilities and function of the other. Academic staff participate fully with the extra-academic aspects of the Seminar, just as the counselor staff attend and participate fully in the academic sessions. The investment in both types of staff is seen as neither luxurious nor extraneous to the educational aims of the Seminar. In fact, providing such a dual focus in staff competencies is a deliberate focus of the Seminar. It is predicated on the notion that a sound educational approach is especially important in an intensive residential program such as the Israel Seminar. The dynamics of achieving a blend of cognitive and affective foci will be explored in further detail in the ensuing sections.

The Learning Community

“The learning community”⁵ is an operational concept which emerges from the

⁵ The concept of the learning community as it applies to the field of education is described in:

basic commitment to the link between the affective and cognitive needs of students. By speaking of a "*learning community*" we note the integral relationship between two elements: 1) a body of knowledge and attitudes to be communicated, and, 2) the emotional relationships among the participants in the educational venture—students and teachers/counselors. The underlying premise is that by creating an atmosphere within the educational enterprise which is conducive to a sense of community one enhances the achievement of the learning objectives. This happens in four ways:

1) *A community of learners/teachers*—The sense of community to be fostered with a group of young adults, such as those comprising the Brandeis Seminar, is not the same as the "bunk" spirit one might generate in a children's summer camp. These are people accustomed to living independent lives, and since most of them have been previously to Israel, they are capable of negotiating the Israeli scene on their own. Instead the concept of community takes on relevance with respect to the common educational background and objectives of the participants. They are together in Israel because they share certain intellectual and professional concerns. The issue is whether, and the extent to which, this commonality is tapped for mutual advantage. The initiative for energizing the potential inherent within the group rests

with the staff. It is set into motion with the staff conviction that all wisdom is not their sole province, but rather resides within all members of the collective—students as well as faculty. Students can learn from each other as well as from faculty. To the extent more members of the learning community assume initiatives and responsibility for contributing ideas and experiences, the educational milieu is enriched. Not only do the learners benefit from the broadened exchange of perspectives of people with a wide range of Jewish backgrounds, but also an atmosphere is generated which is supportive of learning. By encouraging students to see themselves as teachers, as well as learners, they are encouraged to move beyond the typical student stance of passivity and dependence to one of sharing responsibility for the educational agenda—one's own as well as that of the collectivity.

Broadened participation in the teaching-learning enterprise contributes not only facts and ideas, but also group support. In the process of banding together to address the learning tasks, the members of the Seminar experience a feeling of group belonging and pride. With such emotional support learners are emboldened to experiment with new ideas and concepts.

2) *Minimizing Obstacles to Learning*—We have just noted the positive features arising from a sense of community. The process is abetted also as the sense of community serves to minimize obstacles and distractions which might otherwise diminish learning. Participating in an educational program with a fixed population, and a demanding time schedule, inevitably results in a certain level of intrapersonal and interpersonal stress. Typically where the de-

Joseph J. Schwab, "Learning Community," *The Center Magazine* VIII, 3 (May/June, 1975), and George J. Brown, *Human Teaching for Human Learning*, (New York: Viking Press, 1971). Similar ideas underlie the concept of the therapeutic community in the field of mental health. In particular see: Richard Almond, *The Healing Community*, (New York: Jason Aronson, 1974).

cision of the program staff—by plan or by default—is not to get involved in the affective realm of the program, the response by the participants, as they begin to experience the pressures of the program, ranges from avoidance to hostility. In either case the effect is that learning diminishes. Some students adopt a “9:00 to 5:00” attitude: they invest only enough energy in the program to get by. Others are unable or unwilling to achieve this degree of detachment, and they carry over their negative set into the academic arena. Feelings of personal anxiety, a sense of isolation in the group, hostile feelings to certain participants or to staff members affect receptivity to the educational content. To the extent student energies are deflected on to these areas of stress they are unavailable to be invested in learning. Even more problematic is when negative reactions become contagious and affect all the group members. It is in this regard that attention by staff to the affective dimension can establish a climate which is supportive of learning rather than one which is distracting or contrary.

3) *A Supportive, Creative Staff*—The development of a supportive learning environment starts with a recognition and respect for the individual needs of the students who comprise the group. In addition to designing a creative curriculum one must be attentive to the living situation and the manner in which it impacts on the students. Staff should monitor living and meal arrangements to assume that these are reasonably comfortable. In terms of curriculum, material should be organized so as to present the data in coherent and stimulating ways. This means utilizing different formats: lectures, media, student

presentations, panels, and others. The intensity of the schedule in programs such as the Israel Seminar, can be oppressive, so creative presentation of material and variations in style and pace are important to challenge and maintain the interest of the participants. The extent to which academic material is imaginatively presented by faculty makes more likely eliciting a similar level of imaginative response by the students.

A vital component of a supportive learning community is a staff which is accessible and responsive to the participants. Beyond being a teacher this means being available as a sensitive human being. This might take expression in offering guidance to individual students, participating in recreation programs, or engaging in informal bull sessions with students. Particularly in Israel, where there is a tendency to be casual about administrative arrangements, staff for American groups need to be especially responsive to detail, lest frequent disruption of planned activities demoralizes the participants.

4) *A Model of Communal Leadership*—Thus far the discussion of the educational objectives of the Seminar has focused on the communication of curricular content to the learners. We have become aware of another level of learning which has occurred in the Seminar—one which is particularly useful to people preparing for careers of Jewish communal leadership. This has to do with methodology: group leadership and educational process. The Seminar itself—its organization and style of operation—provides the students with a model of purposive Jewish leadership. Here is a case study of designing and conducting a program of Jewish education. The

readiness of the Seminar staff to open to scrutiny their own roles as educators/group leaders, plus the direct involvement of the students in the process, makes this a valuable learning laboratory. As recipients of a program geared to conveying information and shaping attitudes, the students can refer to their own experiences as a means of evaluating the utility of different techniques.

So, in addition to imparting information about Israel and the Jewish experience, the Seminar also affords the opportunity to teach about the process of teaching/leadership.

Tensions Arising with the Learning Community

It should be understood that in taking on the commitment for creating a learning community the staff also take on a number of burdens and responsibilities. Most obviously, as a consequence of the open, informal atmosphere, there is a narrowing of the social distance between the staff and the students. While this contributes to an ease of communication, it at the same time, complicates the task of the staff with respect to the reality that they bear ultimate responsibility for the Seminar. Informal relationships and involvement in decision making raise student's expectations and can lead to unrealistic demands and taking liberties with requirements and regulations. It is a challenge to the ingenuity and energy of the staff to be able to sustain the more open, egalitarian relationships and yet be able to exercise appropriate authority when this is indicated.

The maintenance of the learning community clearly imposes additional emotional demands on the staff. In effect they are

dealing with a double agenda—the formal educational curriculum plus the emotional requirements. This involves the personal contacts with students, which can occur at all hours, and the myriad of meetings to plan, evaluate and negotiate; in short, to be responsive.

It should be obvious that our bias would lead us to conclude that the extra demands imposed in creating and sustaining a learning community are more than offset by the learning achieved by the students, and—withstanding moments of uncertainty during the course of the Seminar—the personal gratification of the staff.

The Brandeis Seminar: Implications for Short-Term Programming in Israel

It is inappropriate to attempt to derive conclusive generalizations about all short-term Israel programs from the Brandeis experience. Each program has its own nature, purposes, population, and setting. Nevertheless, certain basic principles about the planning of such programs do emerge from the Brandeis experience:

1. Need for a Conceptual Rationale and Framework

One cannot assume that simply being in Israel will automatically create Jewish identity or “turn people on” to being Jewish. In some cases, there is such an electric effect; however, it is professionally careless to leave one's educational concerns to chance. Programs in Israel must reflect some sort of conceptual rationale and framework; a sense of what is being sought in Israel and why it is appropriate for the particular group. Having such a rationale

does not mean a curtailment of spontaneity and creativity. Rather it is a means of ordering the educational experience to achieve desired objectives. This should be more than the provision of sugar-coated, overly-idealistic pictures; such an approach borders on propaganda and indoctrination. A lack of planning is neither responsible to the students nor to the Israel experience. What is called for is a purposive aligning of the educational needs of the specific group of learners with the educational potential inherent in Israel.

2. Interaction of Conceptual and Practical

The ultimate test of an educational program is the translation of conceptual frameworks into daily programming. An exclusive concern with either the conceptual frame or the daily program is unsatisfactory. The planning of programs in Israel demands the interaction of the conceptual and the practical. Indeed, it is sometimes failure on the most practical level (e.g. no hot water in the coffee pot just before the important summary session is due to take place) which destroys the most thoughtful conceptual frames. Similarly, exclusive concern with coffee pots, without consideration of purposes, concepts, and values, is ultimately an empty activity.

3. Multi-dimensional Educational Strategies

The study of Israel and issues related to it is best achieved via multi-dimensional educational strategies; i.e., the utilization of a range of educational techniques—field visits, lectures, “planned” free time, discussions, feedback sessions, media. Israeli society particularly lends itself to such a

variegated mode of study; to view it otherwise is to experience Israel superficially. This principle also implies a non-conventional approach to utilizing the learning resources available in Israel. The renowned authority on Israeli ethnic groups might be a less effective teaching resource than an evening spent in homes of different ethnic groups in Jerusalem’s neighborhoods. Similarly, a field visit to homes without preparation or feedback might be distorting and misleading. There is a need for several methods and an artful weave between them.

4. Advance Planning

The realization of an effective program is a complicated process, involving 8–10 months of planning. If one wants to create a carefully thought-out program, a serious investment must be made in the planning stage. (This lesson is not new to those involved in American Jewish educational summer camping, which justifiably has become a full-time profession. However, this lesson has not yet been adequately learned in Israel programs.) It is true that one must avoid the danger of over-planning, and particularly foreclosing the capacity for flexibility and spontaneity. However, planning may be effected in such a way so as to assure the benefits of foresight and insight while preserving creativity and innovation.

5. An Emotionally Sensitive Staff

Trips to Israel inevitably bring into focus the Jewish identity of the participants—their personal Jewish attitudes and values. Moreover, there are the inevitable demands arising from living and traveling in a different country. These two factors, coupled

with the normal tensions generated in any group experience, make it especially important that the staff of the Israel programs be knowledgeable of individual and group dynamics, generally as well as in terms of their particular constellation. This consideration would certainly bear upon the selection of staff. It is not enough that the staff be Israeli or familiar with Israel, they must also be sensitive to the emotional needs of people—individually and collectively.

6. Israel-Diaspora Collaboration

Programs in Israel can profit greatly from genuine cooperative efforts on the part of Israel and Diaspora agencies. If one takes the notion of Israel-Diaspora interrelationship seriously, then the substantive and educational inputs of both partners are crucial. The Israel partner should not regard itself as the sole authority on how to see Israel, nor should the Diaspora partner assume that it alone understands the mentality or concerns of its young people. Jewish ventures have much to profit from genuine exercises in joint planning and implementation.

7. Impact on the Individual

The thrust of an experience in Israel is best viewed in terms of its effect upon the personal development of the participant as a Jew and as a human being. The program in Israel should be seen as one important contemporary form of Jewish character education; i.e., of an education which is

concerned with the development of a person's self and identity. This implies an individualization and personalization of such programs in order to somehow touch the still small voice of each participant.

Conclusion

Few deny the centrality of Israel to contemporary Jewish life; however, inadequate time and thought has been devoted to the elucidation of the meaning of Israel for our lives as individual Jews. We are told that Israel is important; we do not often enough explore the ways and whys of that importance. Nor have we sufficiently addressed the technology of trips to Israel so as to maximize this potent educational experience.

The Brandeis Seminar is an exercise in experiencing Israel in a purposive way which relates it to the being and life-style of its participants. It is an attempt to act upon the assumption that Israel has something to contribute to the professional training of Jewish communal workers, and to their personal development as Jews. It presumes further that the conscious application of sound principles of education and social science can significantly enhance the learnings which can be achieved. The experience of six years of the Brandeis Seminar has proven to be a rewarding verification of these assumptions. It is hoped that the principles which have been highlighted with regard to the Brandeis Seminar can be instructive for other populations in the planning of educational programs in Israel.

APPENDIX

1. 1976 Brandeis Israel Program
2. Assumptions of the Brandeis Israel Seminar
3. Student Evaluations of the Israel Seminar

Appendix 1

1976 Brandeis Program in Israel

May 20 — June 20

Thursday, May 20

Arrival, El Al 024

Friday, May 21

9:30 a.m.: Orientation to the program; Introduction and overview.

Place: Hiatt

10:00 a.m.: "Israel and Jewishness — A Secularist Approach", Dr. Gideon Shimoni, Hebrew Univ.

Place: Hiatt

1:30 p.m.: Continuation of orientation.

Place: Hiatt

Shabbat, May 22

2:30 p.m.: Walking tour of selected neighborhoods in Jerusalem: Nachla'ot, Sha'arei Chesed, Rehavia. Meet at Davidka Square.

Guide: Rachel Ariel.

8:30 p.m.: Movie "Pourquoi Yisrael".

Place: Hiatt

Sunday, May 23

8:30 a.m.: "Contemporary Models of Jewishness — The Link with Israel". Dr. Mike Rosenak, Hebrew Univ.

Place: Hiatt

1:00 p.m.: Leave for army base

A discussion with soldiers on Israel, Jewishness, and Israel-Diaspora Relations.

A visit with Golani combat unit in the field. The visit will include guided tours in the area around the unit's base camp and discussions with soldiers.

We will be sleeping in the field with the unit and return to Jerusalem for lunch on Monday.

Monday, May 24

Afternoon and Evening: Free.

Tuesday, May 25

9:00 a.m.: Summary Session: The Place of Israel in Contemporary Jewishness and Jewishness in Contemporary Israel.

Place: Hiatt

Introduction: *Sociological Responses to Jewishness in Israel.*

The impact of various Aliyot on the Make-up of the State of Israel.

1:00 p.m.: Moroccan Jewry. Dr. Michael Abutbul, Hebrew Univ.

Place: Hiatt

8:00 p.m.: "Social Problems in Israel and the Role of the Community Center". Dr. Zvi Fein, Hebrew University.

Place: Hiatt

Introduction: Day in Community Centers: The group will be divided into 3 subgroups and will visit 3 Jerusalem Community centers.

Wednesday, May 26

Morning: Field observation in selected community centers in Jerusalem: Kiryat Menachem, Kiryat Hayovel and Beit Hano'ar Ha'ivri.

4:00 p.m.: The impact of various Aliyot on the make-up of the State: German Aliya and Youth Aliya. Dr. Chanoch Rinott, Director, Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora.

Place: Hiatt

8:00 p.m.: "Community Centers in Israel and the United States". Feedback session on Field observations. Ralph Dolgoss, Schwartz Program, Hebrew University.

Place: Hiatt

Thursday, May 27

Sociological-Cultural responses as expressions of Jewishness in Israel.

9:00 a.m.: "Is there a Jewish Component in Modern Hebrew Literature". Amnon Hadary, Jewish Agency.

Place: Hiatt

2:30 p.m.: Meeting and discussion with Yehuda Amichi, Israeli Author and poet.

Place: Hiatt

Friday, May 28

The Israeli Media as Jewish Culture.

8:30 a.m.: Visit to Israeli Broadcasting Co.

A. Viewing of:

(1) Films on American Jewry, written and directed by Chaim Yavin, Israel Broadcasting Co.

(2) Selection from the Israeli Satirical Program *Nikui Rosh*. Satirical sketch of "All in the Family".

B. Discussion with Motti Kirschenbaum. Producer-Director of *Nikui Rosh* on: Israeli Media as Jewish Culture.

Shabbat, May 29

Free

Sunday, May 30

9:30 a.m.: Discussion with Chaim Yavin on his conception of Jewish Culture in America and in Israel, as expressed in his films on American Jewry.

Place: Hiatt

11:30 a.m.: Summary session: Israel culture as an expression of Jewishness.

Place: Hiatt

1:30 p.m.: "Israeli Cultures: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Social Class". Dr Alex Winograd, Brandeis Univ.

Place: Hiatt

3:45 p.m.: Introduction: "Zionism — Then and Now".

4:00 p.m.: "Zionism as a Political Movement—Past and Present". Baruch Knepaz, Hebrew Univ.

Place: Hiatt

7:30 p.m.: Study of selected Zionist Classical Texts. Noam Tzion.

Place: Hiatt

Monday, May 31

11:00 a.m.: Major Trends in Religious Zionist

Ideology. Zvi Yaron, Jewish Agency.

2:00 p.m.: "Changing Concepts in Zionism". Prof. Daniel Elazar, Bar Ilan Univ.

Place: Hiatt

Tuesday, June 1

Who Are We? — Jew? Israeli? Zionist? The Problematics of Jewish Identity in Israel

10:00 a.m. "Gesher": Meeting and discussion with Danny Tropper, Director of "Gesher".

Place: Hiatt

1:00 p.m.: "The Institute for Zionist Education": Discussion with Shaul Paz, Director of the Institute in Yaar Yerushalayim.

Place: Hiatt

4:30 p.m.: Visit to Kiryat Moriah: "Machon L'madrichai Chutz La'aretz". Meeting and discussion with British and American students at the Machon.

8:30 p.m.: Summary Session: Zionism and Jewish Identity.

Place: Hiatt

Wednesday, June 2

The Impact of the Holocaust on Jewishness in Israel.

8:00 a.m.: "Educational Problematics in Approaching the Holocaust". Dr. Chaim Shatzker, Hebrew Univ.

Place: Hiatt

1:30 p.m.: Visit to Yad Vashem.

3:00 p.m.: Problematics of Holocaust Research: Meeting and discussion with Mr. Krakovsky, Institute of Holocaust Research, Yad V'shem.

Thursday, June 3

Ideology as Life Style. Visits to non-religious and religious *kibbutzim*.

June 3, June 4 (Shavuot), June 5 (Shabbat) Kibbutz Kfar Giladi.

June 6—June 7

Kibbutz Lavi.

Monday, June 7

Leave Kibbutz Lavi for Kibbutz Lochamei Hagetaot.

11:30 a.m.: "The Sociological and Historical Impact of the Holocaust on Jewishness in Is-

rael". Visit to Ghetto Fighters Museum, Kibbutz Lochamei Hagetaot. Host: Mr. Zvi Shner.

Sleep in Haifa, Ben-Yehuda Hotel.

Tuesday, June 8

10:00 a.m.: Visit to the Teachers Seminar of the Kibbutz Movement "Oranim", Kiryat Tivon, focusing on the course in "Jewish sources". Meeting with Shraga Bar-Sela, Coordinator of the Course, observation in class, and meeting with students.

Return to Jerusalem.

Wednesday, June 9

Israel-Diaspora Relations. The Zionist Movement Responds to Diaspora Needs.

8:30 a.m.: Mr. Yosef Almogi, Chairman of the W.Z.O., Executive and the Jewish Agency Exec. Place: Jewish Agency Building.

10:00 a.m.: Meeting with Mr. Dov Shefatya, Dept. of Education and Culture in the Diaspora, W.Z.O., and Sarah Hoz, Dept. of Teacher Shlichim, W.Z.O.

Place: Jewish Agency Building, King George St.

2:00 p.m.: New materials in Zionist Education. Rafi Vittenstein, Israel Productions Explanation of the Pedagogic Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora Library, School of Education. Sue Mogilner, Director of the Pedagogic Center.

Place: School of Education, Mt. Scopus.

Thursday, June 10

9:00 a.m.: Confrontation with Zionism: Symposium.

Place: Van Leer Institute.

Dr. Janet O'Day and Task Force on Israel-Diaspora Relations.

2:00 p.m.: Summary session.

Place: Hiatt

Friday, June 11

Individual Requests.

Shabbat, June 12

Free optional.

A Comparative Study of 3 Communities in Israel: Community Structure Through Emphasis

on Various Aspects of Communal-Civic Life.

Sunday, June 13

Ashkelon

10:00 a.m.: Religion and Politics in Israel. Meeting and discussion with Rabbi Phil Spec-
tor, Conservative Rabbi in Ashkelon.

1:00 p.m.: Meeting with Rabbi Moshe Cohen, Lecturer at Bar Ilan University and founder of Street Gang Social Work Program in Ashkelon.

Visit to Mental Health Hospital. Meeting with staff.

Meeting and discussion with street gang, and worker.

Return to Jerusalem.

Monday, June 14

Dimona

Community and Education. Education in a development town. Meeting and discussion with Aharon Schneider, Director of Education, Dimona Municipality.

Tour of schools in Dimona.

Tuesday, June 15

Lachish

Community: Regional Planning, Immigration, Absorption. Visit to Kiryat Gat and neighboring *moshavim*.

Host: Ya'akov P'nini.

Wednesday, June 16

Israel and the Western Immigrant

8:30 a.m.: The American Oleh in Israel: the Agony and the Ecstasy, Eliot Praeger.

Place: Hiatt

9:30 a.m.: "The Role of the Association for Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI) in the Absorption of the Western Immigrants and in Israeli Society, Ernie Segal, Director, AACI.

Place: Hiatt

1:30 p.m.: "The Western Immigrant and the Israeli Army". Dr. Zvi Gastwirt, Hebrew Univ. Place: Hiatt

4:30 p.m.: "The Absorption of the Western Immigrant". Arnie Swartz, Ministry of Absorption.

Place: Hiatt

Thursday, June 17

Israel-Diaspora Relations. Details to be announced.

Friday, June 18

Israel-Diaspora Relations

11:00 a.m.: Meeting and discussion with Dr. David Hartman on the Seminar participants' perceptions of the philosophical implications of Israel in Contemporary Jewish Life.

Place: Hiatt.

Friday afternoon, June 18—Saturday Evening, June 19

Shabbat Symposium on the Nature of the Israel-Diaspora Relationship.

Place: Hiatt

Saturday Evening

Party time.

Sunday, June 20

9:00 a.m.: Final Summary and Evaluation.

Place: Hiatt

Appendix 2

Assumptions of the Brandeis Israel Seminar — May, 1976**Purpose**

The Brandeis Israel Seminar deals with two issues: 1) the elucidation of aspects of Israel and Israeli life which are regarded as crucial to the Jewish background of professionals serving the American Jewish community, 2) the elucidation of the meaning (or meanings) of Israel for contemporary Jewish life.

The first assumption of the program is that one can find in the contemporary State of Israel a constellation of responses to the issue of being Jewish in the Twentieth Century. In Israel one can find and experience several attempts to explicate and redefine the meaning of being Jewish.

The following four Israeli responses to the question are studied in the course.

- 1) *the sociological* — that response which defines Jewish in the sense of a collection of Jews living together in a society.
- a) the sociological-Israel — that response which defines "Jewish" in terms of a collection of Jews living together in Israel who are linked by a common existence in Israel.
- b) the sociological-cultural — that response which defines "Jewish" in terms of a collection of Jews living together who participate in a common culture and in new cultural creations.
- c) the sociological-historical—that response which defines "Jewish" in terms of a common historical experience and consciousness.
- 2) *the ideological* — that response which defines "Jewish" in terms of value systems and ideologies.
- 3) *the theological* — that response which defines "Jewish" in terms of a religious world-view, or an ideology which is linked to historical Jewish religion.
- 4) *the political* — that response which defines "Jewish" in terms of a Jewish polity with social and political institutions which reflect the interest of a society of Jews to be responsible for its fate.

The second assumption of the program is that both the State of Israel and the idea of Israel are intimately connected to being Jewish and to Jewishness in our age. There are several conceptions of the Israel—Jewishness relationship, ranging from Israel as an ethnic symbol to Israel as a homeland for all Jews. The elaboration and examination of these conceptions is the second focus of the seminar.

In addition, the Seminar is concerned with broadening the student's experience in his own particular professional area (e.g. center work, youth work, work with the aged, federations, Jewish education). Students are given the opportunity to study the Israeli experience in these various areas.

It is clear that this program is not a tour of Israel, but rather a graduate seminar focusing on the above issues which are directly related to the contemporary Israeli and Jewish experience.

Approach

The subjects of the Seminar are studied in three ways:

- a) academic study—lecture, readings, symposia
- b) field experiences—visits and field observations
- c) analysis and discussion

These three approaches are woven together to inform and reinforce the student's learning experience.

Appendix 3

Evaluation of the Israeli Seminar by the Participating Students 1974-1976

1. Would you recommend a similar housing and meal arrangement as was used at the Brandeis Hiatt Institute?

	1974	1975	1976
	N=20	N=14	N=12
yes	95%	85%	100%
no	5	15	0

2. Should there be more or less Hebrew used in the lectures by the speakers?

	1974	1975	1976
	N=20	N=14	N=12
more	50%	23%	25%
less	0	15%	9%
about the same	50	60	66

3. What was the major benefit for you in having participated in the Seminar? (Responses collated for years 1974-1976 and listed in order of frequency mentioned)

- a. A clear and more realistic understanding of Israel, its needs and problems
- b. Deepened my own personal Jewish identity and commitment
- c. Appreciation of Israel/Diaspora relationship
- d. Better perspective on how to teach about Israel to American Jews
- e. Learned skills of how to conduct a seminar
- f. Enhanced my feelings to my fellow students and teachers
- g. Learned more about social problems of Israel and the professional services to deal with them
4. What recommendations would you make for the seminar? (Responses collated for years 1974-1976 and listed in order of frequency mentioned.)
 - a. More field visits and less lectures
 - b. More direct contact with Israelis
 - c. More pre-trip discussions on Jewish identity and one's relationship to Israel and Zionism.
 - d. Cut down on overscheduling
5. Other comments on the Seminar. (Responses collated for years 1974-1976 and listed in order of frequency mentioned.)
 - a. Staff were competent and considerate
 - b. Speakers were high calibre
 - c. Greater involvement of student/participants in planning
 - d. Well organized plans and well administered
 - e. Seminar should be a week or two longer
6. Should we continue to require the Israel Seminar for all CJS students?

	1974	1975	1976
yes	90%	100%	100%
no	10	0	0

Chart 1 — Methodology and Content

Methodologies	CONTENT AREAS						
	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Israel as Jewishness</i>	<i>Culture as Jewishness</i>	<i>Zionism</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Holocaust</i>	<i>Israel-Diaspora</i>
Analytic							
Experiential							
Summational							

Chart 2 — The Brandeis Seminar — Methodology and Content

	<i>Israel as Jewishness</i>	<i>Culture as Jewishness</i>	<i>Zionism</i>
Analytic	A Secular view	Is there a Jewish component in modern Hebrew literature? Forces shaping Israeli culture	Zionism as a political movement
	A Traditional view The Several Aliyot: W. European N. African Social Problems in Israel and the Response of the Community Center—Immigrant Absorption		Religious Zionist ideology Changing concepts in Zionism Zionism and contemporary Jewish identity
Experiential	Film: "Pourquoi Yisrael?" Field visit to army base Field visits to community centers Field visits to mental health and school systems	Meeting with Israeli author and poet, Yehuda Amichai Visit to Israel TV studio Viewing Israeli TV shows and films and meeting with writers and producers	Study of classical Zionist texts
Summational	Discussion: The place of Israel in contemporary Jewishness and Jewishness in contemporary Israel. Discussion: Debriefing on visits to the community centers, mental health and school systems	Discussion: Israeli culture as expression of Jewishness	Discussion: A personal confrontation with Zionist ideology

(Chart 2 continued on next page)

Chart 2 — Continued

	<i>Jewish Identity in Israel</i>	<i>Holocaust</i>	<i>Ideology as Life-Style</i>	<i>Israel-Diaspora Relations</i>
Analytic	"Gesher": seeking bridges between Israeli religious and secular communities Religion and politics in Israel Jewish consciousness in Israel	Educational problems in approaching the Holocaust; Problems in Holocaust research	The Kibbutz: A religious approach A secular approach A traditional Jewish approach to contemporary life	Israel-Diaspora relations: a historic perspective The Return to history of the Jewish people via Israel
Experiential	Visit to Kiryat Moriat — discussion with students Visit to Oranim-Teachers Seminar of the Kibbutz movement	Visits to Yad Vashem and Kibbutz Lochamei Hage-taot	Field visits to Kibbutz Kfar Giladi (secular) Kibbutz Lavi (religious) Visits to traditional Jewish communities Shabbat at the Wall	Field visits to the World Zionist Organization Meeting with Yosef Almogi
Summational	Discussion: Who are we: Jew, Israeli, Zionist? The problems of Jewish identity in Israel	Discussion: The impact of the Holocaust on Jewishness in Israel	Discussion: The Kibbutz as a contemporary Jewish life-style Discussion: Religious aspects of my identity	Symposium on Israel-Diaspora relations: a personal definition