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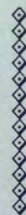
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יידישער וועלט קאנגרעס
קולטור-ענינים

ארויסגעגעבן פונם קולטור-דעפארטמענט
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קונגראס יהודי עולמי
עניני תרבות
יוצא ע"י המחלקה לתרבות
בהשתתפות המכון
לעניני היהודים

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AN HISTORIC GLIMPSE*

By

ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN

The Tercentenary provides an appropriate opportunity to evaluate the past of American Jewry and to speculate as to its future. In evaluating its past, I shall limit myself to a survey of the developments during the half century since American Jewry observed its 250th Anniversary. This period merits special attention because it has wrought transforming changes which have not only shaped the present character of American Jewry but will probably determine its future.

The Jewish people, which has always been a seismograph of the world's tremors, has felt the progress of these years and has suffered as the chief "man of sorrows" from the tragedy of these years. Wherever enlightenment shone his fortunes prospered. Where the night descended he was the first-born assigned to the plague. World War I impoverished European Jewry. World War II decimated it. Of Europe's nine to ten million Jews, two-thirds fell victim to Nazi extermination. And of the surviving remnant the largest part have come under the Communist regimes where its fate is "srayfat neshamah veguf kayyam" - precarious physical existence under spiritual blight. A continent which had been for centuries an alma mater, "aym b'yisrael", to Jewish life throughout the world has become virtually a lost continent for our people. Because of these casualties, Jewish life can never be the same in the years and generations ahead.

The Tisha b'Ab of our time, however, was not without its Sabbath Nachamu (Sabbath of Comfort). Great Powers, touched by the unparalleled tragedy which had befallen the Jewish people, prodded by the homelessness of hundreds of thousands of displaced Jews in Europe, influenced by the climate of rising nationalisms, and aware of an international moral commitment since the time of the Balfour Declaration, agreed to the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. It was the vindication of Herzlian Zionism which fifty years before had envisioned the Jewish State to come into being within fifty years, and had devoted these years, in the face of bitter opposition, to organizing the Jewish people in order to bring it about. Eighteen centuries of prayer for Zion's restoration came to a head in fifty years of purposeful action. Zionism has been Jewish will harnessed to a favoring international constellation. It has been the chief Jewish dynamic of our time. The Medinat Israel came to birth, something new under the sun of nineteen centuries and something wonderful, the thread of Jewish nationhood resumed in its ancestral home, a voice small but respected in the councils of the states, a third chance to be a light to the nations. This is our consolation for the Book of Lamentations which had been written in the blood of six million martyrs.

America, in these fifty years, has become not only a world power but the world power, first in economic and in military strength, an Atlas upon whom half the world leans and whom the other half fears. Reluctantly and painfully America has come to the recognition that even America cannot hope to stand alone in the kind of interdependent world in which we live. So it is carrying its global responsibility without flinching, and it has become more and more world-minded. The American standard of living, labor's wages and working conditions, the position of woman, the spread of education, social security, health provision and child care, are the cynosure of the world. A nation composed of diversity of racial, religious and cultural stocks, it has been not so much a melting pot out of which emerges an amalgam, as an orchestra in which the unique quality of every

* Based on an address delivered at the American Jewish Tercentenary Committee luncheon.

instrument blends into the main theme of the symphony. It has not yet solved its internal social problems. In times of economic depression the screech of the vulture is heard in the land but it has not been a sustained voice. In times of international tension such as the present, the great American freedoms are hard put by reactionaries, but they manage to emerge. The degradation of the American Negro in some of the states of the Union is a national strain but it is a losing rear guard action. Sporadically, disturbers of the peace raise their raucous voices, fanatics of fratricide, distorters of religion, dispensers of demagoguery, and patrioteers. They have not been able to flourish for long in the American climate. On the whole, the democratic processes have survived the tests and the strains. Their successful survival is an inspiration to America's allies and the despair of its adversaries.

For American Jewry these fifty years have been the crowning period of the three centuries even as they have been the culmination for America itself. There were twenty-three Jewish settlers in 1654. Now there are five and a half millions, immigrants and descendants of immigrants, the largest single Jewish community in our tri-millennial history. Some came as refugees fleeing from varying degrees of oppression. Some came as adventurous spirits looking for new opportunities. Some came as idealists in quest of a new heaven and a new earth. They have given in the measure that they have received. To all that America has become in this half century the Jews of America have contributed worthily. To industrial and commercial enterprise, to a strong and responsible labor movement, to culture, the arts and the professions, to religious life, to civic and political thought and action, and to philanthropy, they have added chapters of distinction and volumes of mass participation.

These fifty years have welded a congeries of separate and distinct Old World nuclei, Spanish Portuguese, Central European and East European, into an American Jewish community. During forty of these fifty years, immigration from the Old World was reduced to a trickle so it has been a period of consolidation and of assimilation to the new environment. It has been, moreover, a time of Jewish intergroup assimilation. Only faint echoes remain of the "landsmanschaften" of yesterday. Social walls based on geographic origin are crumbling. Of the worthwhile values of the Old World, only some, alas, have remained, though only fragmentarily. There is a residue of Yiddish literature and there is a stubborn nugget of Hebraic culture. And New World values have been generated. There are American-born and trained Rabbis and teachers. The Synagogue in America has broadened its dimensions even if it has not deepened its stakes. Standards of Jewish pedagogy have been raised even if two thirds of our children remain submerged in "know-nothingism." Defections from Judaism here are not as commonplace as in most Western countries.

Not all the New World values in American Jewish life are unmixed blessings. For too many Jews the program of fighting Anti-Semitism has become a moral equivalent for the Synagogue. We are an over-organized community. Yet not organized enough. There is a plethora of overlapping and duplicating organizations. Yet the leading Jewish community, New York, is still without a Kehillah, daunted by the failure of its attempt to organize one forty years ago. On the national level, American Jewry still waits for a framework of democratic unity and in the meantime struggles to come together ad-hoc-wise from emergency to emergency. Only in philanthropy has American Jewry achieved efficient, democratic unity. Our local philanthropic organizations, the welfare funds and federations and our philanthropic instruments for fundraising for overseas needs, are models of their kind. The American Jewish community has been generous to its kin abroad. It has been a stay and staff to millions across the years across the continents.

American Jewry's shining hour, however, was when it played a notable part, second only to that of the Yishuv in Palestine, in providing material support and

in winning the political support of the American people and government for the Jewish National Home and then for Medinat Israel. In the final stages non-Zionists joined with Zionists. As it brought strength to Israel, American Jewry strengthened itself as well, for help to Zion nourishes the bond of Jewish brotherhood and feeds the wells of Jewish selfhood. This will be American Jewry's crowning credential in the history of our times. Let us not strain our relationship to Israel. No expression of the human spirit should be permitted to be parochial. Neither is Judaism to be confined to national boundaries. Out of Zion has come forth the Law for Humanity. The Christian will understand us. Let us not misunderstand ourselves.

Now at the 300th milestone of American Jewry, we look ahead and we wonder whether the golden chain of Jewish history will have a "hemshech", such continuity in this part of the world as will ensure, barring global catastrophe, a vital Jewish community here to celebrate the 400th anniversary in the year 2054.

A century is, perhaps, too far ahead to venture a forecast with any degree of reliability, in the fast moving world in which we live, even assuming that we can look ahead to a world of peace and stability. It is more reasonable and, therefore, more meaningful to project and forecast fifty years ahead when our young children will be the parents of grown men and women, when they will be the mature components of the American Jewish community as our generation is today.

Today there is a trend in the world toward religion, partly in the wake of the disillusionment following the apotheosis of science, partly as a refuge from the mood of despair induced by the perils to which mankind's security and very survival are exposed. The synagogue has felt the upswing. This trend will undoubtedly continue and probably grow, as the peak is not yet in sight. It is likely to go on for decades, as such trends emerge slowly and spend themselves slowly.

The Synagogue in America is likely to grow also as a result of benign factors special to itself. One of these is the growing movement of populations, especially Jewish families in the childbearing age, away from the large cities to the suburban communities. In such communities the Synagogue occupies a more central place in the life of the Jewish community than in the big cities.

Adult Jewish education, an extension arm of the Synagogue, gives every sign of becoming more and more widespread. It will in turn create a broader base of appreciation and encouragement of higher Jewish learning. There will be a considerable group of indigenous American Jewish scholars. American Jewry will begin to achieve credentials beyond philanthropy.

It is not fantastic to believe that Israel in the next decades, having solved its pressing economic problems and having achieved peaceful relations with its Arab neighbors, will begin to produce significant cultural and spiritual values. These will inevitably stimulate the Jewish culture and spirit in America. There will be cultural interpollination between American Jewry and Israel. Many of these stimulations will infiltrate the Synagogue and the Religious School, enriching their content and strengthening their vitality.

American Jewry will grow in dignity. It will settle down to a more mature set of values. The fighting of anti-Semitism or the straining for Christian approbation will be less and less likely to displace religion and the Synagogue from the position of primacy on the American Jewish scene. First things will be put first, as the American Jewish community becomes more at home as a result of diminished immigration, and more at ease as a result of what is hoped will be a steady decline in hatemongering, accompanied by a steady increase in the traditional American way of life. There is reason to believe that many bright chapters in the history of American Jewry are yet to be written.

HEBREW LITERATURE IN AMERICA

By

CHAIM LEAF

I. Early Beginnings

The beginnings of modern Hebrew letters in America made their appearance in the 1870's, when the Haskalah literature in Eastern Europe had reached its peak and gave signs of looming decline. But while their contemporaries in Europe developed a rich and pulsating literature, the contributions of the early Hebrew writers in America, were few and meager. For the first thirty years or so, they carried on within a limited scope the literary tradition of the Haskalah movement, and with very few exceptions were oblivious, or even antagonistic, to the new trends and tendencies which ushered in the great Hebrew literary revival in the 1890's and the early years of the 20th century in Russia. Most of the literary endeavors in America centered around short-lived magazines. (The first one, "Ha-Zofeh Be-Eretz Ha-Chadasha", was edited by Zvi Hirsh Bernstein.) These Maskilim founded circles for the propagation of Hebrew in America. Very active in this field was Judah David Eisenstein, who later on published the ten-volume Hebrew encyclopedia Otzar Israel, as well as many other compilations and handbooks of Hebrew lore and knowledge. Although these periodicals did little to reflect American conditions, and the vital problems of Jewish life here, they nurtured the Hebrew tongue and kept alive in the hearts of thousands of Jews, who had been brought up in the Hebrew-Maskilim tradition, the tie to modern Hebrew letters.

The Hebrew writers of this first period left no mark on the future development of Hebrew literature. The foremost among them, Menachem Mendel Dolitzki, Naftali Zvi Imber (author of "Hatikvah"), Gershon Rosenzweig and the other minor poets, while recognizing the great opportunities which this rich, new and spacious land offered to the poor immigrant escaping degrading oppression abroad, could not, however, reconcile themselves to the poor physical and spiritual environment into which the masses of their brethren as well as they themselves were thrown here. They lamented their bitter lot, and the acrimonious Rosenzweig aimed his sharpest darts at the ignorance and unholy materialism which cast its spell on the new settlers and their offspring. The poems by the aforementioned poets, as well as those of Jacob Sobel, Isaac Rabinowitz and Moshe Israel Garson, have more historic and social significance than intrinsic value. Except for the biblical encyclopedic dictionary by Abraham Chaim Rosenberg, Otzar Hashemeth, and the quaint travel of Getzil Zelikowitz, very little of note was contributed by the Maskilic-oriented authors.

II. On the Road to Maturity

An important and decisive change of climate and mood in the field of Hebrew letters in America set in in the first decade of the 20th century. With the waves of immigration of that period, there came to these shores young men of talent who were inspired by the vibrant and vigorous voices in Hebrew letters and were completely in accord with the renaissance set in motion by such guiding lights as Ch.N. Bialik, S. Tchernichovsky, Z. Schneur and many other outstanding poets, novelists and essayists.

The new turn in Hebrew letters in America made itself felt with the appearance of the bi-weekly magazine, Shibolim, published by M. Ben-Eliezer. Although only 7 rather slender issues of the magazine appeared, it served as a harbinger of new and fresh literary expressions and directions. Preceding it, a small, but ambitious Hebrew group, called "Ivriah", organized in 1906, embarked on a venture to stimulate on American soil an understanding and appreciation for modern Hebrew letters.

This group succeeded in publishing a few stories by the searching socially conscious writer, J.Ch.Brenner whose monthly, Hameorer, was widely circulated here in America and exerted great influence on the young readers by its searching and stirring articles and essays on vital Jewish problems of the day. At the same time these new trends were further advanced and disseminated through pamphlets published by Dr.J. Klausner and A.L.Ben-Avigdor.

A new impetus to the change in the literary course was given by the renowned Hebrew writer Reuben Brainin, who came to America in 1910. Brainin had established for himself an enviable reputation as one of the foremost Hebrew critics and journalists and was highly regarded as an exponent of European culture. He served as the pivotal point for the hopes of the advocates of the modern trend in Hebrew letters. These hopes were justified, but for a very short period. Soon after his arrival here, he edited a book of poetry, Snunith ("Swallow"), which brought to the fore young Hebrew poets such as Benjamin N.Silkiner, Abraham S.Schwartz, Ephraim A. Lisitzky, A.Domnitz and others. Brainin set out to publish a much heralded weekly, Haderor ("Freedom"), which failed to live up to its high promise and ceased publication after 15 issues. In spite of its failure, it served to stress the need for a modern Hebrew magazine to pave the way for the progress of Hebrew letters in America. This need was filled by the enterprising group of "Achiever", which began by the end of 1912 to publish the monthly Hatoren. This monthly entrenched itself and won an undisputed place in the field of Hebrew literature, dispelling and casting away completely the influence of the remnants of the old guard.

By the beginning of 1916, Hatoren was transformed into a weekly under the editorship of the well-known novelist, J.D.Berkowitz. At the same time, a new weekly was founded, Haiври, which served as official organ of the Mizrachi. Its editor, Rabbi Meir Berlin (later Bar-Ilan), and his assistant M.Lipson, tended to broaden the scope of this weekly and gave it a literary rather than partisan character.

These two publications stimulated the creative efforts of a galaxy of new poets, novelists, essayists, and scholars. In these formative years of modern Hebrew literature in America, it was fortunate to receive the encouragement and assistance of a number of outstanding literary figures who, because of World War I, found asylum in America: Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, "father" of spoken Hebrew; David Ben-Gurion, former premier of Israel; Yitzchak Ben-Zevi, incumbent president of Israel; Dr. Schmarya Levin, brilliant Zionist leader and orator; Dr.S.M. Melamed and others. In 1919, the monthly Miklat, published by A.J.Stybel, made its appearance under the editorship of J.D.Berkowitz. This monthly compared favorably with the best in Hebrew periodicals ever issued. In addition to American Hebrew writers, it secured the participation of outstanding Hebrew authors the world over.

In the early twenties, these periodicals, which contributed so much to the establishment and formation of a Hebrew literary base in America, were forced to discontinue publication. In those trying days for Hebrew letters a new and ambitious experiment took shape - the launching of a Hebrew daily Hadoar. Its appearance was accompanied by an upsurge of hope which, however, failed to materialize; after undergoing several transformations the weekly Hadoar - one of the mainstays of Hebrew literary endeavors to this day -, emerged under the editorship of Menachem Ribalow.

Hadoar, and the various other periodicals were chiefly responsible for the establishment of a modern Hebrew base on American soil. For the last 15 years, the monthly Bitzaron, founded and edited for a decade by the renowned scholar, Professor Chaim Tchernowitz ("Rav-Tzair"), contributed considerably to Hebrew literary achievement. The ten volumes of Sefer Hashanah Liyehudei America, an annual, and the bulky volumes of the Hatekufah, the quarterly which made literary history, further broadened and enhanced Hebrew creativity in the fields of fiction, poetry, literary

criticism, scholarship and research.

III. Growth of Hebrew Poetry

The first notable attempts to reflect modern trends prevalent in current Hebrew letters were made by the poets B.N.Silkner, Ephraim A.Lisitzky, A.S.Schwartz and later Hillel Bavli, Israel Efros, Simon Ginzburg and others. These poets were under the influence of their great contemporaries in Eastern Europe, namely Bialik, Tchernichovsky, Schneur and others. Their influence was especially pronounced in the early works of the young American Hebrew poets. In theme as well as form, these poets were rooted in the classic Hebrew tradition. The dominant characteristic of their poetry was its lyric quality, carving out in concise and perfectly rhythmical lines a multitude of individual experiences and emotions. This poetry assumed an ethereal beauty and esoteric detachment, delving into the inner world of ideas and perceptions, quite removed from environmental reality. Yet, in the early days of his creative work, B.N.Silkner was inspired by American Indian lore to write his poem, Mul Ohel Timura, ("Opposite the Tent of Timura"). This was a unique experiment in Hebrew poetry. Silkner succeeded in capturing the mood and the rhythm of Indian life and struggle, myths and mores, during the period of Spanish rule. The tragic beauty of a declining people and its culture held particular appeal for the Hebrew poet, who himself derived his spiritual strength from an ancient and distant glorious past. The lot of the Indians also found sympathetic expression in the poetic works, Meduroth Doachoth, ("Dying Campfires") and Wigwamim Shotkim ("Silent Wigwams"), by E.A. Lisitzky and Israel Efros, respectively. Lisitzky also drew from the primitive, but rich, folklore of the Negro in America. His recent volume, Bachalai Kush ("In Negro Tents"), is a remarkable reproduction of Negro spirituals and songs, reflecting the realities and fantasies of the colored people. This exceedingly prolific poet, made use of every medium of poetic form and expression. He wrote idylls of American Jewish life, a long philosophical poem, Naftulai Elohim ("Wrestlings of God"), sonnets, elegies, lyric poems and triolets. His prose work includes an autobiography, File Toldoth Adam, written in profuse and rich style, presenting an intimate portrayal of people and events on both sides of the ocean.

Thoroughly traditional in form and content, yet not devoid of individuality, is the poetry of A.S.Schwartz. His modest verse is humane and warm, compassionate and understanding of nature and man.

Hillel Bavli achieved lyrical mastery in his short poems of classic structure. Bavli typifies the deep attachment of the American Hebrew poet to the great tradition of Bialik and his school. Bavli revealed himself as a very fine essayist, publishing a number of critical works on American poets (published in the Hatekufah) Robert Frost, Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, and Amy Lowell.

The influence of the great masters of Hebrew poetry is also felt in the early poetry of Israel Efros. He imparted to his poems, in contrast to the sordid mood often found in Hebrew lyrical poetry, a light and graceful touch, creating the impression of frivolous abandon. Efros' poetry matured with time, assuming a more serious and profound character. Besides the above-mentioned poems, "The Silent Wigwams", Efros portrayed the gold-rush of 1849 and its devastating influence on the people involved, in his poem Zahav ("Gold"). The tragic events following Hitler's rise to power, brought forth deep-felt poems which were collected in Anachnu Ha-dor ("We are the generation"...). Efros has also produced scholarly works, chiefly essays, in the field of Medieval Jewish philosophy.

Simon Ginzburg was given in the beginning to a romanticized portrayal of life in the old country, the charm of recollected youth in the first "Fatherland", the villages and fields of the fertile Ukraina; but he was soon awakened to the tragic

fate that befell our brethren in that land. Ginzburg also turned to his new adopted land and sought in his poems, "New York", "A House on Columbia Hill", and others, to capture the rhythm and spirit of the metropolis, but despite his earnest effort, he succeeded only in giving a grandiose historic account of this new "Tower of Babel," without imparting a feeling of awe and inspiration. The biblical theme was closer to his heart and in Ahavat Hoshea ("Love of Hosea"), he dwelt on the poetic and dramatic interpretation of the tragic life of the Hebrew prophet. Ginzburg made an important contribution to Hebrew scholarship with his work on Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the Italian Hebrew mystic and dramatist.

A refreshing and spring-like poetic note was introduced by Itzhak Silbershlag. Although influenced by continental poets and the great Hebrew masters, the romanticism is the dominant characteristic of his work, as revealed in the larger poems: Judah Halevi and Ibn Gabirol. Some of his poems are woven around Negro folklore.

The combined English and Hebrew poetic influence is evident in the works of the late A.Z. Friedland, Moshe Feinstein and Reuben Avinoam (Grossman). Although universal themes are dominant in their poetry, they are rooted in Hebrew tradition, which represents the dominant force in their poetic expression. Feinstein reveals a dramatic-lyric quality in his Chalom Vegoral, ("Dream and Fate"); Avinoam, who was born in America, but who emigrated to Israel, has been active in translating English and American poetry into Hebrew.

Anglo-American modes and motives exercised a more pronounced influence on the poetry of Simon Halkin, Abraham Regelson and Gabriel Preil. Steeped in Hebrew as well as American culture, in almost equal measure, each of them presents a unique poetic personality.

Halkin, who is Professor of Hebrew Literature at the University of Jerusalem, has dwelt on philosophic-mystical problems, while not overlooking earthly beauty, singing a hymn, through glorious colors and images, to American scenery ("On the Shores of Santa Barbara"). Abraham Regelson's poetry ("A Sojourn in Israel") is equally tinged with a philosophical quest and a naturalism governed by artistic beauty. Rich in metaphor and imagery is the poetry of Gabriel Preil. In his two books of poetry, Nof Shemesh Ukfor ("Landscape of Sun and Frost") and the recent one, Ner Mul Kochavim, ("A Candle Against Stars"), he depicts the locale and color of the American scene in striking similes.

A special place in Hebrew poetry is occupied by the notable poet and essayist, Aaron Zeitlin. Arriving here on the eve of World War II from Warsaw where he had gained fame as a Hebrew-Yiddish poet, publicist and dramatist, he produced here some of the most moving poems. His mystic preoccupation and extensive use of legend and lore lend a subtle and exquisite beauty and meaning to his poetry.

Baruch Katzenelson, who now lives in Israel and has recently published a new book of poems, Milev el Lev ("From Heart to Heart"), continues to pour out his soft, prayer-like poems. His few poems of the American scene in Leor Haner, are in the same warm, lyrical vein as the rest of his delicate poetry.

The outcry against the ugly aspects and manifestations of life in the American metropolis rings loud in the poetry of Abraham Zvi Halevi, Mitoch Ha-Sugar ("From the Cage"). The tendency to realistic exposition and bold and direct expression, characterize most of his poems.

Of the poets who tread the conventional path, Moshe Brind is the typical example. M.S. Ben-Mair has some expressive and well-composed poems and it is a pity that they are not as yet collected in a volume. Elchanan Indelman, who wrote chiefly for children, has lately contributed some poems of mature form and contents.

It is to be noted that the younger Hebrew poets, such as David Kramer and Karmi Charni (who has already published two volumes of poetry in Israel), are American born. Eliezer D. Friedland, who has written some very fine poems on American themes, is also a product of the American Hebrew educational system. The promising young poet Itzhak Zamir died, leaving behind a book of verse, Miyam El Yam.

Most of the poets mentioned above distinguished themselves as notable essayists. Thus, Simon Halkin, Abraham Regelson, and Yitzhak Silbershlag, published critical essays on Hebrew and world literature.

IV. The American Hebrew Novel

While modern Hebrew poetry was already well advanced, the Hebrew Novel on the American soil did not make its appearance until World War I. One of the first novelists, Abraham Soyer (1869-1939), chose to depict in his novels, later collected in his two volumes Dor Holech ("A Passing Generation"), the more familiar aspects of Jewish traditional life molded in the Eastern European milieu. J.D. Berkowitz, who painted so faithfully and vividly the Jewish small town of White Russia, continued in the main to draw from the well of past experiences. Later he began to depict the life of the first generation of immigrants in his inimitable style and with rare humor.

Recent Hebrew novels tend to be broader in outline, more articulate and incisive. They encompass a greater variety of themes and penetrate deeper into the soul of the American Jew in relation to himself and the world outside. The Hebrew novelist, being closer to our historical sources, is best fitted to give artistic expression to the rich Jewish past.

Among Jewish historical novels, Harry Sackler's Ha-Keshet B'anan ("Rainbow in the Clouds"), occupies a prominent place. The same can be said about his Sefer Ha-Machzot ("Book of Plays"). Sackler fuses realistic and symbolic elements in sketching historical characters and events. Sackler has woven in his novels and plays a net of conflicting ideas representing the struggle of the Jewish spiritual outlook in contrast to the earthly ideals of the Gentile world.

S. Blank, who arrived in America in the early Twenties, leaving behind him the horrors of the World War I years and the pogroms that followed them, depicted in his first novels the rustic life of the Jews on Bessarabian soil. Soon his American novels, Ee Hademaoth, ("Island of Tears") and Mister Kunis, made their appearance. They dealt with the raw material of ruthless reality in somewhat naturalistic and melodramatic fashion. S. Blank, manifests a more artistic conception of the conflicts and destinies of human life in his latest book B'Marboleth Ha-Chaim ("In the Turmoil of Life").

Jochanan Twersky (who now sojourns in Israel), the prolific novelist, has produced a number of historical novels, the most important of which is his Uriel Acosta. Twersky offers a gallery of characters and devotes much space to intellectual discussions which tend to reveal the tendencies and the ideas of the various characters. The recent past comes to life in his novel Meolam Leblam ("Between Two Worlds"). This book depicts the transformation of a Jewish youth, who forsakes the Hassidic tradition and passes through various stages of ideological evolution. Since then Twersky published a number of other historical novels, such as Mordecai Emanuel Noah, Habetulah Miludmir ("The Girl From Ludmir") and others. A great deal of soul-searching and probing into the inner world of the younger generation of American Jews is to be found in two novels by Simon Halkin, Yehiel Hahagri and Ad Mashber ("Until the Crisis"). Halkin portrays the first and second generation of American Jews who are caught in a vortex of emotional and ideological conflicts. An air of restlessness and frustration prevails throughout the novels, bringing to light the innermost intimate motivations and longings of the various characters.

Jewish life in America in its various, often uncomplimentary aspects, is the theme for Reuben Wallenrod's novels. In Badyota Hashlishit ("The Third Story"), Ki Phana Yom ("The Day Wanes") and Bain Chomoth Hair ("Between the City Walls"), Wallenrod describes the conflicts and clashes, the struggles and strivings of people caught in the constant ebb and flow of life. Wallenrod treats his characters with psychological insight and displays deep understanding of human nature. In his last novel Beain Dor ("Without a Generation"), he tends to trace the life story of the typical representative of his generation from the time of their early youth in the White Russian hometown to the time when they established themselves on American soil.

In Yeshayahu Rabinowitz, Hebrew fiction found a new, subtle and interesting story teller. His Collection of Stories, just published, Neroth Dolkim ("Burning Candles") are in the best tradition of the introspective novel, distinguished by its ability to create moods, ironic dialogue and delineation of character.

Other novelists who have depicted Jewish life in America are B. Isaacs, S. Dame-sek (whose short stories are mainly autobiographical), and Hayim Abramowitz, the last-named one of the younger generation of Hebrew writers whose book Al Ha-lechem Levado ("By Bread Alone") dwells on the trials and tribulations of a Jewish family in Brooklyn and the conflicts that arise from the quest for material well-being.

Jacob Tarkow-Naamani published an unassuming book of stories, Resisai Hayim ("Fragments of Life") of Israeli and American background.

Zina Rabinowitz is known for her stories for children, as well as for her reportage on Jewish life in various countries.

V. The Essay and Literary Criticism

The field of the literary essay has generally been a fruitful one. The late Menachem Ribalow, editor of Hadoar, published five volumes of literary criticism. The last one, Me'olam Le'olam ("From World to World"), was recently published and contains also a number of essays and impressions of historical and geographical high points in New England.

A host of other authors applied themselves to literary criticism, widening the literary horizons of the average Hebrew reader. The late Abraham Epstein wrote extensively on American Hebrew authors; Yeshayahu Rabinowitz published a volume of penetrating essays on general and Hebrew authors; the late I. I. Wohl, J. Ovsay, and others contributed to the field.

Some of the deceased authors who made important contributions to Hebrew thought, were S. B. Maximon, a pupil of Achad Ha'am, whose philosophical essays and comments reflect the ideas of a forceful moral personality; Dr. S. M. Melamed, the temperamental and erudite publicist, essayist, and scholar whose scattered articles cry out to be collected; Kalman Whiteman, the educator, whose Zionist thinking was religiously oriented; Abraham Goldberg, eminent Zionist leader, whose interests and quests embraced a variety of subjects on art and literature, and who also produced some poetry.

To these we must add Dr. I. Z. Raisin, who wrote an essay on George Eliot and a book in English on the history of the Haskalah Movement. An outstanding place in Hebrew letters and culture in America was held by Dr. Nissan Touroff. He was one of the first to write on psychological science in Hebrew, and his books on the various psychiatric and psychological schools of thought greatly enhanced the knowledge of these subjects in Hebrew.

We have already mentioned Reuben Brainin, whose reputation was established in

Europe. His works published here include a diary in which he comments on people and events in America. Dr.M.Z.Raisin wrote an essay on Milton and on various personalities in American Jewish life. Occupying a Reform pulpit, he expounded the viewpoint of Reform Judaism in Hebrew literature. His memoirs are of considerable interest.

A number of scholars have ventured into the field of essay,literary criticism and publicistic work. Their extra-curricular literary contribution merit special mention. This roster of scholars and men of letters include the late Rav Tsair (Chaim Tchernowitz),Meyer Waxman, Pinchas Churgin, S.K.Mirsky, Simon Bernstein, Simon Federbush, Jekutiel Ginzburg (who is remembered for the enlightened and witty column he contributed for some time to the Hadoar under the pen-name of J.L.Gog), Isaac Rivkind, and the late Samuel Feigin. A book of literary criticism by the last-named was published posthumously.

U.R.Malachi, the well-known writer bibliographer,has also written very informative and erudite articles on a number of Hebrew authors,delving into little-known facts, and leading to a more comprehensive appreciation of the subject matter.

A sagacious and discerning book of essays has been published by J.Z.Frishberg. The book,Im Hador,deals with literary as well as with cultural problems.

M.Ch.Amishai (pen name of Moshe Maisels),present editor of Hadoar,who has written a monumental work in two volumes entitled Machshava Ve'emeth ("Thought and Truth"),often contributes pertinent and keen observations on the passing scene.

Gershon Churgin serves as the interpreter of philosophic thought,general and Jewish. In a facile and lucid style, he expounds in his articles the different schools of philosophy for the average reader.

Daniel Persky is very popular for his weekly column in Hadoar. Specializing in modern interpretation of homiletic lore, he has published three volumes of holiday material replete with folkloristic and satirical comments and discourses.

Working chiefly in the field of Jewish education and publishing volumes on its history, Prof.Zevi Scharfstein is the author of many essays on literary and other themes. Recently he published his autobiography,written with literary skill.

This list does not by any means exhaust all the noteworthy writers who collectively make up the present Hebrew literary scene in America. Worthy of mention among the more or less regular contributors to the Hebrew press,who also write from time to time comprehensive essays,are: Dr.M.Z.Levinson-Lavi, Dr.M.Steiner,A.S.Orlans (a regular commentator on current events in Hadoar), Dr.J.L.Gordon,Dr.Benjamin Schwadron, Dr.Joshua Bloch,Reuven Zinder, Dr.M.G.Glenn,and others.

In conclusion mention must be made of the rendition into Hebrew of classical English and American works by Israel Efros (Hamlet),Hillel Bavli(Anthony and Cleopatra) Simon Halkin (The Merchant of Venice, The Sea Wolf, Leaves of Grass,etc.), Ephraim A.Lisitsky (The Tempest), Itzhak Silberschlag (The works of Aristophanes).

It is difficult to give in the space of a short article an all-embracing picture of the development of Hebrew letters in America and its present state. I hope the reader has been made aware of the progress that Hebrew has made here,striking deep roots in the American soil. The center of Hebrew letters at present is the land of Israel. In our day as in antiquity Israel remains the focus of all the hopes of our national, spiritual,and cultural achievement and fulfillment. But

while recognizing this cardinal fact, and aligning ourselves spiritually, and often physically, with our national center, drawing from it inspiration and cultural sustenance, it is vital for our future in America that Hebrew should occupy its rightful place as an instrument of national creativity. The achievements of the past in every field of literary and cultural endeavor justifies, with Israel as a stimulating force, a more resplendent future for Hebrew letters in America.

Addendum: We regret that, in discussing the Hebrew novelists in America, the name of L.A. Arieli was omitted. His collected stories, Le'or Ha'Venus, has just been published by Dvir. Arieli appears in his book as an absorbing and searching novelist. A streak of irony and sarcasm runs through his stories, which deal with Jewish life on three continents, including the American.

YIDDISH LITERATURE IN AMERICA

Its Main Characteristics And Development

By

EPHRAIM AUERBACH

To Yiddish literature in America the miracle spoken of by the Psalmist has happened: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief corner-stone." From the very outset the builders of Jewish life in America adopted a negative attitude toward Yiddish literature, as well as toward the Yiddish word in general. As soon as the first wave of large-scale Jewish immigration reached the shores of the new country, the heralds of gloom proclaimed doom - the doom of Yiddish, the Yiddish press, let alone creative literature. When we look back across the more than seventy years of the large Jewish immigration to the United States, we conjure up the following picture: A child is born in a home, and the moment it utters the first joyous cry of life, a black figure towers over the child and croaks with a chill, wintry voice: "Death, death, it will die." But the infant cries with lusty lungs, grows and begins to sing, and attains mature responsibility in life. The black figure grows chiller more wintry, its voice more frosty: "Death, death, it will die."

The herald of doom has accompanied Yiddish literature in America from the first day its infant feet began to walk. There was a reason for it: the earlier Jewish settlers in the country were ideologically Jewish defeatists. They held that in America the thread of Jewish history was breaking, that no one would spin it further on the new soil, that no one ought to spin it further. Not (perish the thought!) that they wanted to deny their Judaism; on the contrary, they reared beautiful houses of worship that would do honor to the God of Israel; they ostentatiously gave to Jewish charities; they interceded politically for the Jews of Russia and Rumania. But the houses of prayers were intended rather to stress the freedom of America than as places where one came to an own, warm Jewish God. If they had no temple of their own, they believed, it would mean that they were untrue to American democracy, which guarantees religious freedom. Their charity, again, was humanitarian - also in the spirit of America.

The Jewish mass immigration of the late seventies and early eighties beat upon the American shore with such furious Jewish force that the earlier Jewish settlers in the country sensed that Jewish history, which they had already paid off and dismissed, was advancing on them and might (heaven forbid!) draw them into its vortex. With the mass immigration came the Yiddish language and the thirst for the Yiddish word. They taught the Jewish immigrants many good habits, but their object was to sever the Jewish historical thread in the country. "Eat your fill, little Jews," they seemed to be saying, "get a taste of American freedom and of the fleshpot, and you will naturally get out of your heads such silly things as a Yiddish language, press, literature. You will realize that the ideas you brought with you from the other side are superfluous, ^{ballast} and the heaviest ballast is - Jewish continuity, historical Jewish consciousness. The less conspicuous you will be with your Jewishness, the more welcome you will be here, the more American democracy will clasp you to its heart and give you the kiss of death."

The question here is not whether the American democracy held up by those Jewish settlers in America was the true one, whether they did not look at America with their own myopic eyes. The main thing I wish to stress is the climate in which Yiddish literature sprang up. A climate of negation; a climate of beginning with a forecast of the end; of spring blossoming with a prediction of wintry chill. Yiddish literature came with historic continuity, while the false prophets foretold historic extinction. Yiddish literature sat down piously at the spinning wheel of our millennial history in order to spin new threads and weave them into the old web. The heralds of doom stood towering above the heads of the weavers

with a frosty, wintry smile and, with cracked voices that sounded like footsteps on brittle ice, croaked: "Death, death, it will die."

2.

But it was not only the old-established Jewish inhabitants who negated Yiddish literature; negation also haunted it from within, at the hands of the half - and quarter - intellectuals, whom the waves of immigration had carried to America. Their negation stemmed from other sources - cosmopolitan, Socialist, Anarchist. They themselves wrote Yiddish, spoke Yiddish, delivered speeches in Yiddish, but they did it like very fastidious persons who are forced to speak to the "common people" in the latter's language in order to teach them the precious cosmopolitan virtue of national suicide. The Yiddish language was a tool in their hands, as the plow is in the hands of the peasant, to dig up desicated and decayed roots. Their contempt for the Yiddish language went hand in hand with their contempt for the Jewish pattern of life, Jewish tradition, Jewish historical continuity. They employed Yiddish to tear down the sturdy old Jewish structure in order subsequently to lead the Jewish people into the cosmopolitan tents.

In the bitter struggle of the immigrant masses for economic existence; in the chaotic ideological struggle which raged in the crowded districts, the "common people" naively upheld the Yiddish word. The Jew's attitude to his language was not one of conscious love, but of a sound, idealistic attachment. He even began to create a specific American Yiddish, just as the people had created a Polish Yiddish, a Lithuanian Yiddish, a Ukrainian-Bessarabian Yiddish....

But it is not with linguistics that I am concerned here; my concern is with Yiddish literature in America, of which, within the narrow limits of an article, I shall be able to dwell only on the main features, without mentioning even its most important creators. It is important, however, to digress a little in order to bring out the historic truth, that the Yiddish language which the immigrant masses clung to, shaped the physiognomy of American Jewry. Ideas of survival sprang from the immigrant depths, where life was lived out in Yiddish. Historic Jewish continuity was woven on the looms of the Yiddish word, and Yiddish literature was fomented in the untidy immigrant nest.

Whether American Jewry could have become so great a historic force in the destiny of our people during the recent crucial years without Yiddish is problematical. One may doubt whether the relief work for European Jewry after World War I would have possessed the strength to attain such dimensions without the Yiddish language. It is also doubtful whether American Jewry could politically have achieved so much both for Jewish rights in Europe and for Eretz Israel if deep in our life there had not pulsed the fresh folk springs of the Yiddish language. Historical processes must not be viewed in their immediate effect, but must be penetrated more deeply. Although in the immediacy of our life, in the present moment, it looks as though the Yiddish language is bowing to fate and leaving the historic stage, we must look backward in order to see that, without the Yiddish language, there would have been no Jewish folk life in America and hence no sensitiveness to Jewish suffering thousands of miles away, nor to Jewish hopes in Eretz Israel, nor to ideas generally.

3.

Yiddish literature in America grew out of the immigrant depths. Its pioneers - in the eighties - had not previously been writers; they did not bring with them ready-made authorial pens like Menachem Mendel Dolitzki, to whom Judah Loeb Gordon had handed over his pen and crowned him his successor in Hebrew poetry. Our pioneer writers did not bring an artistic heritage with them, only the rich creative folk wealth which generations of Jewish life had stored up in them. They were immigrants, they fell into the vortex, they shared the immigrant's lot - the sweat-

shop, peddling, inadequate homes, boarders and landladies, immigrant abashment, human degradation, and dogged Jewish perseverance in human uplift. When the creative wellspring began to break forth from the ^{deep} recesses within them, the first theme of their writings was human uplift. If we take as examples the social motives in world literature and place them over against the themes of our pioneer writers in America, we shall see how different they are in their very essence. The social motive in world literature is for the most part a protest against economic enslavement, its passion is for raising the status, for a higher rung on the ladder of life. The social motive in our pioneer writers certainly embodies the protest against economic enslavement, but to this is added the anguished cry of the degraded person, the straining for human uplift. When Morris Rosenfeld in his social songs bewailed his bitter lot, there was in his lament the eternal Jewish cry of "a people holy unto God" who must not be degraded. It was not only for economic emancipation that the poet-pioneer strove, but for the uplift of man, whose holiness is of the very essence of our ethics. Unknown to himself, there burst forth from him the cry of the Hebrew prophets; his rage was over the degraded man, not the degraded class. Edelstadt and Boyshover, who were less rooted in Judaism than Rosenfeld, also indulged in the prophet's rage even when they cut their songs according to the pattern of the party platform.

The storytellers of that period - realistic, almost naturalistic - brought out more sharply the abashment of the Jew. Their principal motive was the disgrace of Jewish employers degrading the Jewish worker. This shame was endured by the Jewish worker in the sweatshop, the common Jew, who for the most part hailed from a small town in the old country where the poorest laborer considered himself part of the whole community and on occasion, in the synagogue, he could rap on the table and stop the reading of the Law during the Sabbath morning service. *) Socially, in that small town, there was a great gulf between the rich man and the workingman, but within the framework of Judaism, they frequently drew close to each other. It should be remembered that in the seventies and eighties of the last century, Jewish riches in the East European shtettil (small town) did not grow at the expense of the Jewish poor, but at that of the rural peasant, and the Jewish worker, porter, wagoner, or poor shopkeeper did not have such direct economic contact with the rich Jew as to feel that the latter was exploiting him, degrading him, depriving him of his Jewish dignity.

It was not until he came to America that the Jewish immigrant saw himself enslaved by a fellow Jew, who a few years earlier had himself been an immigrant. And who was the enslaver? In a great many cases, the immigrant had known him in the shtettil, where the latter was not one of the prominent Jews, one of the highborn, but a tailor, a shoemaker, a wagoner. Often the wronged, wretched immigrant had been a member of the middle class in the old home, something of a Talmudic scholar, and here the ignoramus degraded him, wrung the sweat from him in order to get rich. This is the main theme of the fictional literature of that epoch. The social conflict was at bottom a family quarrel, although on the surface it bore all the marks of social strife in general. And again we deduce from the pioneer storytellers the protest against human degradation and the yearning for human uplift. The pioneer fictionist, like the pioneer poet, obviously harbored Jewish ethics, of which he was frequently unaware, believing that he wrote as he did because he was a socialist.

The literature of that period was purposive. Its object was to educate the Jewish immigrant, to rouse him to the class struggle, to paint for him the bright picture of the Socialist society of the future. It also contained a considerable amount of ridicule of the Jewish religion, it being its naive belief that a pious Jew was not fit for the class struggle. Formally the pioneer literature did not

*) A method resorted to in order to call the attention of the worshippers to some grievance.- Transl.

devote itself to artistic values; the main thing to it was the practical purpose. The writer took up the pen without the slightest artistic preparation, his motive force being the social mission. Accordingly, the literature of that period was miniature - a short story, a song. The longer novelette, or novel, which appeared only as a serial in a daily newspaper, was in the style of Shomer, far removed from realism, full of strange episodes, fantastic, exciting, incredible, escapist.

But in the fermentation of that epoch, the dregs settled and there remained pure wine which we still drink with keen enjoyment. It was a purposive literature, but in the case of many writers their artistic blood percolated the practical purpose. We know that period from its journalistic output and memoirs, but no line in it when we read its songs and stories. The pioneer writer who did not set himself any artistic goals, intuitively, perhaps against his will, attained to artistic expression.

4.

The Yiddish literature of the pioneer period was American much earlier than American literature - American, that is, in the sense of realism, milieu, factory, awareness of ideological trends. To be sure, in the America of the Yiddish pioneer writers, one does not find the vast expanse of the country, the prairie, and big industry, but the narrow Jewish immigrant world is there in full. Its idea was cosmopolitanism, but in its artistic essence it fulfilled quite another mission: the unity of the Jewish people. Both in verse and in prose the Yiddish literature of that period linked together the Jews of Eastern Europe and those of America; the Jew who figures in it was emotionally and psychologically still rooted in the shtettil; he formed a new shtettil reality which did not at all sever the threads connecting him with the reality of the old shtettil.

The literature of practical purpose, which set itself no artistic goals, plowed the fields for those who came after, who held that literature was its own end. While the early immigrant writers had no literary consciousness, only an urge to express themselves, their successors were already permeated with a consciousness of the Yiddish writer's mission to erect a great literary structure. They put the accent on the artistic word and belittled the idea. The idea, they held, renders the clear artistic well turbid. The word alone is the artistic end, the word alone is charged with idea. And although they broke away from their predecessors, the pioneer writers of the eighties, treated them with contempt, there is no doubt that they learned a good deal from them. They, the successors of the pioneers, did indeed turn to world literature, chiefly to Russian and German literature, for poetic and fictional forms; but they would not have attained to a more refined expression if the pioneers had not previously plowed the field artistically.

In the matter of the artistic purpose they went to extremes, just as the pioneers had done in regard to the ideological purpose. In poetry they sought not only the imagery of the word, but also the nuance of the word. They wanted to convey a mood in a form in which rhythm and word blended harmoniously. They wished to exult the individual poet with his artistic temperament, with his inner uncertainties, with the aimlessness of both his sorrow and his joy. In their artistic laboratory they refashioned the Yiddish word, extracted the most delicate nuances from it, drew fresh subtleties from the folk spring, discovered such wealth and suppleness in the language that one was simply dazzled. While Peretz still could complain that "my song would have sounded different if I had sung for Gentiles in their language," the Yiddish poets of New York, in the first decade of the present century, did not complain, but triumphed over the Yiddish word. Like clay in the hands of the potter was the Yiddish word in their hands.

In prose the trend was the same, though somewhat different. The storytellers of the pioneer period approached man with a common yardstick, as it were. Their man possessed traits of his own, but it was their aim to convey through them the rule,

that from one man you might deduce hundreds like him. The story, accordingly, was essentially not about the individual man who is different from all others although socially he lives in the same milieu with them. The fiction writers who came after the pioneers, already tried to fathom the singular in a man, to reach his psychological mechanism, to lead him from the domain of the general into that of the individual. With the refined verbal tool they were concerned chiefly to convey the nuances of human feeling, frequently psychological tangles, and very often unexpected turns which the earlier writer of the pioneer period would not have permitted himself to write about even if they had occurred to him. The prose writers also ventured to try their hands at longer novelettes, which were far from successful simply because they concentrated on the expression, the word, not on the idea. Experimentally and artistically, however, they accomplished a good deal: they plowed up the field for the subsequent long novel.

5.

Out of the two contrary trends there arose the synthesis of complete creative maturity. The same generation which at first had rebelled against the idea and given first place to artistry, afterwards arrived at the harmony of both ends. In world literature the struggle for harmony between idea and artistry went on for decades. Yiddish literature in America went through this process with phenomenal speed.

Yiddish literature of the early twenties stood before two historic events: the Bolshevik upheaval and the Jewish redemption. The Bolshevik revolution, which did not remain localized in Russia but importunately penetrated every country in the world, was bound by its elemental sweep to catch the imagination of the creative Jew. Communism, figuratively speaking, buttonholed the Yiddish writer and demanded an answer to the question, Do you accept or reject me? The Yiddish writer stemmed either directly from the country where Communism arose with such world-dominating fury, or from the adjacent countries. In addition, Russian Jewry was then healthy and vigorous and a new stream of Yiddish creativeness gushed forth from it. For the first time there rang forth in Yiddish poetry motives of joy, liberating rhythm, clang of the redeeming steps. For the first time there resounded in Yiddish fiction the song of building, of love for a country, of identification with the fate of a country. It was something new, something fresh; it was invigorating from a purely literary point of view.

I must confess that I and persons like me, who from the very outset were ideologically anti-Communist, were artistically stimulated by the new pulse, the impetuous rhythm of the Soviet Yiddish literature of the initial years. We were ideologically opposed to Sovietism, but literarily we envied the Yiddish writers of Moscow, Minsk, Kiev, and Kharkow their love of country, their artistic joy, their complete belonging at the great historic wedding feast.

The Jewish redemption motive was the echo of the "Wayside State" which resounded after the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. I say "the echo", and I think it necessary to explain why the theme of redemption, in relation to Eretz Israel, reached Yiddish literature only as an echo. Emotionally and psychologically the Yiddish writer never severed his bond with Eretz Israel, but the political idea of Eretz Israel - Zionism and even Chalutzism - did not stimulate him artistically. Many causes contributed to this, of which the most important was the Yiddish writer's enrootment in the Jewish here and now. Here he was on common ground with the ultra-Orthodox Jew, whose Messianism never was a political idea, but a belief and a feeling. However, the "Wayside State" of the early twenties influenced Yiddish writers in a roundabout way, which was concealed from its view. The hidden Jewish historical channel infused refreshing clarity into Yiddish literature.

Under the impact of the "Wayside State" the Yiddish writer turned - not physically but with his deeply artistic sense - to Jewish historic sources, to folk sources, to the spiritual essence of Jewishness. The "echo" goaded him no less than the direct sound of Communism. So, while he did not respond to it ideologically and

politically, he found salvation in it artistically. It was distinctly the historic call of the "Wayside State" which led the Yiddish writer to a deeper national absorption, to a national fervor, to Jewish artistic unrest, to Jewishness in a broadly national sense. From this grew the great works which unearthed elemental human motives in historic Jewish figures. From this sprang the long short story, even the more deeply lyrical Yiddish song.

Sovietism influenced Yiddish literature formalistically - new forms, rhythm, even image and melody. But as regards feeling, greater depth, return to basic Jewish ideas, Eretz Israel exerted the decisive influence on our literature. Even those writers who were ideologically more sensitive to Sovietism than to the call of Eretz Israel, also drew their national artistic fire from the historic Jewish advance to statehood in Eretz Israel.

All these phases of Yiddish literature in America are compressed within the limits of about seven decades, - a short space of time for a literature to advance from its inception to its culmination. This is all the more remarkable when we remember that the inception took place in a chaotic immigrant milieu, during the process of transplantation from one continent to another. If we look back across the seventy years, the abundance of Yiddish creativity is to us a miracle and puzzle. In misery, in isolation from the broad Jewish currents, amid constant prophecies of doom, Yiddish literature offered the heroic resistance of creativity. Whence did it draw this incomprehensible strength? This strength Yiddish literature drew from the eternal Jewish wellspring which has sustained our people throughout the long exile. It is the sense and idea of one Jewish people the world over. The Yiddish writer in America always had the feeling that he was reaching beyond the borders of this country, that he was building a creative structure for the entire people, in all the lands of its dispersion. The Yiddish writer also felt that he was part of Jewish creativeness over a span of one thousand years. He was not isolated, he was linked to generations of Yiddish creators, he was contributing his spiritual treasure to the vast spiritual stores of our people.

When we see today that in the tercentenary celebrations of American Jewry, an attempt is being made to pass over Yiddish literature in silence, we are not surprised. We do not feel downhearted. We know that in every period there were leading circles who falsified history, but the truly valuable always remains part of the historic wealth, despite the falsifiers. Convinced that in the contribution of American Jewry to millennial Jewish history Yiddish literature constitutes the most important item, we hold, in a modest way, our own celebration of the anniversary fête, and wish ourselves to proceed from strength to strength.

Our creative energy is not yet exhausted. Far from it.

-Translated by Maximilian Hurwitz

THE CHANGING FORTUNES OF YIDDISH IN AMERICA

By

JACOB LESTCHINSKY

In the past fifty years, we witnessed a phenomenal process of rapid rise and growth of Yiddish and Yiddish culture in America, which has been superseded by a steady decline. Moreover, the same builders and creators who plowed and sowed the soil of Yiddish first in Eastern Europe and later in this country and saw with their eyes and enjoyed the results of their hard labor, are now doomed to witness the decline of the language of their heart.

In the United States there appeared, together with the great influx of the Jewish masses, the great spiritual and cultural treasures, to a degree unknown previously and in new, delicate, and intimate forms. Not only did the Yiddish press and periodicals and the Yiddish theater, the cultural media for the people at large develop and grow to a degree undreamt of in Europe, but also the higher and finer forms of creation, such as Yiddish poetry and belles lettres, showed signs of growth which challenged the greatest Yiddish creators of Eastern Europe.

The so-called "young ones" in America, who came in considerable numbers to the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century, intoxicated on the one hand by their own richness and fullness, and on the other by the freedom and fast tempo of life in America, had from the very outset ambitious far-reaching plans. They did not deem it necessary to ask themselves the question of whether just the free soil of America would be suitable for the creative forms transplanted from Eastern Europe, and whether a minority culture could blossom and grow in the rich and free American environment.

Menachem Boraisha characterized forty years ago the "young ones" in these words: "A generation of young writers and poets, people from an old world, thrown into the turmoil of the stony city, dejected and agonizing, live on their memories, which they brought with them and with the quivering dreams which began to take shape in their new world."

Another gifted young Yiddish writer, A. Raboi, thus conveyed the moods and sentiments of the talented young Yiddish writers blinded by the vastness of the American city, and by the great prospects before them: "We should get out of the narrow milieu of the coffee house and disperse throughout America and inhale the American air, and then we may be able to write something worthy. All of us write about the life of the old shtetel. All write about the shtetel.... Where is American Jewish life?"

One could almost feel a new epoch in the development of Yiddish literature. The great wide world was open to the Yiddish man and creative writer, so why should there be no hopes for a new, rich period?

None of those "young ones", thought that perhaps just in the free environment of America the language of their creative work might wither. And that the rich culture of the country might stifle the young plants brought over from the small shtetel which proved so advantageous for the entire modern Yiddish culture. But how could one expect of dreamers and poets a sober appraisal of the objective conditions for the growth of tender shoots transplanted from the poor shtetel to rich New York when even the greatest historian of the period was not able to make such a sober analysis.

Simon Dubnov, the historian of the Jewish people, a sober and dispassionate thinker, described in his Letters on Old and New Jewry (1897-1906) how, under free conditions of America, there would develop a democratic Jewish community, day schools with Yiddish and Hebrew as the languages of instruction, and how on these foundations of Jewish national life there would also evolve a higher Jewish culture and spiritual values.

It is characteristic that Jewish schools, with Yiddish as the language of instruction, came into being simultaneously in the Pale of Russia and in the United States, between 1908 and 1910. One can also find in America parallels to the famous hadarim metukanim, with Hebrew as the language of instruction, educational institutions which began to spring up in Russia at the very end of the 19th century and developed in the first decade of the 20th century.

The builders and creators of all these national structures, both educational institutions and high literary and cultural castles, were so imbued with the spiritual values brought over from Eastern Europe that they scarcely noticed that, parallel with their poor and narrow corner of Yiddish creativity, assimilative waves flooded the very foundations of Jewish life, the sources of every national creation. Besides, we have to bear in mind that until approximately 1925, there arrived annually, except the few war years, great masses of Jews and with them fresh national-cultural creative forces, who thus filled the gaps caused by waves of assimilation. In Eastern Europe, Yiddish cultural experiences in the postwar years, a renaissance of unprecedented scope which was the more astonishing since the general living conditions deteriorated considerably; consequently, the influx into America of established cultural values and also of cultural creators was of such dazzling magnitude and quality as to blind one to the realities of the new country. In the 1920's, the new Yiddish cultural center in America began to make such headway that voices are heard saying that neither Warsaw where Jews were eager for and dreaming of emigration, nor Moscow where Yiddish culture was being put into a straight jacket by the Yevseks (Yiddish Communists), but New York was chosen by history to become the center of modern Yiddish culture; New York, with its two million Jews, with its own living conditions which developed freely and were not imposed by legal restrictions or physical outbreaks. It seemed that in a country with no monolithic, historically molded and consolidated national culture, with its gates open to tens of languages and cultures and with strong democratic principles, assimilation or surrender to the language of the culture of the majority would not take place.

One did not see or did not want to see that just this absolute freedom for all languages and cultures to develop and to consolidate was very detrimental for them; that the same peoples who were ready in Europe to shed their blood for the right to their own language and culture, here in America embraced assimilation with joy and pleasure; nor did one want to hear warnings from that Jewish national movement which, in line with its historical approach to the Jewish problem and its analysis of the Jewish reality in Western Europe, warned that the fortunes of Yiddish in America would not be better than in Western Europe, where emancipation stifled the language of the people and economic advancement smothered it.

With grief and sorrow, Zionist and Zionist-minded thinkers painted the future of Yiddish in black colors. Thus Dr. A. Coralnik wrote as far back as 1928 the following words: "And the Jews - the English-speaking, the Polish-speaking, the Hebrew-speaking - will long for the peculiar sound of the language which was spoken by generations of Jews. They will long for the sounds which were born in the Middle Ages, transplanted to the Slavic steppes; sounds of Jewish loneliness, of awakening and intimacy, of sorrow and joy; sounds filled with the heartblood of the people."

And now we who have survived the holocaust and found a haven of refuge in America, we have to witness the sight of Yiddish poets and novelists struggling

frantically to express all their emotions and sentiments with which they are filled; of Yiddish philologists and folklorists rushing to put on paper Yiddish idioms; of Yiddish actors roaming the world over to find a group of lovers of the Yiddish theater, of Yiddish historians, sociologists, economists, and literary critics trying to write down the results of their researches in the conviction that their spiritual nearness to the Jewish masses, their rootedness in the life of the people, has revealed facets and phenomena which will remain unknown to the scholar and researcher using other languages.

We think that it will be best to let the Yiddish creative writers, dreamers and teachers pour out their bitter and despairing hearts, but also their deep faith in the future role of Yiddish in the further development of the Jewish people.

Let us first listen to the words of that Yiddish poet for whom the Yiddish language is the holy of holiness and the only instrument of his creations: H. Leivick. "A fellow-poet said to me: Let us all write the last poem, place it in a coffin, and carry it through the streets where American Jews live."

It will be a mistake to believe that this is a chance mood on Leivick's part, a passing mood which is not characteristic of the poet's real sentiments. From his polemics with the anti-Yiddishists one may think so. But if one follows Leivick's writings when he does not polemize with adversaries but reports on his travels throughout America, one finds that the quoted words are the most intimate expression of his sorrows and griefs, of his deepest despair based on his personal observations.

Similar sentiments on the lot of Yiddish were voiced by another Yiddish poet, the recently deceased J. Segal.

True national poetry, be it ever so individualistic, must somewhere in its most intimate processes be connected with the folksongs, full-flavored with the folk idiom, metaphors, images and tales. But when the folksong, the folk tales, folk humor, the folk metaphor is missing, there is no hope for poetical creations. The young Yiddish poet, Wolf Yunin, who earnestly and diligently applied himself to the question of whether the 5,000,000 Jews of America have a folksong, came to the following conclusions: "After years of collecting folklore, especially Yiddish folksongs, first in Europe and in the last 15 years in America - I have not succeeded in finding even a single Yiddish folksong that sprang up in America." Yunin thinks that the main reason for it is the fact that in America there is no genuine Jewish folk life, such as existed in the European countries. According to him, the 5,000,000 Jews still live here as individuals.

Similar sentiments are expressed also by Yudl Mark, a veteran and very competent Yiddish educator. Describing the low standards of Yiddish education, he states that although there are many Yiddish schools, their pupils' knowledge of the Yiddish language is very meager and shorn of its natural richness which has its roots only in the Jewish home with a truly Yiddish environment.

Let us come back to the problem of Yiddish literature and writers in America. Of the hosts of Yiddish writers in pre-war Poland, about 60 were rescued and about 30 young Yiddish writers were added. Of all these writers, there are now about 30 in Israel, 16 in the United States, 9 in Argentina, 10 in France, 4 in Canada, and a few in other countries. The largest Jewish settlement of 5,000,000 Jews in America has absorbed only 16 of the 90 homeless Yiddish writers. This fact alone is the best evidence of the precarious condition of Yiddish in this country.

JEWISH SCHOLARSHIP IN AMERICA

By

J.K.MIKLISZANSKI

Introductory Note.- American Jewry looks back on a history of ten generations. But as far as its spiritual existence is concerned, actually only three generations count. Until the second half of the 19th century, the role American Jewry played among other communities of the world was negligible both in quantity and in quality. In other words, spiritual Jewry, creative Jewry, Jewry that shapes the nature and character of the people, Jewry for which we live, - this Jewry now celebrates in the United States only its 75th or 100th anniversary. If we should distinguish in these 100 years between one period and another, we might say that the first period of 30-40 years was that of trial and error, while the second period of 50-60 years is that of reality, results and achievements. These spiritual achievements are of a diversified nature: religion, education, literature (Hebrew, Yiddish, English), journalism, etc. At this juncture, it is worthwhile to dwell upon each and every one of them, both for the sake of historical knowledge and for practical purposes. In the following pages we shall consider a subject which in itself is also diversified and ramified, and which it is possible to include under the generally accepted name Hokhmat Yisrael.

Our approach to the problem is a synthetic one. It is our intention to present the subject not in details, but only in its fundamental principles, not its phases but its paths, not the actual developments but the trends. Therefore, from the outset all objections to what was included or omitted in this survey, and to what extent, are immaterial. This is not a bibliographical or historiographical paper. The picture given here of what is happening in the field of Jewish learning in the United States of America at the present time, is very general(*) because in the writer's opinion, this is the most appropriate way to reach positive conclusions.

Hokhmat Yisrael, variously translated as the "science of Judaism," "Jewish scholarship," "Jewish learning," addresses itself to research and interpretation of sources relating to Jews and Judaism from a purely scientific point of view. In a broad sense, the term applies not only to researches with a modern approach, but in general to the whole creative activity relating to Jewish sources both in the old and in the new school; i.e., it also includes the literature emanating from Yeshiva and Talmudic circles.

The contribution of American Jewry to Hokhmat Yisrael is rich and many-sided. There are first-rate schools, rich libraries and all the facilities necessary for study, reflection, and writing. Above all, there is the will and readiness to take over the heritage of the now extinct European Jewry, and to continue to forge the long chain of the People of the Book. The rule of the preceding generation that modern Jewish learning can be produced only in a modern language is still considered valid here, too. Very important works continue to be published here in English. But in recent years there is strong evidence of a tendency among scholars and researchers to write in Hebrew. And so far as one can foresee, the future of Judaica belongs wholly to Hebrew.

(*) Those interested in the details of the subject, are advised to read the comprehensive article by I. Berger, Hokhmat Yisrael B'America, (from the outset up to 1939); Sefer Hashanah Li'Yehudai America, 1939. See also J.K. Mikliszanski: Trends and Outlooks, HADOAR No. 33, 1954.

As said, important Hebrew achievements can already be recorded in this sphere. In our summary we will adhere to the following classification: (1) texts; (2) novellae (hiddushim); (3) Jewish studies; (4) miscellanies; (5) translations; (6) periodicals.

The lines of demarkation between one class and another are often blurred. For example, there are texts which are published in learned journals; there are studies which contain novellae, and vice versa. But for purposes of orientation it is useful to adopt this classification.

1. Texts

These may be divided into two categories: (a) new manuscripts discovered in our time or in previous generations, but never before; (b) sources which are already in print but which, owing to certain novellae, emendations, fresh explanations that have to be made in the text proper or in its interpretation, the publishers have found it necessary to publish anew.

An example of the first category is the work published in 1948 by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America under the name of Maimonides' Halakhot of the Jerusalem Talmud, edited by Saul Lieberman, one of the foremost authorities on all Halakhic sources. The manuscript of this work was discovered in several hefts (fascicles, i.e. a number of sheets of paper fastened together) without the author's name. But on the strength of the opinion of experts on Maimonides' handwriting and his own proofs, Mr. Lieberman came to the positive conclusion that Maimonides was the author of those fascicles, which had been gathering dust in libraries for centuries. They are fragments of a larger work which is lost and may perhaps turn up. The introduction and the wealth of explanations and annotations on the text make for the scholarly value of the work.

Illustrative of whole books which were printed for the first time on the basis of old manuscripts are the thick volumes of Rabbi Menachem bar Hame'iri which are being published one after another by various scholars in Israel and America. The author is one of the first-rank commentators of the Middle Ages.

Of the second category of the first class - i.e., texts which are being printed anew because of critical studies made subsequently, mention may be made of Maimonides' Sefer Hamitzvot ("Book of the Commandments"), a new edition of which was published nine years ago by one of the foremost Jewish scholars in the field, R. Chaim Heller, a resident of New York, after the manuscript in Munich and the MS in London, "corrected and cleaned of the innumerable errors and flaws which mar the previously printed editions, "as it says on the title-page.

An example of a scholarly edition of an old text of a more specific nature is afforded by the Otzar Habraitot, published in New York in three thick volumes under the editorship of Dr. Michael Higger, who is also known for his textual work in connection with Masekhot Ketanot.

This is also the place to mention with appreciation Dr. Paltiel Birnbaum's anthological edition of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah with vowel points. Such editions may bring closer to the Hebrew reader the Halakhic sources which are unfamiliar to him in the original.

2. Novellae

Although this class comprises all kinds of religious treatises, its main significance and principal contribution are in the sphere of Halakha. After the Bible, the Halakhic literature occupies the most prominent place among the literary effusions of Jews; in it Israel's particular genius finds its richest, most imposing and creative expression. Every intellectual or literary achievement in the field

of Torah must be regarded as an addition to Hokhmat Yisrael. Nevertheless, some hold that the term Hokhmat Yisrael applies exclusively to the research work carried on in modern institutions of Jewish learning. Books of a traditional character are designated as rabbinical literature, a term which finds no justification in the Hebrew language nor in the Hebrew tradition. The so-called rabbinical literature is not necessarily by rabbis nor for rabbis. It concerns itself with Torah for students of Torah.

Classify them as one may, the works of a Torah character occupy a very honored place in Hebrew letters in America, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Every wave of Jewish immigration, and especially the immigration of the period following World War II, has brought to this country numerous Talmudic scholars, who continue their studies here in the traditional Yeshiva way. In the Jewish Book Annual for the year 5712 (1952), Daniel Persky states that in the preceding year 52 Hebrew books were published in the United States in the field of so-called rabbinical literature as against 36 Hebrew works in all other fields combined. And if one considers that the latter include also scholarly writings which are cognate to Torah literature, the proportion of rabbinical works would be even greater.

The result is that in America Hebrew literature is being built mainly not of secular but of traditional material. Its general flavor is one of Torah and of Jewish scholarship.

It need only be stressed, in order to make still clearer the connection between the old Torah and modern scholarship in the field of Judaica, that it is precisely from those circles which cling to the traditional school that the future researchers and scholars will come, just as today's masters of Judaica sprang from those circles and still draw sustenance from those roots on which they were reared in the old-style yeshivas.

A very instructive illustration in this respect are the three fat volumes of Peirushim ve-Hidushim ba-Yerushalmi ("Commentaries and Novellae on the Jerusalem Talmud") by the late Professor Louis Ginzburg, one of the most creative workers in the vineyard of Jewish scholarship in the United States during the past fifty years. In this work traditional Torah matter is combined with modern critique and it is hard to separate the new from the old, the "rabbinical" from the scientific.

One thing more. The halakhic literature is not limited to written works. It also finds impressive expression in oral utterances. There are among us heads of Yeshivas, lecturers, and teachers who disseminate Torah and learning among large numbers of students. Thus, for example, the lessons in halakha and haggadah and the lectures on philosophy by Joseph Dov Soloveichik of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary both at the Seminary and outside the Seminary belong among the achievements of Jewish scholarship in the best sense of the word. Rabbi Soloveichik publishes few of his numerous manuscripts, but even the few which have appeared in print are of a high and meaty caliber. Thus, for example, his 85-page essay "The Man of the Halakha" (Talpioth, first year) is a masterly treatise on the essence of the Halakha and its exponents marked by classic depth in thought and form.

In the field of halakha and halakhic research Abraham Weiss is an authority on the history and development of the Talmud. His recent book L'Heker ha-Talmud (Talmudical Studies) is devoted to this subject. Samuel K. Mirsky, editor of Talpioth, recently published a book titled Bain Sh'kiah U'zrihah ("Between Sunset and Sunrise"), which contains a series of valuable monographs in the field.

3. Jewish Studies

This body of literature is devoted to pure research and scholarship in the narrower, modern sense of the word. This type of literature, although mainly concerned with religious and traditional sources, looks upon itself as academic and secular. It completely ignores that whole specific atmosphere of faith and religion and its sole endeavor is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Yet when one peruses carefully the works of these modern scholars, one perceives how difficult it is to achieve a complete division between beliefs and opinions in Jewish learning, how closely, in every source of our ancient and modern literature, in every phenomenon of our culture, sacred and secular factors are bound up, intertwined, and knit together. It is impossible to hew a completely secular path through the historic matter of old Israel. It is hard for a Jew to adhere to completely objective and secular methods in relation to Jewish learning.

Be that as it may, this (as far as possible) purely scientific branch of Hokmat Yisrael may also be divided into several categories: (a) monographs, (b) historiography, (c) philosophy, (d) bibliography.

(a) Monographs.— This category is the most important from the standpoint of creativeness. We term its productions monographs because each in this category concerns itself with a particular theme. It embraces all treatises, minor and major, on all kinds of subjects in the sphere of Bible, Talmud, Midrashim, medieval writings, and many other subjects which come under the heading of Jewish scholarship. The whole modern scientific apparatus is employed: establishing the authenticity of manuscripts, comparison between different versions, archaeological discoveries, philological researches, critical analysis of the texts, paleography, etc.

In this work of research into sources, much has been accomplished in the last few decades, and the part played by American researchers, or more properly by European researchers who settled in America, is very great. The studies dealing with the literary treasures of the Genizah in Cairo, Egypt, discovered at the turn of the century by the late Solomon Schechter, were made mostly on American soil.

It is impossible to dwell here on individual scholars and their works in this field. This is not a bibliographical but a general account. We only set forth a few illustrations. Thus Louis Finkelstein recently published a book entitled The Pharisees and the Men of the Great Synagogue. It is written in Hebrew. Although most of this author's works are in English, and at the end of the book there is an English summary of the contents, this study is based on a new analysis of Talmudic and Midrashic texts concerning problems that many other scholars have written a good deal about. The author offers quite new interpretations and comes to wholly new conclusions.

One cannot pass over in silence the important studies of American scholars in the field of medieval Hebrew literature. Let us mention, for example, Israel Davidson's monumental works, Otzar Hashirah Vehapiyut, and the numerous writings of Shalom Spiegel, who is one of the outstanding scholars in the field of Hebrew medieval poetry; the important contributions of Simon Bernstein, as well as the valuable works of Joseph Marcus.

In the field of biblical studies, vital contributions have been made by H.L. Ginzburg and Robert Gordis. Ginzburg recently published Gleanings in First Isaiah and Judah and the Trans-Jordan State from 734 to 582 BC. Gordis wrote Democratic Origins in Ancient Israel, and the Song of Songs.

Hebrew jurisprudence is represented here by solid works which are marked by a desire to adopt the old halakhic material to the new legislative requirements of the modern Jewish State. A prominent place in this field is occupied by the writings

of Simon Federbush.

(b) Historiography. In the field of Jewish historiography, too, much has been accomplished in America. Of first-rate importance are the four volumes of Toldot Hahalakha and the two volumes of Toldot Haposkim by the late Chaim Tchernowitz, which were published after the author settled in the United States. These will remain classic works in their field. What a pity they were left incomplete. Missing from them is a thousand years of the history of the halakha - the first thousand years from the destruction of the Second Temple to the advent of the Poskim (Codifiers).

In the field of general Jewish history, Dr. Salo W. Baron published his comprehensive work, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, The Jewish Community (in 3 volumes), in English, and a number of treatises in Hebrew. A new and enlarged edition of Baron's History of the Jews, of which two volumes appeared to date, is now in preparation.

Meyer Waxman, too, wrote his 5,000-page work, A History of Jewish Literature, which keeps appearing in new editions. In Hebrew he published a comprehensive anthology, Mishle Yisrael, besides important essays and monographs in various periodicals, part of which have been collected in a volume entitled Kitve Meyer Waxman (1944). Of a local character is Moshe Davis's Yahadut Amerika be-Hitpathutah ("The Shaping of American Judaism").

These are but a few examples of the wealth of historiographical works, general and local, cultural and sociological. They prove that there is an impelling will in American Jewry to study and know our past, our nature and our mission.

Valuable contributions by American scholars were also made in the field of Jewish demography, statistics and economics. Mention should be made of the nestor in the field, Jacob Lestchinsky, who has written extensively on these topics for half a century.

(c) Philosophy. - In the field of philosophy, too, which has many ramifications, the American contribution is extremely important. The outstanding figure is Harry A. Wolfson, thanks to whom the Jewish division of the famous Harvard University Library is today a first-class center for books on everything concerning Jews and Judaica in all languages, ages, and countries, including the very latest Hebrew publications printed in the State of Israel and elsewhere. In the last 25 years Prof. Wolfson published, besides essays and monographs, three bulky works which belong to the classic literature of universal philosophy: Crescas' Critique of Aristotle (1929), Baruch Spinoza (1934), and Philo (1947). They are written in English and should by all means be translated into Hebrew.

A monumental philosophical work in Hebrew is Machashava ve-Emeth by M.H. Amishai (pen name of Moses Maisels, editor of the Hebrew weekly Hadoar). The first volume (over 500 pages) of this work treats of philosophy in general; the second volume (nearly 500 closely printed pages) is devoted to "Judaism within its own limits and within the limits of the world." This is not the place to discuss the author's original line of thought, with which it is hard to agree (see, apropos of this, J.K. Mikliszanski's article, "Historiography of Judaism," in Zukunft, July, 1943). Let it merely be stated here that Amishai's work is that of a great thinker and ardent Jew; it is a wonderful synthesis of lofty thought and lofty language. It is ranked among the great masterpieces of modern Hebrew prose.

Recently there settled in this country Simon Rawidowicz, a profound essayist, an original thinker with an original style, from whom Hebrew letters in America can expect a good deal under his editorship. The important work, Sefer Dubnow, has already appeared here, and in press now is his own work Bavel vi'Yerushalayim ("Babylon and

(d) Bibliography.-- In the field of bibliography, first mention must be made of the Jewish Book Annual published in New York by the Jewish Book Council in three languages: English, Hebrew, and Yiddish. It contains exhaustive lists and general appraisals of the literary achievements of the year among the Jews of America and to some extent also in the State of Israel.

From time to time comprehensive bibliographies in special fields compiled by expert scholars are published in this country. Thus, the third volume of Dr. Baron's above-mentioned history is devoted to bibliographical material on Jewish historiography in all languages.

Of considerable value to a wide field which has as yet not been properly explored is the Kuntres ha-Teshuvot, a bibliography on the Responsa literature, by Dr. Boaz Cohen, the author of a series of other bibliographies and one of the foremost researchers into Jewish law.

Great contributions to Jewish bibliography in America have also been made by the following writers and scholars: A.R. Malachi, an authority on Hebrew periodical literature; Isaac Rivkind, one of the builders of the famous library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Joshua Bloch, Chief of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library; Daniel Persky, a regular contributor of the aforesaid Jewish Book Annual; and others.

A good example of bibliographies compiled diligently by individual librarians as monographs is the bibliographical pamphlet on Elijah Gaon on the occasion of the latter's 150th anniversary, prepared by J.I. Dinstag, Librarian of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. The same librarian is also at work on a comprehensive bibliography on Maimonides.

4. Miscellanies

By the term "miscellanies" is meant all books which are not the work of one author, but contain papers by various writers and on various subjects.

Foremost among these is the 10-volume encyclopedia Otzar Yisrael, edited by J.D. Eisenstein, who is also the editor of a number of other encyclopedic Otzars ("Thesaurus"). To this day the Otzar Yisrael, for all its faults, is the only complete Jewish encyclopedia in Hebrew. It will not long remain the only one, for far-reaching initial efforts are already being made in Israel for Hebrew encyclopedias on a much bigger scale. Otzar Yisrael is, strictly speaking, an abridgement of the 12-volume Jewish Encyclopedia in English (1901-1906) which was also produced in America and may be regarded as the most valuable literary monument of Jewish scholarship in the New World. Of less scholarly but more practical value, because it is of more recent date, is The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia in 10 volumes, published about a dozen years ago.

In this class of miscellanies, under the given definition, also belong the numerous jubilee books issued in honor of important personalities. They contain papers by American and also Israeli scholars. For example, the Touroff Book, issued by the Hebrew Teachers College of Boston; the Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Book, the Alexander Marx Jubilee Book, the Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Book, all three published by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; and the Hadoar Jubilee Book, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Hebrew weekly.

5. Translations

By this we mean translation of Hebrew sources into English. They are at once a science and an art. Usually, they appear together with introductions, rather indices, bibliographies, etc. By way of example, let us cite the volumes of Maimonides' Mishneh

Torah, which were rendered into English by a board of translators and published by Yale University as part of a larger literary project. Of considerable literary and educational value are Dr. Paltiel Birnbaum's excellent translations in the field of liturgy.

The variegation of the Hebrew works translated into English may be illustrated by Lauterbach's translation of Midrash Mekilta; Kaplan's translation of Luzzatto's Mesillat Yesharim; Rosenblatt's translation of Saadia Gaon's Sefer Emunot ve-Deot.

The first attempt to translate the Jerusalem Talmud into Hebrew was also made in America: the tractates Berakot and Peah, translated by Jacob Neuman, and brought out in a beautiful edition by the Hebrew Teachers' College of Boston. The same institution also published the writings of Hirsch Peretz Chajes in a Hebrew translation by Israel Levine.

A wealth of articles, essays, and treatises, long and short, in all areas of Jewish scholarship, are being published in various Hebrew and English periodicals. This periodical literature is also the only organ of critique and reviews. But it must be admitted that very few competent scholars in America engage in critical estimates of the work of fellow scholars, so that the field of criticism of Jewish scholarly works is generally neglected.

The organ of Hokhmat Yisrael in America is the English-language Jewish Quarterly Review, edited by Solomon Zeitlin, one of the most productive Jewish scholars in America (who occasionally writes also in Hebrew) and Abraham A. Neuman, President of Dropsie College in Philadelphia.

The publication Proceedings is published by the American Academy for Jewish Research and contains mainly the papers read at the annual meetings of the academy. Studies on Jewish subjects are also published in non-Jewish English publications, for example, the Journal of Biblical Literature.

In Hebrew, the following periodicals are devoted to Jewish Learning: Horeb, edited by Pinchas Churgin; Talpioth, edited by S.K. Mirsky; Pardes, edited by S.A. Pardes; Bitzaron, founded by the late Chaim Tchernowitz and now edited by an editorial board, also gives a prominent place to scholarly papers. The same is true of the few numbers of Hatekufah, published in America under the editorship of Silberschlag and Zeitlin, and Metsudah, under the editorship of S. Rawidowicz, both of which contain important departments devoted to Jewish research. Megillot, too, founded by the late Hayim Greenberg, also prints articles of scholarly interest. Harofe Haivri ("The Jewish Physician"), edited by M. Einhorn, though a professional journal, also publishes papers based on research into classic Jewish sources. In Yiddish, the Yivo Bletter, edited by M. Weinreich, is noted for the scholarly papers which regularly appear in it.

Lastly, special mention should be made of the services rendered by the Hebrew weekly Hadoar, which about a year ago was orphaned by the demise of its editor, M. Ribalow. This publication is devoted to Hebrew culture in all its aspects. Among its other merits, it also serves as a spacious hospice for Jewish Learning. There is hardly an issue that does not contain a major or minor paper dealing with some topic of Jewish scholarship. In the special large issues of Hadoar, the section devoted to learned papers is rich and variegated. The scholarly Jewish material which has appeared in Hadoar in the thirty years of its existence would fill bulky volumes and it is a pity that no bibliography of this material has yet been compiled. Many a treatise printed in this week was subsequently published in book form: for example, S. Federbush's Mishpat Hameluchah b'Yisrael.

The same may be said of Sefer Hashana and Mabua - conspicuous in all of these is the peculiar place of Jewish scholarship in Hebrew literature; and in this respect all of these perform an important educational task for the Hebrew-reading public in America. Without them, important areas of Hebrew literature would remain completely unknown to this public.

Future Prospects

As far as one can judge from the situation today, there are no great opportunities or considerable prospects to train and cultivate on American soil creators of Hebrew belles-lettres - poets, storytellers, playwrights. Neither the education, the milieu, nor the inspiration is to be found here. Among all the Hebrew poets there is only one who is a native of this country, and even he has settled in Israel. With great efforts and self-sacrificing perseverance one may hope to raise Jews here who will be able to speak and read Hebrew, Jews with a deep appreciation for the values of Hebraic culture. But it is impossible to transform the non-Jewish atmosphere in which we live here and make it wholly Hebraic or Yiddish. True, poets and creators spring up and create only in the language of their being and soul. But here, in the midst of a life which surges on furiously in a non-Jewish tongue, it is very doubtful that Hebrew can ever become the natural language of Hebraists. Today it is only in Israel that Hebrew is becoming an integral part of everyday Jewish life and it is only there that genuine literary and artistic values can come into being.

On the other hand, there are splendid prospects even here in America for Hebrew literary creation in the field of Jewish scholarship. A Hebrew scholar and researcher does not need a completely favorable cultural environment for his creative development. Given the will, love, and diligence, he can think and create Hebraic values even under unfavorable conditions. Moreover, apart from the culturally non-Jewish environment, which cannot be changed, the American Jewish scholar has all the other means of working: schools, libraries, technical facilities, material rewards, etc. For this reason it would seem that, more than any other Hebrew field, the so-called Hokhmat Yisrael will in future be a great blessing to Jewish spiritual existence in America and add considerably to the treasures of everlasting Judaism.

AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORIOGRAPHY

By

BERNARD D. WEINRYB

I

Tercentenary celebrations notwithstanding, the Jewish group in America is a very young one. One hundred and fifty years after the arrival of the first Jews in America (1654), they numbered less than 3,000. Seventy-five years ago there were in this country about a quarter of a million Jews. Today's five million Jews comprise mostly first and second generation immigrants.

New arrivals in a country usually take little interest in the past and history of that country. Everything appears to them strange, and they are primarily concerned with their present and immediate future. They seek rather historical continuity with their Old World past, to which they look back nostalgically and with romantic yearnings.

Another barrier to historic perception is the division and resultant tension within the group, engendered both by the varying home backgrounds of the immigrants and the differences arising from the fact that some groups arrived earlier and others later. Class and group stratification in immigrant countries follow, to a great extent, the divisions between the different immigration waves. There are in the U.S. the Sephardim and Ashkenazim, German and Eastern European Jews, Polish-Russian and "Galizianer", German-Jewish refugees and Oriental Jews, Sh'erith Hapleyta of different variations from Hungarian ultra-orthodox and Chabad Chassidim to secular leaders of labor movements. Tensions also exist between immigrants and their children, conflicts which often create wide schisms. All of which results in fragmentation, division and subdivision into unfused groups, into subcommunities lacking a sense of belonging to a united national, cultural, religious or ethnical unit. The lack of such a feeling of unity apparently precludes any interest in the history of the group, since the group supposedly does not exist.

The atmosphere in America itself did not particularly favor study and research. The basic respect for learning generally, and Jewish learning in particular, was missing. There was in America, and this is still partially true, no basic motivation for Jewish literary work. Such interest in Jewish writing and in Jewish history as was kept alive in the U.S. was sustained by some European immigrants who brought with them their old-country habits and attitudes. Some of them may have continued their work in America. But, being steeped in European background, they were very seldom successful in entirely acclimatizing themselves in the new country. It is small wonder that the neglect of America's past was, and in part still is, characteristic of the American Jewish community.

II

The Jews, to be sure, like other ethnic groups, did not remain entirely without historical writing. Since the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the Jews, along with the Germans, the Irish, the Scandinavians, the Poles, and other groups, have developed a historiography of their own, depicting their varied experiences in this country. But this was, for the most part, a historiography with a specific motive. It was not designed so much to reveal the group's past as to show the contribution of the group - or of personalities originating from the group - toward America. The basic motivation was, in the main, an apologetic one, to defend the ethnic group against the growing anti-immigration and anti-immigrant sentiment in the country since the 1880's.

Having long been a minority, the Jews felt a particularly strong need for such an apologetic historiography; they found it necessary to defend themselves against attacks from outside and to emphasize their "contributions". When the American Jewish Historical Society was founded at the end of the 19th century (1892), along with similar societies of other ethnic groups, the Jewish population in this country was still very small (over half a million), and was largely made up of very recent immigrants. The earlier Jewish settlers - a handful of descendants of the Sephardic Jews and the small group of Americanized German-Jewish immigrants and their children - did not feel themselves too secure against the background of rising anti-immigrant tendencies and the constantly growing tide of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe.

The founders of the Society modestly regarded Jewish history in America as a sort of footnote to general American history - through presentation of the role which the Jew has played on the American scene. "The genealogy of these (Jewish) men (who contributed to the discovery and development of America) and the record of their achievements", it is said in the program of the Society at its foundation in 1892, "will, when gathered together, be of value and interest to the historian and perchance contribute materially to the history of our country." "These Jewish men" were, in point of fact, meant as individuals not as a group both because the propounders of Americanism denied Jewish group identity and because dealing at that time with the Jewish past in America meant dealing with a small number of individuals. During the first century and a half after the arrival of the original 23 Jews in New York (then New Amsterdam) not more than some 1,000 Jews came to this country, or an average of 6-7 Jews yearly. The trend thus arose to record the deeds "of little unimportant Jews of the past" (to use the expression of Lee M. Friedman, past president of the American Jewish Historical Society) and to point out apologetically their contribution to the making of America. This turning to the individualistic-biographical approach, and to apologetics to stress the share of the Jews in building America became the prevailing trend in the tens of volumes of the publications the American Jewish Historical Society put out, and in most other books and articles which appeared on this subject. This, so to say, "utilitarian" approach is mostly mirrored even in the titles of the books. There is the American Jew as Patriot, Citizen and Soldier and there are Jewish Pioneers and Patriots, Jewish Pioneers in America, Pilgrim people, Jews in the making of America¹⁾ and similar books in which the tendency is not so clearly indicated on the title page.

III

Forces for change have been in operation during the last two decades. The Jewish community in America has come of age and matured. In numbers it has increased almost ten times since the foundation of the American Jewish Historical Society. Its structure, too, has changed. The American Jewish population consists mostly of Eastern European Jews with second and third generation immigrants predominating. The percentage of Jewish immigrants in the population will probably only amount to one quarter. The rest are American born and bred, who feel themselves at home in America and secure enough on American soil not to need always the resort to "proving" their contribution. The more so that America herself has also changed. The children of the "new immigrants" of the Italians, the Slavic peoples and others, who half a century ago were looked down upon as inferior, are today sitting in Congress and playing leading roles in local and national government. Again, among the Jews, the

1) J. Wolf, The American Jew as Patriot etc. (1895); L.M. Friedman, Jewish Pioneers in America (1930) and Pilgrim People (1950); G. Cohen, Jews in the Making of America (1924).

division between one emigration wave and another, between the various old world backgrounds and between first and second generations are levelling off, while the catastrophe of the war years in Europe, and the foundation of the State of Israel are cementing the group feeling.

One result of these transformations is manifesting itself in a strengthening of interest in the American past. During the last decade or so, all four institutions of higher learning in America - The Hebrew Union College, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, The Yeshivah University, and the Dropsie College - have introduced courses in American Jewish history. The Hebrew Union College founded the American Jewish Archives to collect materials and documents from all over the country, and publishing a periodical under the same name (American Jewish Archives). The Jewish Theological Seminary recently announced the establishment of an Institute in Research in American Jewish History. The Yivo (Yiddish Scientific Institute) published a few studies in this field.

A most gratifying indication of the awakening interest can be seen in a number of M.A. and Ph.D. theses on American Jewish topics written recently for submission in general academic institutions, some outside the respective Jewish departments and chairs.¹⁾ This latter fact seems to be of considerable importance. Writing for a general institution, under the guidance of professors of a general subject, one is, so to speak, forced to forsake the "traditionally" apologetic-journalistic tendency, and to give up many biases. The fact that some of these, and similar, studies are written for sociological departments in which scientific approaches and techniques are usually highly developed and the internal life of society is stressed, may be of significance for future trends in Jewish historical and sociological writing.

IV

The celebration of the Tercentenary stimulated a broader interest in Jewish history in America. In a number of communities the writing of local histories is being sponsored by community organizations or undertaken as a community project. It is, of course, hard to predict how valuable all these books and booklets will prove to be. The fact is that many of these communities lack researchers properly trained in Jewish historiography and Jewish social studies. A number of Jewish publications (Judaism, Yivo Annual, of Jewish Social Science, The Jewish Quarterly Review, The Jewish People Past and Present) are issuing special numbers or volumes varying in quality and scholarly standards.

Generally speaking, two, partially contradictory, trends are today discernable in American Jewish historiography. The "heritage" of the old apologetic individualistic-biographical approach emphasizing the contribution of "little unimportant" - and some important - Jews, is predominant. On the other hand, a more genuine interest in Jewish group life, a more scientific approach, and a real determination to study the forces active in Jewish society are on the ascendant. Both these tendencies were clearly in evidence at the Conference of Jewish historians called by the American Jewish Historical Society and held in Peekskill at the beginning of September. Both trends manifested themselves in the reports and deliberations, the standard being generally high. The resolution or declaration adopted at the end of the meeting may perhaps be indicative of the prevailing climate of opinion. The committee proposed to emphasize that Jewish history in America is only a part of American history (the old "footnote to American history" idea), but, upon the demand of many participants, the formulation was altered, and American Jewish history depicted as a part of American history, as well as of world Jewish history. This change may be symbolic of the changes in approach taking place in American Jewish historiography.

¹⁾ Jerome Carlin, The Rabbi. A Sociological Study of a Religious Specialist. M.A. Diss. University of Chicago, 1951, Marshal Sklare, Conservative Judaism. Ph.D. Diss. Columbia University, 1953; George Kranzler, The Jewish Community of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, N.Y. Ph.D. thesis, Columbia Univ. 1954; Arthur J. Buch, The Jewish Community in Scranton. Ph.D. thesis, 1945, N.Y. School of Social Research.

JEWIS IN AMERICAN CULTURAL LIFE

By

ABRAHAM G. DUKER

The propriety to discuss the participation of Jews in American life and to highlight their contributions to it has been questioned on several counts. It has been argued that the practice of pointing to achievements of Jews in various fields is in bad taste and constitutes either chauvinism or apologetics. In a democratic society, the argument runs, all persons should be viewed as individuals and their participation in the common life should not be evaluated or even singled out on the basis of the particular racial, religious, or ethnic group to which they belong. Jews, like everyone else, should refrain from this practice. Some critics go further and maintain that to call attention to the achievements of the Jewish group is bad community relations. It may arouse jealousy at the success of Jewish individuals and their enviable positions of importance in society, and with jealousy comes anti-Semitism.

Jews, however, have not been alone in the tendency to emphasize various aspects of their achievements and contributions to American life. Christians of many denominations as well as members of racial and ethnic groups have also accentuated what, according to their view, constitute the positive elements in their contributions and participation. It is evident that groups in search of psychological security and status tend to emphasize the positive aspects of their life and achievements. Thus, the Italians call attention to Columbus' presumed Italian descent by parading on Columbus Day. The Poles have followed suit by marching on Pulaski Day in order to bring before the public their share in the Revolutionary War. In consequence of their need for status when they constituted a weak, unpopular minority, the Irish have made the wearing of the green an almost all-American custom on St. Patrick's Day. Anniversaries of the arrival of different groups to the territory of the United States are marked by official issues of postage stamps, as in the case of the Huguenots and Swedes.

On the scholarly level many colleges, universities and theological seminaries are sponsored by religious and ethnic groups; Notre Dame, Fordham, (Catholic with Irish accentuation), Alfred (Seventh Day Adventist), Alliance College (Polish Catholic), Hofstra (Lutheran), Gustavus Adolphus (Swedish Lutheran), Brigham Young (Mormon). All these emphasize in their curricula and activities some of the cultural elements and contributions of their particular sponsoring group.

Thus it can be seen that the practice of calling attention to group achievements is common among Americans of all origins and faiths. Jews, however, have been under greater stress than other groups and hence in greater need of self-assurance and group security. In addition, the process of emancipation opened up new needs for such apologetic writings, since the Jews had both to fight for equality as individuals and to win respect for their religion. Emancipated Jewries are, therefore, characterized by continuous activities of defense and apologetics, with emphasis on the positive qualities and contributions of Jews.

However, it is not easy to determine what constitutes Jewish contributions or Jewish participation. Are contributions and achievements of outstanding individuals of Jewish descent to be credited to the Jewish group? There can be a simple answer to this question when the person under consideration is known to be or to have been affiliated with the Jewish community or with the Jewish religion or when at least he has not severed his affiliation with them. The answer is complicated in the case of individuals of prominence who severed their connections with the Jewish community. An example is the case of Judah P. Benjamin, the great statesman in the South during the Civil War. Presumably, he never embraced Christianity. He never denied his Jewishness and, indeed, was attacked

for it both in the North and South. However, he failed to show any interest in Jewish life, married a Catholic and was buried in a Catholic cemetery. Can his career be claimed as a "Jewish contribution"?

Another problem is the nature of the Jewish contribution. Is an outstanding work in mathematics by a Jewish scientist to be credited to the Jewish group? One school of thought insists that only contributions that are based directly on Jewish teachings should be credited to the Jewish people. However, other groups are not as discriminating in their standards of selection, and it would appear that most Jews follow the more inclusive standard.

While there is no lack of popular publications on the subject of the Jews' participation in American life and their contributions to it, it is impossible at this stage to arrive at any authoritative evaluation of it. No organized body of facts concerning the participation of Jews in American life and their contributions to American civilization is available. Just as there is no standard history of the Jews in this country, there are few scholarly studies on participation or contributions. Hence, of necessity, the present essay must limit itself to sketching some highlights and problems.

Usually overlooked in works on Jewish contributions to general civilization or to American life are contributions through the direct medium of Jewish culture. If we are to view Jewish culture as part of Western civilization, we must presume that works of Hebrew and Yiddish authors as well as Jewish scholarship belong to it as legitimately as do the products of authors in other languages and cultures. However, publications on contributions of Jews to general civilization usually omit these "specifically" Jewish productions. The general tendency is to view as Jewish contributions to civilization only those that are made outside the specific areas of Jewish culture. And yet, Hebrew and Yiddish literature in America should be viewed as part of American literature. Similarly, Talmudic research, a very widely cultivated branch of learning in America, is usually not regarded as an aspect of American scholarship. In contrast, research in Christian patristic literature has always been viewed as "American". Likewise, Jewish synagogue music is not commonly identified as "American" church music, while Christian hymns are. The approach suggested here, requires a broader view than the kind of thinking that would restrict American culture to production in the English language only and in the accepted Christian tradition. Again, if we view group contributions in the broader sense, we must re-examine specific group interests from a broader point of view. Should we view American relief to Armenians, Koreans and other peoples in need as a contribution of America, and therefore also to American life? Then, by the same token, the humanitarian activities of American Jews in the protection and relief of their brethren abroad - not to speak of the American Jews' efforts on behalf of the reconstruction of the Jewish homeland in the Holy Land and Israel's statehood - their almost singlehanded struggle against genocide during World War II - become great chapters in the history of America's humanitarianism and decency. Perhaps true rootedness in American life requires more than linguistic and cultural adjustment, and participation in wars and philanthropy. With this broadened view in mind, the attempt will be made to present some thoughts on the background of Jewish participation in American cultural life and to outline some of its group contributions.

It would seem that the children of the "German" or Central European immigrants who came here in the middle of the 19th century were less interested in intellectual pursuits than the East European Jews and their offspring. This may have been due in part to the lesser emphasis on study in American society during that period, to the greater opportunities and more lucrative rewards in business and industry and to the strength of Jewish emphasis on learning among the less culturally emancipated East Europeans. Moreover, a number of academic fields had

been restricted to Jews until fairly recently, while some continue to be so in part, forcing Jews to concentrate in other areas. The generalization may therefore be justified that Jewish contributions to many areas of American life may now well be in their beginning stage.

This is evident in the participation of Jews in science. Of the eight Jewish Nobel prize winners living in the United States (a high proportion of a total of 28 American Nobel laureates) five received their awards in physics. Most of them were born abroad. Similarly, of the three Jewish Nobel prize recipients in medicine, one was born abroad. Jews have been particularly active in the new fields of atomic and hydrogen energy, with names like J. Robert Oppenheimer and Edward Teller, outstanding in their fields. Jews have also been prominently associated with chemical, physiological and soil research, with Moses Gomberg, Jacob G. Lipman and Selman A. Waksman among the best known.

Medicine appears to have been the earliest profession of North American Jews and some prominent Jewish physicians attained eminence in this country in the 19th century, including Abraham Jacobi, Jacob Solis Cohen and Aaron Friedenwald. Jewish physicians have been even more prominent in the 20th century with men like Jacques Loeb, Simon Flexner, Joseph Goldberger, Bela Schick acquiring an international reputation. Of late Jews have been playing a growing role in psychiatry, medical education research, and in public health.

Similarly, the entry of Jews into architecture is a new development. Any list of America's outstanding architects would include the names of Erich Mendelsohn, Jacques Ely Kahn and Albert Kahn. Jews have also latterly entered the engineering field in increasing numbers.

Jews have been particularly prominent in the legal profession, especially in the judiciary, as seen in appointments to the United States Supreme Court (Brandeis, Cardozo, Frankfurter). Interestingly enough, they have not attained equal prominence in political life, a field in which they had been outstanding in the 19th century in relation to their proportion in the population and their educational status. Few Jews have obtained the highest ranks in the armed forces.

With the coming of the Emancipation in Western Europe, Jews achieved positions of eminence in German literature, with leading names like Heine, Boerne, Kafka, Jacob Wasserman, the Zweigs and Franz Werfel. To judge by contemporary evaluations, Jews have to date failed to attain a comparable position in American literature. There is a host of gifted novelists, essayists and critics, but none, at the moment, can be said to stand in the forefront of contemporary American literature.

Since Emancipation Jews have played an important role in the entertainment field, where there has always been less restrictions because of its initial lack of responsibility and bohemian-like comradery. Jewish interest in many phases of the American theatre dates back to the early decades of the 19th century, when Mordecai Manuel Noah's plays were very popular. Among the established playwrights of our day one counts Elmer Rice, Clifford Odets, S. N. Behrman, Arthur Miller and Bella and Sam Spewak. Jews have also been prominent in theatrical entrepreunering. In any account of the advance of the American Theatre in the 20th century, the names of Oscar Hammerstein, David Belasco, Charles Frohman, the Shubert brothers, and Theresa Helburn (the Theatre Guild) would figure prominently. Related to the theatre are the motion pictures. Here, one must speak of Jews as pioneering and "founding fathers" of a mass medium of entertainment of incalculable influence. Jews have been particularly prominent as comedians rather than as dramatic stars, with the screen, radio and TV furnishing new mass outlets.

Closely connected with entertainment is music. The names of Richard Rodgers, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern and Sigmund Romberg would lead the list of America's leading composers of light music. Among the best known serious composers are Leonard Bernstein, Rubin Goldmark, Ernest Bloch, Aaron Copland and Mark Blitzstein. Jews occupy even higher ranks as virtuosi with an outstanding number of violonists of the first magnitude. Lately, the number of Jewish operatic stars in this country has been on the increase.

The widest participation of Jews in any esthetic field is probably to be found in the arts of painting and sculpture. Already in the 19th century, a few Jews were to be found among pre-eminent sculptors and painters. But it is in the present century that a mass efflorescence of art has been taking place among East European Jews and their immediate descendants. Little purpose would be served by listing the score or more of significant names. Their number alone reveals the sudden, yet sustained release of artistic impulses and energies long damned up by tradition and environment.

With expanding democracy, Jewish representation in the academic field has grown, despite the original restrictions and a present lingering limitation of opportunities in many areas. Jews have made their mark, notably in anthropology (Boaz, Sapir, Goldenweiser, Herskovits) and to a lesser extent in philosophy (Morris R. Cohen, Irwin Edman, Ernest Nagel, Sidney Hook, Paul Weiss). While there is little Jewish representation in the administrative apparatus of the higher institutions of learning, the number of Jews on the faculties and research staffs has grown with a highly accelerated rapidity. A recent partial sampling reveals that the number of Jewish academicians associated with colleges, universities and foundations must be counted in the thousands.

There has been a manifest tendency to emphasize the contribution of Jews to American life by citing names of outstanding individuals of Jewish origin in various fields, a weakness unavoidable even in the present work. Obviously, it is more difficult to evaluate the contributions of Jews as a group. Such evaluation would require extensive research, which in turn, would have to be subjected to historical analysis based on a specific viewpoint. Unfortunately, the present state of knowledge and historical research in the meagerly cultivated field of American Jewish history and contemporary life limits the writer to generalizations and conjectures.

The most often cited group contribution of the Jews to American cultural life is the Hebraic influence exercised through the medium of the Puritans. Early America was permeated with the spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Puritans and other early Americans frequently drew the parallel between themselves and the children of Israel who, having been delivered from the House of Bondage traversed a wilderness in order to establish a new society under divine guidance in the Promised Land. Attempts were also made to emulate Mosaic legislation in government and other institutions. Stemming from the Hebrew scriptures, this Hebraic influence is indeed a Jewish group contribution. However, it would seem that it cannot be traced to direct contact with Jews, but rather to an intense interest in the Bible. Biblical influences on the religion, government, public life and spirit of the Puritans loom large in the spirit of America. Moreover, the stern and rigid approach of the Puritans to certain aspects of life, such as Sabbath observance, is more reminiscent of the Karaitic movement rather than of the more permissive rabbinic Judaism. In the absence of a published study of the direct contacts between Puritans and Jews in Holland and in England and, in view of the limited scholarship of the early American Jews, it is difficult to prove the case for Hebraic influence as a Jewish contribution through direct contact.

It appears to have been more of a carryover of Protestant sectarian trends and Christian Hebraism, both of which found fertile ground in the religiously independent sectarian English colonies on this continent. Indeed, a study of such influences must also take into consideration parallels in Huguenot and other Protestant movements.

Another area of Jewish group contributions to American life is philanthropy. Mosaic legislation enjoined the care of the poor and the protection of the weak, and the Bible is permeated with emphasis on tzedek or righteousness and social justice. The emphasis has been further developed by Rabbinic Judaism. Moreover, living Jewish experiences in Palestine and in the Diaspora as well involved much mutual assistance and communal care of the poor, and developed a communal tradition and institutional life based on the principles of tzedakah (charity as an act of justice) and yosher (equity). These traditional concepts and practices have left their mark even on persons without a traditional Jewish upbringing or interest in the Jewish religion or community. This is seen by the high degree of participation of Jews in Jewish and general philanthropic causes. The assumption is common that Jews are more generous contributors to charity and public causes than non-Jews. It can also be assumed that Jews have made a contribution to American life by helping to make philanthropy a normal moral obligation of citizenship. Again, needed to verify such assumptions are studies of comparative philanthropic giving by Jews according to economic class, and similar investigations into charitable activities of some organizations, known for their emphasis on philanthropy and self-help.

If group contributions are to be evaluated on this basis, it would appear that American Jews have to their credit pioneering in social welfare organizations and practices. Although, Jewish social services have not always adjusted to the needs of an evolving predominantly native survivalist community because of traditions of non-sectarianism and de-Judaization, Jewish social work institutions and professionals can be rightly characterized as pioneers in many areas of public welfare. Their pioneering is a consequence of their ability to adjust their institutions to constantly changing conditions, an ability grounded in the tradition of self-help and mutual aid. Such contributions are brought out in a study of Abraham Cronbach.

Jewish group contributions can also be found in the area of labor-management relations. The Jewish tradition of social justice acted as a potent preparation for labor action. This factor has not always been acknowledged by students of the labor movement because of their generally secular attitude. Moreover, at the time of the commencement of mass immigration from Eastern Europe, an aggressive socialist ideology prevailed among the intellectuals and found ready response among Jewish youth then attempting to break away from religious tradition under the impact of the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement.

The important contribution of the Jewish group to civil liberties and equality merits also our attention. The very arrival of the Jews to Dutch North America involved that small group in a struggle, first for the right to remain here; later, for the extension of their privileges, as demonstrated by Asser Levy's classical assertion of his right to stand guard in New Amsterdam in 1655, and, finally, the struggle for complete equality, which some still view as unfulfilled. This fight for equality helped to broaden human rights for all. Generally, the 19th century struggle for emancipation in Central Europe was emulated here during that period in the arena of Church and State relations and in the defense of the rights involved in the American passport for all citizens.

of Simon Federbush.

(b) Historiography. In the field of Jewish historiography, too, much has been accomplished in America. Of first-rate importance are the four volumes of Toldot Hahalakha and the two volumes of Toldot Haposkim by the late Chaim Tchernowitz, which were published after the author settled in the United States. These will remain classic works in their field. What a pity they were left incomplete. Missing from them is a thousand years of the history of the halakha - the first thousand years from the destruction of the Second Temple to the advent of the Poskim (Codifiers).

In the field of general Jewish history, Dr. Salo W. Baron published his comprehensive work, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, The Jewish Community (in 3 volumes), in English, and a number of treatises in Hebrew. A new and enlarged edition of Baron's History of the Jews, of which two volumes appeared to date, is now in preparation.

Meyer Waxman, too, wrote his 5,000-page work, A History of Jewish Literature, which keeps appearing in new editions. In Hebrew he published a comprehensive anthology, Mishle Yisrael, besides important essays and monographs in various periodicals, part of which have been collected in a volume entitled Kitve Meyer Waxman (1944). Of a local character is Moshe Davis's Yahadut Amerika be-Hitpathutah ("The Shaping of American Judaism").

These are but a few examples of the wealth of historiographical works, general and local, cultural and sociological. They prove that there is an impelling will in American Jewry to study and know our past, our nature and our mission.

Valuable contributions by American scholars were also made in the field of Jewish demography, statistics and economics. Mention should be made of the nestor in the field, Jacob Lestchinsky, who has written extensively on these topics for half a century.

(c) Philosophy. - In the field of philosophy, too, which has many ramifications, the American contribution is extremely important. The outstanding figure is Harry A. Wolfson, thanks to whom the Jewish division of the famous Harvard University Library is today a first-class center for books on everything concerning Jews and Judaica in all languages, ages, and countries, including the very latest Hebrew publications printed in the State of Israel and elsewhere. In the last 25 years Prof. Wolfson published, besides essays and monographs, three bulky works which belong to the classic literature of universal philosophy: Crescas' Critique of Aristotle (1929), Baruch Spinoza (1934), and Philo (1947). They are written in English and should by all means be translated into Hebrew.

A monumental philosophical work in Hebrew is Machashava ve-Emeth by M.H. Amishai (pen name of Moses Maisels, editor of the Hebrew weekly Hadoar). The first volume (over 500 pages) of this work treats of philosophy in general; the second volume (nearly 500 closely printed pages) is devoted to "Judaism within its own limits and within the limits of the world." This is not the place to discuss the author's original line of thought, with which it is hard to agree (see, apropos of this, J.K. Mikliszanski's article, "Historiography of Judaism," in Zukunft, July, 1943). Let it merely be stated here that Amishai's work is that of a great thinker and ardent Jew; it is a wonderful synthesis of lofty thought and lofty language. It is ranked among the great masterpieces of modern Hebrew prose.

Recently there settled in this country Simon Rawidowicz, a profound essayist, an original thinker with an original style, from whom Hebrew letters in America can expect a good deal under his editorship. The important work, Sefer Dubnow, has already appeared here, and in press now is his own work Bavel vi'Yerushalayim ("Babylon and

(d) Bibliography.-- In the field of bibliography, first mention must be made of the Jewish Book Annual published in New York by the Jewish Book Council in three languages: English, Hebrew, and Yiddish. It contains exhaustive lists and general appraisals of the literary achievements of the year among the Jews of America and to some extent also in the State of Israel.

From time to time comprehensive bibliographies in special fields compiled by expert scholars are published in this country. Thus, the third volume of Dr. Baron's above-mentioned history is devoted to bibliographical material on Jewish historiography in all languages.

Of considerable value to a wide field which has as yet not been properly explored is the Kuntres ha-Teshuvot, a bibliography on the Responsa literature, by Dr. Boaz Cohen, the author of a series of other bibliographies and one of the foremost researchers into Jewish law.

Great contributions to Jewish bibliography in America have also been made by the following writers and scholars: A. R. Malachi, an authority on Hebrew periodical literature; Isaac Rivkind, one of the builders of the famous library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Joshua Bloch, Chief of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library; Daniel Persky, a regular contributor of the aforesaid Jewish Book Annual; and others.

A good example of bibliographies compiled diligently by individual librarians as monographs is the bibliographical pamphlet on Elijah Gaon on the occasion of the latter's 150th anniversary, prepared by J. I. Dinstag, Librarian of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. The same librarian is also at work on a comprehensive bibliography on Maimonides.

4. Miscellanies

By the term "miscellanies" is meant all books which are not the work of one author, but contain papers by various writers and on various subjects.

Foremost among these is the 10-volume encyclopedia Otzar Yisrael, edited by J. D. Eisenstein, who is also the editor of a number of other encyclopedic Otzars ("Thesaurus"). To this day the Otzar Yisrael, for all its faults, is the only complete Jewish encyclopedia in Hebrew. It will not long remain the only one, for far-reaching initial efforts are already being made in Israel for Hebrew encyclopedias on a much bigger scale. Otzar Yisrael is, strictly speaking, an abridgement of the 12-volume Jewish Encyclopedia in English (1901-1906) which was also produced in America and may be regarded as the most valuable literary monument of Jewish scholarship in the New World. Of less scholarly but more practical value, because it is of more recent date, is The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia in 10 volumes, published about a dozen years ago.

In this class of miscellanies, under the given definition, also belong the numerous jubilee books issued in honor of important personalities. They contain papers by American and also Israeli scholars. For example, the Touroff Book, issued by the Hebrew Teachers College of Boston; the Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Book, the Alexander Marx Jubilee Book, the Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Book, all three published by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; and the Hadoar Jubilee Book, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Hebrew weekly.

5. Translations

By this we mean translation of Hebrew sources into English. They are at once a science and an art. Usually, they appear together with introductions, rather indices, bibliographies, etc. By way of example, let us cite the volumes of Maimonides' Mishneh

Torah, which were rendered into English by a board of translators and published by Yale University as part of a larger literary project. Of considerable literary and educational value are Dr. Paltiel Birnbaum's excellent translations in the field of liturgy.

The variegation of the Hebrew works translated into English may be illustrated by Lauterbach's translation of Midrash Mekilta; Kaplan's translation of Luzzatto's Mesillat Yesharim; Rosenblatt's translation of Saadia Gaon's Sefer Emunot ve-Deot.

The first attempt to translate the Jerusalem Talmud into Hebrew was also made in America: the tractates Berakot and Peah, translated by Jacob Neuman, and brought out in a beautiful edition by the Hebrew Teachers' College of Boston. The same institution also published the writings of Hirsch Peretz Chajes in a Hebrew translation by Israel Levine.

A wealth of articles, essays, and treatises, long and short, in all areas of Jewish scholarship, are being published in various Hebrew and English periodicals. This periodical literature is also the only organ of critique and reviews. But it must be admitted that very few competent scholars in America engage in critical estimates of the work of fellow scholars, so that the field of criticism of Jewish scholarly works is generally neglected.

The organ of Hokhmat Yisrael in America is the English-language Jewish Quarterly Review, edited by Solomon Zeitlin, one of the most productive Jewish scholars in America (who occasionally writes also in Hebrew) and Abraham A. Neuman, President of Dropsie College in Philadelphia.

The publication Proceedings is published by the American Academy for Jewish Research and contains mainly the papers read at the annual meetings of the academy. Studies on Jewish subjects are also published in non-Jewish English publications, for example, the Journal of Biblical Literature.

In Hebrew, the following periodicals are devoted to Jewish Learning: Horeb, edited by Pinchas Churgin; Talpioth, edited by S.K. Mirsky; Pardes, edited by S.A. Pardes; Bitzaron, founded by the late Chaim Tchernowitz and now edited by an editorial board, also gives a prominent place to scholarly papers. The same is true of the few numbers of Hatekufah, published in America under the editorship of Silberschlag and Zeitlin, and Metsudah, under the editorship of S. Rawidowicz, both of which contain important departments devoted to Jewish research. Megillot, too, founded by the late Hayim Greenberg, also prints articles of scholarly interest. Harofe Haivri ("The Jewish Physician"), edited by M. Einhorn, though a professional journal, also publishes papers based on research into classic Jewish sources. In Yiddish, the Yivo Bletter, edited by M. Weinreich, is noted for the scholarly papers which regularly appear in it.

Lastly, special mention should be made of the services rendered by the Hebrew weekly Hadoar, which about a year ago was orphaned by the demise of its editor, M. Ribalow. This publication is devoted to Hebrew culture in all its aspects. Among its other merits, it also serves as a spacious hospice for Jewish Learning. There is hardly an issue that does not contain a major or minor paper dealing with some topic of Jewish scholarship. In the special large issues of Hadoar, the section devoted to learned papers is rich and variegated. The scholarly Jewish material which has appeared in Hadoar in the thirty years of its existence would fill bulky volumes and it is a pity that no bibliography of this material has yet been compiled. Many a treatise printed in this week was subsequently published in book form: for example, S. Federbush's Mishpat Hameluchah b'Yisrael.

The same may be said of Sefer Hashana and Mabua - conspicuous in all of these is the peculiar place of Jewish scholarship in Hebrew literature; and in this respect all of these perform an important educational task for the Hebrew-reading public in America. Without them, important areas of Hebrew literature would remain completely unknown to this public.

Future Prospects

As far as one can judge from the situation today, there are no great opportunities or considerable prospects to train and cultivate on American soil creators of Hebrew belles-lettres - poets, storytellers, playwrights. Neither the education, the milieu, nor the inspiration is to be found here. Among all the Hebrew poets there is only one who is a native of this country, and even he has settled in Israel. With great efforts and self-sacrificing perseverance one may hope to raise Jews here who will be able to speak and read Hebrew, Jews with a deep appreciation for the values of Hebraic culture. But it is impossible to transform the non-Jewish atmosphere in which we live here and make it wholly Hebraic or Yiddish. True, poets and creators spring up and create only in the language of their being and soul. But here, in the midst of a life which surges on furiously in a non-Jewish tongue, it is very doubtful that Hebrew can ever become the natural language of Hebraists. Today it is only in Israel that Hebrew is becoming an integral part of everyday Jewish life and it is only there that genuine literary and artistic values can come into being.

On the other hand, there are splendid prospects even here in America for Hebrew literary creation in the field of Jewish scholarship. A Hebrew scholar and researcher does not need a completely favorable cultural environment for his creative development. Given the will, love, and diligence, he can think and create Hebraic values even under unfavorable conditions. Moreover, apart from the culturally non-Jewish environment, which cannot be changed, the American Jewish scholar has all the other means of working: schools, libraries, technical facilities, material rewards, etc. For this reason it would seem that, more than any other Hebrew field, the so-called Hokhmat Yisrael will in future be a great blessing to Jewish spiritual existence in America and add considerably to the treasures of everlasting Judaism.

AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORIOGRAPHY

By

BERNARD D. WEINRYB

I

Tercentenary celebrations notwithstanding, the Jewish group in America is a very young one. One hundred and fifty years after the arrival of the first Jews in America (1654), they numbered less than 3,000. Seventy-five years ago there were in this country about a quarter of a million Jews. Today's five million Jews comprise mostly first and second generation immigrants.

New arrivals in a country usually take little interest in the past and history of that country. Everything appears to them strange, and they are primarily concerned with their present and immediate future. They seek rather historical continuity with their Old World past, to which they look back nostalgically and with romantic yearnings.

Another barrier to historic perception is the division and resultant tension within the group, engendered both by the varying home backgrounds of the immigrants and the differences arising from the fact that some groups arrived earlier and others later. Class and group stratification in immigrant countries follow, to a great extent, the divisions between the different immigration waves. There are in the U.S. the Sephardim and Ashkenazim, German and Eastern European Jews, Polish-Russian and "Galizianer", German-Jewish refugees and Oriental Jews, Sh'erith Hapleyta of different variations from Hungarian ultra-orthodox and Chabad Chassidim to secular leaders of labor movements. Tensions also exist between immigrants and their children, conflicts which often create wide schisms. All of which results in fragmentation, division and subdivision into unfused groups, into subcommunities lacking a sense of belonging to a united national, cultural, religious or ethnical unit. The lack of such a feeling of unity apparently precludes any interest in the history of the group, since the group supposedly does not exist.

The atmosphere in America itself did not particularly favor study and research. The basic respect for learning generally, and Jewish learning in particular, was missing. There was in America, and this is still partially true, no basic motivation for Jewish literary work. Such interest in Jewish writing and in Jewish history as was kept alive in the U.S. was sustained by some European immigrants who brought with them their old-country habits and attitudes. Some of them may have continued their work in America. But, being steeped in European background, they were very seldom successful in entirely acclimatizing themselves in the new country. It is small wonder that the neglect of America's past was, and in part still is, characteristic of the American Jewish community.

II

The Jews, to be sure, like other ethnic groups, did not remain entirely without historical writing. Since the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the Jews, along with the Germans, the Irish, the Scandinavians, the Poles, and other groups, have developed a historiography of their own, depicting their varied experiences in this country. But this was, for the most part, a historiography with a specific motive. It was not designed so much to reveal the group's past as to show the contribution of the group - or of personalities originating from the group - toward America. The basic motivation was, in the main, an apologetic one, to defend the ethnic group against the growing anti-immigration and anti-immigrant sentiment in the country since the 1880's.

Having long been a minority, the Jews felt a particularly strong need for such an apologetic historiography; they found it necessary to defend themselves against attacks from outside and to emphasize their "contributions". When the American Jewish Historical Society was founded at the end of the 19th century (1892), along with similar societies of other ethnic groups, the Jewish population in this country was still very small (over half a million), and was largely made up of very recent immigrants. The earlier Jewish settlers - a handful of descendants of the Sephardic Jews and the small group of Americanized German-Jewish immigrants and their children - did not feel themselves too secure against the background of rising anti-immigrant tendencies and the constantly growing tide of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe.

The founders of the Society modestly regarded Jewish history in America as a sort of footnote to general American history - through presentation of the role which the Jew has played on the American scene. "The genealogy of these (Jewish) men (who contributed to the discovery and development of America) and the record of their achievements", it is said in the program of the Society at its foundation in 1892, "will, when gathered together, be of value and interest to the historian and perchance contribute materially to the history of our country." "These Jewish men" were, in point of fact, meant as individuals not as a group both because the propounders of Americanism denied Jewish group identity and because dealing at that time with the Jewish past in America meant dealing with a small number of individuals. During the first century and a half after the arrival of the original 23 Jews in New York (then New Amsterdam) not more than some 1,000 Jews came to this country, or an average of 6-7 Jews yearly. The trend thus arose to record the deeds "of little unimportant Jews of the past" (to use the expression of Lee M. Friedman, past president of the American Jewish Historical Society) and to point out apologetically their contribution to the making of America. This turning to the individualistic-biographical approach, and to apologetics to stress the share of the Jews in building America became the prevailing trend in the tens of volumes of the publications the American Jewish Historical Society put out, and in most other books and articles which appeared on this subject. This, so to say, "utilitarian" approach is mostly mirrored even in the titles of the books. There is the American Jew as Patriot, Citizen and Soldier and there are Jewish Pioneers and Patriots, Jewish Pioneers in America, Pilgrim people, Jews in the making of America¹⁾ and similar books in which the tendency is not so clearly indicated on the title page.

III

Forces for change have been in operation during the last two decades. The Jewish community in America has come of age and matured. In numbers it has increased almost ten times since the foundation of the American Jewish Historical Society. Its structure, too, has changed. The American Jewish population consists mostly of Eastern European Jews with second and third generation immigrants predominating. The percentage of Jewish immigrants in the population will probably only amount to one quarter. The rest are American born and bred, who feel themselves at home in America and secure enough on American soil not to need always the resort to "proving" their contribution. The more so that America herself has also changed. The children of the "new immigrants" of the Italians, the Slavic peoples and others, who half a century ago were looked down upon as inferior, are today sitting in Congress and playing leading roles in local and national government. Again, among the Jews, the

1) J. Wolf, The American Jew as Patriot etc. (1895); L.M. Friedman, Jewish Pioneers in America (1930) and Pilgrim People (1950); G. Cohen, Jews in the Making of America (1924).

Thus, American Jews made significant contributions to the separation of Church and State by insisting on the psychological equality of the Jews as a group. Protests against declaring Thanksgiving Day a Christian holiday in official proclamations by the Governors of New York and Pennsylvania in the middle of the 19th century come in this category, although no legislation was involved. The first prayer by a rabbi at the opening of a session of the House of Representatives (February 1, 1860), and the appointment of Jews to the chaplaincy in the U.S. Army during the Civil War, hitherto open only to ordained ministers of the Christian faith, may well be viewed as landmarks in the history of the separation of Church and State in the United States. Few are aware of the efforts that had made these achievements possible. In recent times, too, Jews have been in the vanguard of the continued fight for the separation of Church and State. They have led the opposition to Release Time, Bible reading, public prayer and distribution of denominational Bibles in the public schools. They have waged, sometimes singlehanded, the fight against Blue Sunday Laws. Of course, these struggles were largely motivated by the desire to protect the legal equality of the Jewish religion. Nevertheless, they have helped to maintain the America of the Founding Fathers.

The involvement of Jews in the struggle for equality and civil rights must be considered, as we have seen, within the broader framework of the impact of Jewish traditions, the position of Jews as a minority, the world situation and trends in American life. Perhaps the next stage in Jewish community relations will involve the struggle for the psychological equality of the Jewish group in American society and of its specific culture in American culture.

Throughout this paper we have argued, directly and indirectly, for an "inclusive" view of the scope of American culture; one broad enough, to include American-Hebrew and Yiddish literature within the framework of American literature, and the products of Jewish scholarship within the domain of American scholarship. The failure to adopt such view has constituted an adverse factor in the education of the American Jew, most of whom cannot read these works in their original language and hence remain in ignorance of them. At the same time, an opportunity is missed to enrich American culture. By implication, we have argued for a multi-cultural America, an idea too readily dismissed because of the remnant of an old exaggerated fear of the unassimilability of the immigrant into American culture. But whatever standard is employed to gauge the Jew's participation in and contribution to American life, the record that emerges is a many-faced one, in some of its aspects brilliant and weighty, in others merely imitative and routine but, taken together, so significant as to justify a modicum of pride.

HIGHER JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE U.S.A.

By

WOLF BLATTBERG

Historical Background

Modern institutions for training Rabbis and for fostering Jewish knowledge date back to the 19th century, and were a result of the general tendencies prevailing in Jewish life in Europe during the period of emancipation. Side by side with the old Yeshivah, which was dedicated to the pursuit of Talmudical studies, there arose new types of higher educational institutions at a time when the Jews began to take a more active part in the life of the peoples among which they lived, and to identify themselves with contemporary cultural movements. A new type of Rabbi was now needed to guide the younger generation. He had to be well versed both in the Talmud and in secular knowledge.

The first efforts to establish new types of institutions were made in countries influenced by the French Revolution. In Metz, Alsace Lorraine, in 1829 an old Yeshivah was transformed into a central rabbinical college (Ecole Rabbinique Central), which was later transferred to Paris as the Jewish Seminary of France. In Austria, a seminary for training modern rabbis was opened the same year in Padua, which was chosen as the seat, due to the fact that the provinces of Northern Italy were more modernized. The curriculum of this seminary was drawn up on the basis of Reggiōs ha-Torah ve-ha-Philosophia, which called for both general and Jewish studies. This rabbinical institution was later transferred to Florence and finally to Rome.

These institutions in Metz and Padua were only of local significance, and it was Germany where the modern seminaries, serving as patterns for similar institutions in other countries, were established. The first attempt was made in 1836 by Abraham Geiger, who wanted to found a Jewish theological faculty at one of the German universities. He objected to the establishment of separate rabbinical seminaries on the ground that they might become one-sided and get out of touch with the general cultural trend of the times. But Geiger's attempt failed. It is Zecharia Frankel, then Rabbi of Dresden, who enjoys the historical distinction of founding the seminary in Breslau in 1854, which in the course of time actually became the model for similar seminaries throughout Europe and the New World. Frankel was the head of the Conservative group in Germany which stood for "positive historical Judaism" and took a middle course between Reform Judaism on the one hand and ultra-Orthodoxy on the other. In the course of time the Breslau Seminary became, besides a place for training rabbis, also a great center of Jewish scholarship. Among the members of its faculty was the great historian Heinrich Graetz, and among its graduates were the most renowned Jewish scholars of the second half of the 19th and the early years of the 20th centuries.

The two other wings of German Jewry, the Reformers and the Orthodox, soon followed suit. In 1872 Abraham Geiger and others established the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin, dedicated to the fostering of Jewish knowledge and to the training of liberal rabbis; and one year later, mainly due to the efforts of Azriel Hildesheimer, head of the Jewish Orthodoxy in Germany at that time, the first modern Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary was opened likewise in Berlin.

The common feature of the new institutions, far apart as they were ideologically, was their emphasis on Jewish knowledge and learning.

Rabbinical Seminaries in America

The first institution on American soil which may be considered a counterpart of new new type of seminary established in Europe, was the Hebrew Union College, founded in 1875 by the then leader of American Reform Judaism, Isaac Mayer Wise.

Previous attempts to establish similar institutions in Philadelphia(Maimonides College) and New York proved ephemeral. Wise devoted the last 25 years of his life to the upbuilding and development of Hebrew Union College. As a Reformer,he held that the new institution must be open to every positive influence of modern thought because,as he said,no one could stop the stream of time; but,on the other hand,he stress ed that his "basis was always the halakha." Originally, he envisaged that it would serve all the trends in Judaism and therefore invited Sabbatai Morais to participate in the examinations, but unity could not be achieved.

Wise realized that Judaism would not survive in America unless future American rabbis were imbued with the free spirit of America,and were educated in America. He was the first to see that it would no longer be possible to bring over rabbis from Europe, especially from Germany,as had been the practice previously,because the new generation "will feel,think,and speak American."

The Hebrew Union College was for a time a stronghold of opposition to Zionism and to the idea of Jewish national renaissance. But since then things have changed entirely.

In 1922,in order to advance liberal Judaism in America,the late Dr.Stephen S. Wise founded in New York the Jewish Institute of Religion. He envisaged the Institute as a "school of training for the Jewish Ministry,research and community service." Dr.Wise stamped the institution with the impress of his own personality. In accordance with the principles of the Free Synagogue, the Institute was not bound to any single specific interpretation of Judaism, but had to serve as a training place for all who were normally and intellectually fit. It is needless to say that Dr.Wise put strong emphasis on contemporary Jewish problems,national thinking,and the upbuilding of Palestine.

The two institutions were merged in 1950,under the name Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, to unite the forces of liberal Judaism in America.

According to its Statement of Principles, the Hebrew Union College - Institute of Religion is dedicated to the preservation of Judaism, its great historic ideals, and its traditional institutions. It holds that Judaism is "in both spirit and fact a continuously progressive religious discipline,and that it must be kept constantly liberal and spiritually alert." It believes that if Judaism is to live and expand in America, "it must square itself with every advanced and scientific understanding, must progressively integrate its spirit and tradition with the spirit and culture of America, and must engender that type of religious devotion which will uphold and enhance the humanitarian ideals of our fathers."

Up to the current school year,1954-5, the Cincinnati school has ordained 587 Rabbis, more than 400 of whom are today actively engaged in Jewish service. The New York School has ordained 242 Rabbis,approximately 200 of whom are today active in the rabbinate or allied fields.

At the New York branch there is a school of Education and Sacred Music. The School of Education trains new teachers for Reform congregations, while the School of Sacred Music trains its students in the tradition of Jewish liturgical music to serve American Jewish religious institutions as cantors.

The Hebrew Union College Press (established in 1920) publishes scholarly works by members of the faculty. The year 1924 saw the launching in Cincinnati of the Hebrew Union College Annual, a journal devoted to the advancement of Jewish learning. Twenty-five volumes of the Annual have been published to date.

In 1947 there were established at the Cincinnati school the American Jewish Archives for the furtherance of the study of American Jewish History through the collection, preservation, and publication of American Jewish manuscript material. The Archives contain the largest collection of minute books of American Jewish congregations in the USA.

In Los Angeles Hebrew Union College-Institute of Religion maintains a college of Jewish Studies to train religious school personnel and to promote Jewish education among adults.

The rabbinical seminary of Conservative Judaism in this country came into being in 1887 (12 years later than the Hebrew Union College), mainly due to the tireless efforts of Sabbatai Morraiss, H. Pereira Mendes, and others. It was established as a reaction against the growing forces of radical Reform, which found its expression in the Pittsburgh Platform adopted at the Conference of Reform Rabbis in 1885. The new Seminary was to be devoted to the ideas and principles of historic Judaism, which was a kind of Orthodoxy adjusted to the American environment. It sanctioned the English sermon, the English translation of the prayer book, as well as that of the Bible, but it did not abandon any essential Jewish values. The new seminary was called "Beth-Midrash le-Rabbanim" (Jewish Theological Seminary of America) to emphasize the tendency to strengthen historic Judaism without identification with any particular trend. In the eyes of the founders historic Judaism was no trend or movement but Judaism itself or, as Isaac Leeser had put it, "Yahadut lelo shum t'nai" (unconditional Judaism).

The Seminary was thoroughly reorganized in 1902, after the late Solomon Schechter took over its presidency. Schechter called to the faculty scholars of world renown and established the Seminary as a famous institution of learning.

The Seminary includes, besides the Rabbinical School, a Teachers Institute and various schools for adult Jewish education. Since 1887 the Rabbinical School has graduated 600 Rabbis, of whom about 450 are now in active service.

The Seminary has one of the largest Jewish libraries in the world, including, among others, a rich collection of Hebrew manuscripts and rare books. Among the publications of the Seminary are numerous books which are standard works in the field of Jewish learning.

The greatest institution for training Orthodox Rabbis in America is Yeshiva University in New York. The first American University under Jewish auspices traces its origin to 1886, with the establishment of "Eitz-Hayim" Yeshiva, and the Isaac Elhanan Theological Seminary, founded in 1896. From its humble beginning as a small theological seminary, Yeshiva has developed into an accredited university comprising 12 different schools and divisions with a total enrollment of nearly 2,700.

The development of Yeshiva University parallels, to a certain extent, that of some great American universities, such as Harvard, Columbia, and others, which also started as theological seminaries and in the course of time widened their scope of activity.

The institution was reorganized in 1915, and later in 1928, with the establishment of Yeshiva College, which was designed to provide an education in the liberal arts and sciences to young men who, at the same time, pursue studies in Jewish religion. Whilst students of the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Theological

Seminary receive their secular education outside at colleges or universities, it is the idea of Yeshiva University to provide young people with a harmonious blending of Jewish learning and academic scholarship "under one roof."

In September, 1954, there was opened at Yeshiva the first College for Women, to provide young women with an education in the liberal arts and sciences, and simultaneously with proper Jewish knowledge. Yeshiva University is now building the first college of medicine under Jewish sponsorship, "The Albert Einstein College of Medicine," to be opened in September, 1955.

Yeshiva University has ordained to date over 500 Rabbis. It boasts 4 scholarly publications: Horev, devoted to Jewish history and Hebrew literature; Talpioth, and Sura, in Hebrew, and the internationally known mathematical journal Scripta Mathematica.

The younger and smaller sister institution of Yeshiva University is the Hebrew Theological College (Beth Midrash La'Torah) in Chicago. It was founded in 1920 and has since graduated some 180 rabbis and 300 teachers. The college includes a rabbinical school, a teachers institute, added in 1927, a school of shechita, a preparatory school, and a graduate school. Its total enrollment is about 600. The course includes four years of study at the preparatory school, and seven years at the rabbinical seminary. The students are required to study at the same time at a college or university. The last three years are devoted exclusively to Hebrew and rabbinical studies. The main emphasis is placed on the mastery of the Talmud and the Codes.

Like Yeshiva University, in New York, The Hebrew Theological College grew out of a small yeshiva, Eitz Chaim, which was established in 1912. The College has a preparatory school in Los Angeles.

Besides these two institutions for training Orthodox Rabbis, there are a number of traditional Yeshivoth that confer S'micha upon their graduates. They are:

Torah Va'daath)	
R. Hayim Berlin)	
Mirer Yeshiva)	
Tiferet Yerushalayim)	All in New York
R. Jacob Joseph)	
R. Israel Meir ha'Cohen)	

Beth Midrash Gavoha, Lakewood, N.J.
 Ner Yisrael, Baltimore, Md.
 Telser Yeshiva, Cleveland, Ohio
 Bnei Yehuda, Detroit, Michigan

The graduates of these Yeshivoth serve as Rabbis and, to a great extent, as Rashei-Yeshivoth.

Other Institutions of Higher Learning

The object of the rabbinical seminary is, first, to train rabbis and, second, to serve as centers of Jewish scholarship and research. The institution devoted exclusively to fulfilling this second aim is the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia. It was founded in 1907 as a postgraduate institution for Hebrew learning and other branches of Semitic culture. Its object is to further, through independent research and the training of scholars, the knowledge of Judaism and to continue the development of Jewish culture. Dropsie College also has a School of Education and an Institute for Israel and the Middle East. It is non-sectarian and in the Classic Department of the college from 30 to 35 per cent of the students are Christians, mostly ministers who subsequently become professors in theological

seminaries representing every important Protestant denomination.

Dropsie provides a common platform to which Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform leaders can subscribe. Dropsie issues two outstanding publications, The Jewish Quarterly Review, which has appeared regularly in Philadelphia since 1910, and Jewish Apocryphal Literature. The Jewish Quarterly Review is the only scientific quarterly in the English language which is devoted to all branches of Jewish knowledge. The aim of Jewish Apocryphal Literature is to publish the ancient versions of these classics together with a new translation and commentaries.

Dropsie is a small institution with no ambition to become larger; it is a kind of community of scholars.

Graduates of Dropsie serve on the faculties of noted colleges and universities throughout the country and abroad.

Facilities for the pursuit of Jewish studies are also available at Brandeis University, in Waltham, Massachusetts, the first non-sectarian Jewish-sponsored university in the United States, where there are chairs of Jewish history, literature, and philosophy.

In addition, there are foundations for Jewish studies at major universities. At Harvard the Nathan Littauer Chair of Jewish Literature and Philosophy has existed since 1925, and at Columbia the Miller Foundation for Jewish History, Literature and Institutions, founded in 1929. At New York University the Jewish Culture Foundation was established in 1937, and has considerably grown in the last few years.

Teachers Seminaries

The task of training teachers for schools of the various trends is incumbent on a number of teachers seminaries. These institutes conduct afternoon or evening classes, while the bulk of their students receive their general education in colleges or universities. The following are the principal institutions of this type (arranged chronologically):

Gratz College - Philadelphia, Pa. (established in 1897);
Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America
(1909);
Teachers Institute of Yeshiva University (1917);
Jewish Teachers' Seminary and People's University (1918);
Hebrew Teachers Institute, Baltimore, Md. (1919);
Hebrew Teachers College, Boston, Mass. (1921);
Hebrew Teachers Institute "Herzliah", New York, (1923);
College of Jewish Studies, Chicago, Ill. (1924);
Hebrew Teachers Training School for Girls, New York (1928);

There are also similar institutions in Cleveland, Detroit, and Los Angeles, but they have not as yet graduated any teachers. The total enrollment in all these institutions is approximately 1,200, of whom about 54 per cent are male students.

The majority of the students (about 56%) come from special preparatory schools either attached to the institution itself or to another institution. About 8 per cent come from Yeshivot, and the rest from various other schools. For this reason, there is a great difference in the level of their Hebrew training. It is noteworthy that about 10 per cent of the students serve simultaneously as teachers at Talmud Torahs, Sunday Schools, and the like.

While there is a great diversity among the students as to their Hebrew knowledge - and some of them are not even adequately prepared - the teachers are, as a

rule, very well trained for their profession, and a great many of them excel in their work. There are among them scholars, poets and writers of established renown. Altogether there are about 100 teachers in these institutions, of whom about one third serve on a full-time basis. In recent years progress has been noticeable in the use of Hebrew as a language of instruction. In most of the institutions Hebrew is the only language of instruction. An outstanding exception is the Teachers Seminary and People's University, where Yiddish is the language of instruction, and Hebrew is limited to the Hebrew subjects.

The shortage of teachers is a problem which has troubled the American Jewish community in recent years. The Hebrew Teachers Federation of America has established the fact that all existing seminaries are able to fill only from 20 to 25 per cent of the demand. In 1952, more than half of the communities reported that their major need was qualified Hebrew teachers. This need has increased in recent years, due to educational and social progress, which has resulted in the intensification of the Jewish school program. Of late, there has been a tendency to enroll in the Sunday Schools younger children only, while older ones attend a Jewish school a few days a week. Besides, the study of Hebrew is being stressed in schools where no particular importance was attached to it formerly.

According to the figures established by the Research Department of the American Association for Jewish Education, about 4,200 Hebrew teachers are active in Jewish schools; of this number approximately 1,700 are employed in New York City, and over 2,500 in the rest of the country. The average number of years a Hebrew teacher stays in the profession is less than 9; accordingly, close to 500 new teachers are needed every year to replace the ones who leave the profession. However, teachers institutes turn out, as said, only about 20-25 per cent of the teachers required by the schools every year. In 1947-8 about 90 teachers were graduated. In 1948/9 there were 95 graduates, and in 1952, over 130. It may be assumed that in 1953 the number was about the same.

As a consequence of the unsatisfied demand for qualified Hebrew teachers, many persons lacking the necessary training and skill are employed in the profession.

To improve the situation, various suggestions have been made, among them the establishment of professional codes so as to ensure opportunities for professional growth and afford benefits that would give the teacher a feeling of social and economic security. It has also been suggested to select young people in the high schools and colleges, and encourage as well as help them to pursue the Jewish teaching profession. The idea has also been advanced to establish all-day teachers seminaries with a four-year course of both Hebrew and general education. It is felt that in such a school more time and attention could be devoted to the Hebrew subjects. It is also felt that most graduates of such a school would remain permanently in the profession, and it is an established fact that one permanent teacher is worth more than many temporary ones. Finally, it is held in educational circles that since the teachers serve the communities throughout the country, it is the duty of the Jewish community in America at large, and not merely of the local community in which a teachers seminary happens to exist, to maintain these institutes.

Conclusion

The situation in the rabbinate is entirely different from that in the teaching profession. The rabbinate in America is a well established profession, and in general young people who go into the rabbinate choose it as a life career. The proportion between supply and demand is therefore more balanced, and in general there is no shortage of trained rabbis. Some acute shortage is at present felt

only in the Conservative movement, due to a rapid increase of new largely suburban communities, most of which happen to be Conservative. In the Reform communities the number of graduates of the Cincinnati and New York schools meet the demand. There are no rabbis in the small Reform congregations in the South, and this gap is filled partly by traveling rabbis, who sometimes travel a circuit of several hundred miles to serve the needs of the small congregations. Students of the Cincinnati School likewise travel to small neighboring congregations to officiate there. Nor do the Orthodox congregations experience any shortage of rabbis. The average of 35 graduates of Yeshiva University, about 10 of Beth Midrash Le-Torah of Chicago, and of the traditional Yeshivah, meet the entire demand.

In this connection, mention should be made of some peculiar features of the American rabbinate. The American rabbi is supposed not only to carry out strictly rabbinical functions, but many others. He has to be in constant touch with his flock through pastoral service and counseling, as well as through organization, leadership, and administration of the various activities centered around the synagogue. In addition, he has to participate in the social, political and philanthropic affairs of the local community, as well as of the regional and national scene. Moreover, he has to combine all these diversified activities with the traditional task of the Rabbi, i.e. Jewish learning.

It should be added that not all graduates of the rabbinical schools go into the rabbinate, and a large part of them go into some kind of allied service. Many go both into the civilian and military chaplaincy. About 80 rabbis hold positions as counselors of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations at various American colleges and universities. As a rule, rabbis hold the major administrative posts at the national religious organizations. But a considerable number of rabbis serve in civic and other organizations.

The American rabbi plays an important role in American Jewish life aside from his profession, and some of the most colorful personalities and political leaders in American Jewish life came from the ranks of the rabbinate.

TAKING INVENTORY IN JEWISH EDUCATION

By

JUDAH PILCH

Self-examination and stock taking are usually a healthy process leading to clarification of purpose and better understanding of assets and liabilities. A full examination of as complex an enterprise as Jewish education in America will have to await the completion of the National Study of Jewish Education now being conducted by the Commission for the Study of Jewish Education in the United States. A brief balance sheet can, however, indicate the major problems which require solution.

The greatest asset we can point to is the emergence in American Jewish life of a profound interest in Jewish education in all its ramifications. All elements in the community have come to recognize the primacy of Jewish education in strengthening and enhancing Jewish group life in America. Practically all major national organizations are either directly or indirectly engaged in some phase of Jewish education for youth and adults. Some of the organizations that only a few years back gave little or no attention to the problem of education, have now joined educators in alerting the Jewish community to the urgent need for Jewish learning. As to the ordinary person - parents in particular - their concern for the cultivation of those forms of Jewish life which can be fostered through Jewish education has considerably increased. There is greater awareness for the need of a basic Jewish education as indispensable to continuity of Jewish group life in America.

There are figures to substantiate the latter claim. In many small communities almost 85% of all children of school age attend Jewish schools; in a growing number of cities Jewish education receives almost one-quarter of the money spent for all local needs; practically everywhere the principle of community responsibility for Jewish education has been accepted.

That the movement toward identification with the Jewish group through the Jewish school has gained momentum can be seen from recent literature bearing on Jewish education and from reports of the various national and local agencies active in the field. More than 200 new school plants have been erected in the last few years; the nationwide expenditure for Jewish education, according to the research specialist of the American Association for Jewish Education, is in the neighborhood of 33-35 million dollars a year, which is considerably more than the amount spent on education a decade ago. As to the school population, there has been a tremendous increase in enrollment, which by now has reached 350,000, whereas in 1947 there were some 240,000 pupils in the various Jewish schools.

Another asset which holds promise for the future is the constant stress, by parents especially, on the child's interest. No matter how inadequate our pedagogic devices and educational tools may be in terms of scientific educational procedure, most of the schools in the country have come to appreciate the point of view of progressive education. While most of the learning is still by rote there is a conscious attempt (largely in response to a demand by the modern, education-minded parents) to introduce co-curricular (once called extra-curricular) activities in order to make the child's stay in school pleasurable, and to devise techniques and materials which transmit Jewish knowledge and values and provide significant experiences on a child level. The recent developments in audio-visual aids for Jewish schools, the pioneering work in the field of tests and measurements, the preparations of syllabi and educational materials for the teacher, all undertaken by local bureaus and national agencies in order to relate education to the child's capacity and interests and to make schooling meaningful, demonstrate that in the last decade the trend to child-centeredness has been accentuated.

One more asset comes to mind in evaluating the present status of Jewish education, namely, its new-found respectability. More and more prominent lay leaders have joined the ranks of workers in the laity of Jewish schools. The professional educator is no longer considered - and ignored - as a Melamed, but is given social standing and is accepted as an important functionary in Jewish communal endeavor. Conferences on Jewish education attract as many people, even though not as many gifts, as meetings on Jewish philanthropy. For the student of Jewish education in America, who remembers the indifferent attitude to education and the educator on the part of community leaders only two or three decades ago, it is encouraging to note the change that has taken place in the last few years. It is indicative not only of the increased maturity of our community, but also of the people's intuitive understanding of the current need for education in this transitional period of Jewish life. While this recognition of the importance of education for the survival of Jewish group life has not as yet resulted in proportionate financial grants to schools, all signs point to a growing readiness on the part of the community to open not only its heart but also its purse.

This increase in standing of Jewish education has brought about a change of attitude towards the all-day school movement. Only ten years ago, the all-day schools were called parochial schools and were indifferently regarded. Today, after a remarkable record of growth and development, most people view these schools, which constitute an integral part of our educational system, as offering excellent opportunities for intensive Jewish education.

The greatest current liability of Jewish education is the appalling shortage of qualified and competent educational personnel to staff the ever-growing number of schools in this country. Teachers who are not prepared for the job and to whom teaching is not a calling are being employed in many of our schools. This is being done because the teachers' training schools graduate less than one-fifth of the number of teachers actually **required** for Jewish school systems.

This is not the place to discuss the problem in detail. The widespread belief that this shortage of teachers is due mainly to the prevailing low salary scale is incorrect. Qualified teachers can find employment at a reasonably good salary if, in addition to the two hours per day of formal teaching, they are qualified to perform other services related to education, such as club work, parent education, adult institutes, etc. The fact remains that, unless we can recruit young people who will want to make Jewish teaching a life career, all the achievements of this decade (new school plants, better facilities, favorable orientation, child-centeredness, etc.) will be of little avail. In the final analysis, it is the teacher who either makes the child's school life a pleasant one or antagonizes the learner so that Bar Mitzvah marks not only the pupil's graduation from Jewish schooling, but often the end of any contact with Jewish cultural content. While it is true that the teacher is not the only agent who stimulates growth, we know from experience that the good teacher has ways of influencing the home, so that both home and school, in cooperation, nurture the young child Jewishly.

Another problem which has been plaguing Jewish education in recent years is the time factor. Some 40 to 50 percent of our children still attend Jewish educational institutions once a week for one or one and a half hours, in a school year consisting of approximately 37 weeks. In the more intensive schools, namely, the afternoon Hebrew schools, where children attend from two to three times per week, the length of stay of the average student is about three years. It should be quite apparent that three years of Jewish education do not suffice for the acquisition of even a smattering of knowledge of the Jewish heritage, let alone the development of positive attitudes which will make identification with the Jewish people meaningful and durable.

Here and there we see signs of intensification of education. Some of the Sunday schools have added a day for selected groups of pupils for study primarily of the Hebrew language. Other schools have added nursery and kindergarten units to their systems, thus giving the average child an additional two or three years of guided Jewish experience. In some communities the Bar Mitzvah requirements call for three to five years of regular attendance in a Hebrew school. All these attempts to increase hours of instruction and to prolong the stay of the student in the Jewish school are commendable but are still insufficient. The truth of the matter is that in terms of both scholastic achievement and the nature and scope of the child's Jewish experiences, the young Jew is more of a transient guest in the Jewish school than a long term resident. The aggregate maximum of 1,200 hours of education is concededly inadequate..

That brings us to a related problem - the need for continuity. Precisely at the time in an adolescent's life when he reaches that stage of intellectual development where he is ready to orient himself to Judaic concepts and values, he is no longer to be found in a Jewish institution of learning. Very few continue their Jewish studies beyond the elementary Hebrew school level or the confirmation classes in the Sunday schools. Under such circumstances, we cannot hope to have many Jews on any adequate cultural level. To the question of what will happen to Jewish scholarship in America, the answer is obvious.

Allied with the problem of continuity is that of the Jewish home. It is universally acknowledged that the home is a very important factor in the personality development of the child. Unfortunately, the average American Jewish home is devoid of Jewish cultural content. At best, it is in a phase between de-Judaization and re-Judaization. The restoration of the home as a Jewish cultural focus is an end in itself. Continuity of Jewish education is thus an excellent means for assuring the Judaization of the Jewish home. Young adults who continue their Jewish studies will no doubt build homes where a Jewish atmosphere will prevail.

The gradual but constant de-Hebraization of the Jewish school program must also be viewed as a liability. Throughout history, Hebrew has served not only as a vehicle of communication and creativity, but also as a means for transmitting the spirit of the Jewish people, a conductor of its glow and warmth. In all times, Hebrew has been the *Sine qua non* in any Jewish educational program. In our schools today, however, Hebrew no longer occupies that distinctive place. It is no longer considered the most essential element in the curriculum. In my travels about the country I have noticed the entrenchment of amhaartzut in most of our educational institutions. One rarely finds a group of children in the graduating classes of the elementary schools or even in the so-called high schools who know enough Hebrew to understand a simple conversation. Even worse, few if any, save the students in the better all-day schools and elected groups in the intensive Talmud Torahs, can read with comprehension either a selection in the prayerbook or the Bible, to say nothing of modern Hebrew literature. This is indeed a tragic phenomenon. It is true that adequate study of Hebrew requires time and concentration and that a crowded curriculum does not afford sufficient time for effective teaching of Hebrew. But even taking into account these conditions of insufficient time and meager Jewish home environment, the relegation of Hebrew to a secondary role is tantamount to the abandonment of the very basis of Jewish education.

In deploring this situation, I do not mean to imply agreement with those who want to make our children bilingual. The American environment is not conducive to the emergence of a Hebrew-speaking youth, but we should expect our school population to have some knowledge of the Hebrew language as the primary source of all Judaic studies if we wish to develop Jews who will make their contribution to the advancement of Jewish thought and letters..

This question of environment inevitably raises the problem of Jewish curriculum. To what degree and in what way should the school reckon with the needs of the child, his home, his Jewish group life, his daily environment? There are some who argue that the limited achievement of the Jewish school can be traced to an overcrowded and unbalanced curriculum. There is general agreement that improving the quality of Jewish education calls for a revised school program which would be a synthesis of the child's interests and the minimal skills and knowledge which he must acquire during his school career. This necessitates careful selection of the essential cultural values and traditions that should be inculcated in the child - values which have stood the test of time and are still relevant to present day life.

If we exploit to the fullest our assets, while gradually eliminating our liabilities, there is no reason why the Jewish school system should not become as strong qualitatively as it is today quantitatively.

Planning the future program of Jewish education therefore implies the following:

1. Recruitment and training of substantial numbers of teachers while simultaneously working for the welfare and the advancement of the educational personnel we now have.

2. Intensifying the educational process in all schools by adding hours of instruction and years of attendance to the pupil's school career.

3. Hebraization of the school curriculum. This can be made possible if the above two aims are realized and pupils have the time and the guidance permitting them to gain knowledge and inspiration from the authentic Jewish sources which are available in Hebrew.

4. Motivating the high school and college student to seek Jewish education and providing attractive facilities for continuing Jewish education beyond the elementary school.

5. Experimentation in all areas of Jewish education to ascertain the validity and relevance of ongoing processes and to seek new ways for the improvement of the quality of Jewish education.

6. Providing greater financial resources for the Jewish educational enterprise.

PROGRESS OF JEWISH EDUCATION
IN THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

By

ABRAHAM E. MILLGRAM

About four years ago the Department of Research of the American Association for Jewish Education published the following telling figures: Of all children attending Jewish schools in the United States, 45.5% are enrolled in Conservative congregations, 25% in Reform congregations, 17.3% in community Talmud Torahs, and 11.6% in Orthodox congregations. These figures indicate not only that almost half of the children enrolled in Jewish schools are under the auspices of the Conservative synagogue, but that the future of American Jewry is largely dependent on how the Conservative Movement assumes and carries out its responsibilities in the area of Jewish education. This thesis, of course, assumes that Jewish life in America will prosper or deteriorate, depending on whether the new generation is rooted in Jewish values and joyously accepts its responsibilities as Jews.

The United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education

It was September, 1945, when the United Synagogue of America, the central organization of all Conservative synagogues in America, reorganized its Commission on Education. This body is a joint commission, consisting of equal representatives of the United Synagogue and the Rabbinical Assembly.

Raising Educational Standards

The first important task undertaken by the Commission was that of raising educational standards in the affiliated congregational schools. At the time of the Commission's reorganization, the average Conservative congregational school consisted of a large Sunday school and a small weekday school. The proportional enrollment of the two departments was often as large as ten to one in favor of the Sunday school. By the end of its first year of existence, the Commission published a Statement entitled "The Objectives and Standards for the Congregational School." The Conservative Movement was waiting for guidance, and this Statement proved a catalytic agent resulting in revolutionary changes.

The Statement listed the following objectives for the Conservative congregational school:

AN INVENTIVE JEWISH EDUCATION FOR every Jewish boy and girl is indispensable if our children are to experience the worthwhileness of Jewish life and ideals, and if they are to claim their Jewish heritage joyfully. Our school curriculum should therefore be constructed in accordance with the following goals:

1. To develop and enhance the child's spiritual and ethical sensitivity so that in act and attitude he may be governed by the religious, ethical and cultural traditions of Judaism.
2. To equip the child with knowledge of the Hebrew language which is indispensable to a full appreciation of the spirit and content of the Jewish heritage and of its renaissance in modern Israel.
3. To impart a knowledge of Jewish history, literature and culture, necessary for rich, meaningful and intelligent Jewish living and for an understanding of the contributions of the Jew and of Judaism to world civilization.
4. To develop in the child the ability and the desire to practice the traditional Jewish observances in the synagogue and the home.

5. To provide for the child, during his school career, a wide range of group activities and observances through which he may experience the satisfaction and the inspiration of Jewish living.

6. To instill in the child the desire to continue his studies beyond the elementary school level, and to encourage the graduates of the secondary schools to pursue their studies in higher schools of Jewish learning.

7. To develop in the child an interest and a desire to participate in local, national and world Jewish affairs and to contribute toward the fulfillment of the prophetic vision of a just society and a united mankind.

8. To give the child an awareness of the essential harmony between the ideals and traditions of American democracy and the ideals and traditions of Judaism to the end that he may be happily adjusted as a Jew, a citizen and an heir to the great American and Jewish traditions.

The Statement also laid the groundwork for the curriculum of the school, listing seven basic areas with which the curriculum should deal. These seven areas were the following:

1. Religious convictions and observances.
2. The Hebrew language.
3. Torah (in the broadest sense).
4. History of the Jewish people and its literature.
5. Eretz Yisrael.
6. American Jewish history.
7. The arts.

More important than the sections dealing with the "Objectives" and the "Contents of the Curriculum" was the section dealing with the educational standards which the Statement presented categorically. The first important demand that the Statement made was summarized in the following words:

AN INTENSIVE JEWISH EDUCATION in accordance with the curriculum pattern outlined in the preceding section requires a sufficient amount of time for its implementation. Tested experience has proved that the one-day-a-week school does not provide sufficient time and therefore cannot convey the basic knowledge of Hebrew and of other subjects necessary for the achievement of our objectives.

The Statement also demanded that in the elementary and junior high school departments, consisting of children between the ages of 8-14, "the minimum weekly schedules should consist of six hours of instruction, with classes meeting not less than three days a week."

Another categorical demand made of the congregational school was in regard to Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah requirements. The prevalent practice had been to accept children in the Hebrew school without reference to their age. Many a child was enrolled about a year before his Bar Mitzvah, and the school was expected to train him for the ceremony. This was a very harmful practice. The Statement therefore demanded of the Conservative congregational school to establish a rigid rule not to allow its students to become Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah unless they had attended a minimum of three years in the Hebrew school.

Considerable Progress

As stated above, the issuance of this Statement immediately galvanized the Conservative congregational forces, and resulted in phenomenal progress. It can be stated that ^{at} least 70% of all Conservative congregations affiliated with the United

Synagogue have eliminated the one-day-a-week school for children above eight or nine. The other congregations are trying to eliminate in the course of time the one-day-a-week school. Even more widespread is the rule demanding a minimum of three years' attendance in Hebrew school as a prerequisite for Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah eligibility. Many congregations have gone beyond that. Last year all the Conservative congregational schools of Queens, New York, adopted a regulation demanding a minimum of four years of Hebrew school attendance. There are some congregations that have raised this prerequisite to five years of Hebrew school attendance.

The Promotion of Jewish Education

The remarkable changes listed above did not take place altogether without the exertion of efforts on the part of the Commission. Among the more important promotional projects undertaken by the Commission were a series of lay and rabbinic conferences. These conferences had as their primary purpose the "selling" of Jewish education to the members of the lay boards. More ambitious was the institution of annual educational conferences for the members of the Rabbinical Assembly. The leadership of the Conservative Movement was also reached at the biennial conventions of the United Synagogue of America, where sessions were regularly set aside for Jewish education, and appropriate resolutions were adopted urging the congregations to abide by the Commission's standards. The Commission is also publishing a quarterly, The Synagogue School. The primary purpose of this periodical is to stimulate more and better education in the congregational school.

The Publication Program

By far the most impressive record established during the past decade has been in the field of publications. The Commission, at the time of its reorganization, established several publication committees to specialize in the several areas where educational materials were needed. Some of the publications that have come off the press are by now the most widely used in American Jewish schools. The Commission has been publishing on the average of six new books annually, and fifteen new publications are now in various stages of production.

The All-Day School

The Commission has taken a positive stand on the all-day school movement. Since there is a widespread misconception that the Conservative Movement is committed solely to the afternoon school, it is important to quote the Commission's official statement of policy in regard to the all-day school. The following excerpt from the above-mentioned Statement will suffice:

An encouraging recent development in Jewish education has been the increase in the number of the all-day Jewish schools. While the afternoon congregational school will constitute the basic pattern for Jewish education in our congregations, the great value of the all-day Jewish school must be recognized. It is of the utmost importance that a substantial minority of our children receive the benefit of the kind of Jewish education which only a well-conducted all-day school can provide. It is therefore highly desirable that congregations, wherever possible, pool their resources for the purpose of establishing such all-day schools. Their graduates will constitute the main reservoir for a well-informed lay and professional leadership in American Jewry.

One of the ambitious projects in the general area of all-day Jewish education undertaken by the Commission has been the promotion of the foundation school idea. Educators have recognized the importance of the early years in the child's education. The Jewish foundation school "is an educational institution designed to cover the first five years of the child's schooling -- beginning with the nursery school years (ages 3-5) and continuing up to the age of eight when the child enters the

third grade in public school and the afternoon classes in the Hebrew school." The foundation school, as conceived by the Commission, gives the child a bicultural education, stressing both the Jewish and the secular needs of the child. Needless to say that Hebrew is regarded as a basic element of the program. Children who have had such an Hebraic training surely have a sound foundation for their future Jewish education.

The Educators Assembly

The problem of personnel has been a source of deep worry for the members of the Commission. Not only is the pool of Jewish professional educators inadequate to meet the needs of American Jewry, but it is growing smaller from year to year.

The past few years, however, have not been permitted to pass without taking some action. Specifically, the Commission has undertaken two projects. It established an efficient placement bureau under the competent guidance of a professional director.

Even more promising is the second project in this area, namely, the organization of the Educators Assembly of the United Synagogue of America. This organization, which consists of close to one hundred educational directors and principals, has already had a healthy influence on the profession. By establishing high standards of admission, demanding professional training and competence as prerequisites, the organization is gradually eliminating some of the chaotic conditions in Jewish education. To be a member of the Educators Assembly means that one is a full time competent professional Jewish educator both in the administrative and supervisory areas.

Re-evaluation of the Commission's Program

This being the tenth year since its reorganization, the Commission has seen fit to re-evaluate its work. An active committee with several subcommittees are investigating various areas. It is quite possible that as a result of this re-evaluation the Commission may shift emphasis or may enter new areas of activity. Some conclusions have already been reached by this committee on evaluation. These conclusions involve new areas of activity, and will necessarily involve additional personnel. Since the parent organizations (the United Synagogue and Rabbinical Assembly) are deeply committed to the importance of Jewish education, the Commission is confident that the recommendations which will emerge from the current re-evaluation will be enthusiastically supported by the parent organizations and that the needed financial support will be forthcoming.

The Commission is optimistic about the decade ahead. It is generally felt that the first ten years have provided valuable experience as well as educational progress. The next decade should prove even more fruitful in its contributions to Jewish education.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM
of the
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

By

EMANUEL GAMORAN

In order to understand the school system of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, it is important to be aware of the background of the Reform movement in this country.

Reform may be said to have begun in America in the year 1846 when Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise came to this country. He was a thinker and a born organizer, and he exerted a wide influence on Reform Judaism and on American Judaism in general. He was responsible, above all, for the founding of the three basic institutions of Liberal Judaism in America -- the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the laity, in 1873, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1875 (now united with the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York), and the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1889. The creation of these institutions is significant not only from an educational and from a Reform point of view, but also from the viewpoint of American Jewry as a whole, for Conservative and Orthodox Jewry also followed this pattern of organization, originally conceived by Isaac Mayer Wise.

At the very first Council of the Union called in Cleveland in 1874, just one year after the first general convention of the Union was held in Cincinnati, a resolution was introduced which urged the unification of the "Sabbath schools," the development of a course of study, a study of the textbooks available, and the like. The Committee on Sabbath Schools was apparently an active one and proceeded to make a study, communicating with seventy Sabbath schools in the country, concerning the courses of study pursued by them. Their conclusions suggested the teaching of Hebrew to include Hebrew grammar, the prayer book and the Bible, Biblical and post-Biblical history, the Jewish religion, and singing.

It was not, however, until 1886, when the Hebrew Sabbath School Union was organized in Cincinnati, "to provide a uniform system for all Hebrew Sabbath schools in the United States by promulgating a uniform course of study and by training competent teachers" that Liberal Jewish education may be said to have begun in an earnest manner under organized auspices. The statistical report of the Hebrew Sabbath School for 1889 lists 114 schools having a total enrollment of 13,576 pupils. It should be remembered that all Jewish schools in the United States were at first all-day schools which gave both secular and religious instruction. It wasn't until 1860 and after that the American public school system had struck firm roots and Jews began to send their children to the public schools. Little by little the all-day schools, which had combined secular and religious education, were replaced by two-day-a-week schools, generally conducted on Sabbath and on Sunday.

In 1838, Rebecca Gratz had established in Philadelphia the first Jewish Sunday School in the United States. Though Sunday schools increased in number after that day, it is noteworthy that in 1882, eighty-one out of a total of ninety-one schools affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations were still two-day-a-week schools conducted on Sabbath and on Sunday.

The Hebrew Sabbath School Union continued its work, publishing several textbooks for pupils and guide books for teachers. However, it gave up its separate existence in 1903 and handed over its activities to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The Union engaged in propaganda for Jewish religious education in small communities, organized Sunday schools, and published a few textbooks.

A new period, as far as Sunday school education is concerned, began in 1923. In that year the Union of American Hebrew Congregations established an Education Department and invited the writer to become its Director. The Commission on Jewish Education was created as a joint body representing both the Central Conference of American Rabbis (the professional group) and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the laity). It was likewise decided to arrange a course of study for Jewish schools and to engage in propaganda for week-day religious instruction, that is, for the introduction of at least one session in addition to Sunday. The fundamental aim of the Jewish religious school was formulated as that of enabling the child to participate intelligently, effectively, and loyally in Jewish life.

One of the initial steps of the Commission on Jewish education was to sponsor the first scientific survey in the field of Jewish Sunday school education. Questionnaires were sent to 400 schools. One hundred and ninety replies were received, and 125 came from congregations affiliated with the Union (Survey of 125 Religious Schools by Emanuel Gamoran, 1925). This study revealed some interesting facts concerning Reform education. School buildings were few in spite of fine congregational structures. Classes were held in basements, and only 30 per cent of the schools were in separate buildings. The average period of instruction was one hour and twenty-seven minutes; only 15 per cent provided education for an additional day in the week; only 23 per cent had a complete high school department; only 35 per cent had Hebrew as part of the regular curriculum, and even then it was taught somewhat less than six years and less than an hour a week.

The greatest lack was in textbooks. There were a few elementary school books and none in the high school. There was only one complete series of texts in Jewish history, and that altogether difficult for juvenile comprehension. Current events were not taught at all, and the center of gravity was on the study of Bible stories. Each story was told and "the moral drawn." As far as Jewish history was concerned, the children were brought to the Babylonian exile, and there they remained, often not to be redeemed. Most of the teachers were ill prepared for their work. The study also revealed certain favorable facts. For example, it showed that the children in school were from the ages of five to sixteen; that elimination was low, only 9.1 per cent; 77 per cent remained after confirmation, which is a very high percentage. Undoubtedly the congregational school was holding its pupils longer than the communal school, especially where the congregation functioned as a center for the entire family. The corresponding lacks were adequate textbooks and trained teachers. Therefore the course of study which we prepared and published became at the same time a plan for the creation of a textbook literature.

Now, thirty years after the organization of the Commission on Jewish Education, we may state what this Commission, under the joint auspices of the Union and the Conference, accomplished. Our first and greatest need was the development of a course of study for the Liberal Jewish religious school and the creation of this textbook literature. Religious school consisted mostly of well-wishers who possessed what has been rightly called an "aura of amiability." This was accompanied by vague talk of spirituality, but the schools were in the main pitifully inadequate and few people took them seriously. The first step, then, for the new Commission on Jewish Education was to develop such a curriculum. Bearing in mind from the beginning that one-day a week of Jewish education was insufficient to meet our needs, we presented the country with a two-day-a-week curriculum for the Jewish school. The Commission recognized the need of creating a literature for such a course of study that would include Judaism, Jewish history and literature, Hebrew, the prayer book, customs and ceremonies, music, the Jewish community and its problems, current events, and other related subjects.

It was the virtue of the Reform movement that it had a liberal point of view; therefore it could depart from the status quo, both in form and in content. It could change in the direction that it thought desirable. From its earliest days the

Liberal movement sought to emphasize the essentials rather than mere tools of education. It was always interested in the essence of Judaism and it recognized that that essence is to be found in the great universal, humanistic values of Jewish tradition. For a while it was deflected from its central purpose by its opposition to Jewish nationalism. The struggle on the part of the Jews to secure emancipation, to achieve civil and political rights, brought many people to confuse the concepts of "statehood" with those of "peoplehood." By now, intelligent Jews -- with the exception of an insignificant contingent of Jews -- recognize the difference between a "state" and a "people." No one who thinks straight will any more ask the question, Are we a people or a religion? They understand that culture is the outgrowth of the life of a people, and it is the uniqueness of the Jewish people that it developed a culture which is essentially religious. Therefore, any system of Jewish education which is worthy of the name will operate with the three concepts of God, Israel and Torah. And the classic Jewish dictum from the Kabala, "Israel and the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are One," is a reflection of the true Jewish spirit.

In that spirit and with the knowledge that a full, well-rounded concept of Judaism includes all these three aspects, the Commission on Jewish Education proceeded to map out a course of study for the Jewish religious schools and a program of publications to fill every school need. Those who accept only the "Jewish people" and overlook "Torah" and "God" are disappointed in the publications; those who accept only the "Jewish people" and overlook "Torah" and "God" are disappointed in the publications; those who see only "religion" and forget "Torah" and "Israel" are equally unhappy. Neither peoplehood nor God alone constitute Judaism. Israel, Torah, and God, all combined, are Judaism.

In these thirty years we have prepared a literature for Jewish education beginning with publications for little children and their parents in the home, continuing with pupils in the Jewish school, for young people in the high school, for our youth, for our teachers and school administrators, and finally for adults in general.

We have issued many "firsts." A few may be of interest:

The first four-color series on the holidays for pre-school children.

The first well-illustrated series on Bible and post-Biblical heroes.

The first Animated Series on the calendar and the holidays.

Two series of books on Jewish history for younger and older children, which mark a new departure in the teaching of that subject. (A third series is now in process of being published.)

A first series on Jewish literature.

A series on the holidays and on customs and ceremonies from the cradle to adulthood.

The first program for teacher training.

The first series on adult education.

The first series on the Jewish community.

The only translation of Bialik's children's poems.

The first series of correspondence courses to meet the needs of the "forgotten Jews" in the small communities.

We were the first to launch a popular list of commentaries on the Bible to meet the needs of Jewish laymen or the Christian student who has no access to Hebrew sources. And we have now established a new audio-Visual Department which creates audio-visual aids, both filmstrips and motion pictures, and helps our congregations to establish audio-visual departments in their schools.

With the help of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods we have conducted hundreds of seminars for teacher training and for adult education. Our literature is used by Jews of all shades of opinion and belief, and all elements of Jewry receive its pamphlets. We feel that religion in general and Judaism in particular must be interpreted to meet the needs of the times. We have reason to feel that if others followed our example Judaism would have a better chance of survival and the essentials of Judaism would be safeguarded wherever Jews are.

We seek to retain the experimental spirit in our activities. Many of our books were first issued in experimental editions and received criticisms and suggestions from principals and teachers who used them. By now we have created over 400 books, pamphlets, debates, plays, teachers' guides, discussion outlines, and other materials to meet practically every need from the cradle to the grave.

We seek to bring the result of the science of education to the Jewish religious school. The latest findings in psychology and in general education discovered by the best minds in our universities and schools of education are tried, tested, and applied to Jewish education. We do not succumb to every gadget that is introduced, nor to every educational panacea, but we follow the serious work earnestly pursued by students of education and we examine it for what it is worth. We hope to continue this creative activity in the years to come and to help develop an American Jewry, loyal to the ideals of Judaism, to the Jewish heritage; in short, devoted to our people, our culture, and our faith.

THE TORAH UMESORAH PROGRAM
FOR INTENSIVE JEWISH EDUCATION

By

JOSEPH KAMINETSKY

Day Schools, or Yeshivot Ketanot, where both religious and general (secular) subjects are studied under one roof, are growing by leaps and bounds in the United States. In June, 1954, when the current school term ended, there were approximately 160 such schools, about evenly divided between the Metropolitan area and the rest of the country, with an enrollment of close to 35,000 pupils. More specifically, these schools exist today in 65 cities in 24 States, and are distributed in every section of the country - the Pacific Coast, the Midwest, the South (both east and west) and the Eastern Seaboard area. They operate mostly on the elementary level; but there are already a goodly number of secondary schools as well. At the beginning of the present school year, about 10 additional schools were opened.

It is a well-recognized fact by now that the tremendous growth of the Day School movement was made possible, to a large extent, by the pioneering and devoted efforts of one of the leading national agencies in the field: Torah Umesorah, whose English name is the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools. In point of fact, Torah Umesorah, by September, 1954, had helped in the founding of at least 66 of the country's 170 Day Schools - and about 70 per cent of the "out-of-town" schools. (Torah Umesorah concentrates, to a large degree, on establishing such schools outside the larger Metropolitan areas, where it feels the need is greatest.)

Torah Umesorah was founded in June, 1944, as an independent organization to spearhead the establishment of such schools by the deans and leading Roshe Yeshiva of the major rabbinical seminaries in America, and the former heads of the Great Yeshivot in Europe, aided and abetted by an intrepid group of active lay workers for Torah. The leading spirit in bringing about the formation of Torah Umesorah was Rabbi Feivel Mendelowitz, of blessed memory - one of the most devoted and selfless workers for Torah in our generation - who would often quote the following passage from Yalkut Shimoni, which may well serve to describe the organization's élan vital:

The 72,000 inhabitants of Givat Benjamin - why did they perish?

It was the duty of the Sanhedrin (which Moses and Joshua left after them to lead Israel) to gird their loins with ropes of iron, to lift up their cloaks, and make the rounds of every village and town in Israel - now in Lochish, on to Eglon, thence to Hebron, pressing on to Beth El, and then to Jerusalem - in order to teach the children of Israel.

But they did not do so.

Instead, the moment they entered the land, each hurried to his vineyard, and to his olive field, and exclaimed, "I am at peace - why should I worry?"

In projecting its program for the "Torah-conquest" of Jewish communities, the founders of Torah Umesorah called upon American-trained Yeshiva graduates, conversant with the American scene and trained in American universities, to go out into the field to help establish new yeshivot. It was understood, of course, that all

institutions founded were to be fully Orthodox in character, and that their curricula would be based on the traditional interpretation of the Torah as it has been taught throughout the ages.

This latter point is most crucial in our story. For, it is a tribute to the dynamism of the Orthodox Jewish community of America that 90 per cent of all the Day Schools in the country are under the auspices of observant Jews. Not that the majority of the pupils attending these schools come from Orthodox homes. The actual number who do so can only be estimated - and a fair estimate would be about 30-40 per cent at best for the country as a whole! Yet, the programs of the overwhelming majority of these schools are highly traditional in character. Certainly, one of the basic aims of the Day Schools which Torah Umesorah has helped establish, is: shemirat hamitzvot - personal observance of the laws, customs, and ceremonies of Judaism. In essence, Torah Umesorah is committed to the idea of lehachazir ha-atarah leyosanah - to restore Torah-learning and Torah-living to their former glory. Torah Umesorah Yeshivot concentrate on making future Yeshiva bachurim out of their pupils. To them the highest ideal is to send a boy to a higher Yeshiva or Mesivta to continue his Jewish studies. (Girls, too, are similarly urged to go ever higher on the educational ladder.)

In broader terms, the aims and objectives of the Torah Umesorah Day Schools can be subsumed under three general headings, as follows:

(1) Stress on Intellectual Attainments - A frank attempt to restore the concept of the ben Torah or talmid chochom to Jewish living in America. "Study is greater," says the Talmud, "because it leads to deeds." Our schools stress living Judaism, to put it succinctly.

(2) Education for Values - Emphasis on the basic values of Judaism: love of God, respect for one's fellow-man, love of Torah, people and land. This is achieved through a harmonization of the basic spiritual values of Judaism and American democracy (with a small d), and the development of a sense of ethical awareness in our pupils.

(3) The Spiritual Renaissance of the American Jewish Family - The Day School looks upon itself as a "grand strategy" best calculated to achieve the spiritual refashioning of the Jewish home. By inculcating in its pupils a better understanding of the Jewish way of life, it is effecting a religious regaling in the lives of the parents as well. (There are many who will claim, in fact, that the greatest contribution of the Day School is its work in re-educating Jewish parents - through their children - in the ideals and values of Judaism.)

To achieve these aims, Torah Umesorah has worked hard and diligently. The results have been most gratifying in many respects. In each community visited, the forces of Orthodoxy operating in them have been welded together and regaling for action. As a matter of fact, all segments of the community which have expressed interest in a yeshiva ketana - regardless of "political" or other Jewish affiliation - have been contacted to add their strength to the growing idea. Zionists, Mizrachists, Agudists, and even secularists have been drawn into the picture, so long as they recognize the Shulhan Arukh as the prevailing code of Jewish law.

There is much that is interesting and challenging in a survey of the type of Torah Umesorah Day Schools which stud the continent. In the main, they fall into three categories: (1) the "old-type" yeshiva, which uses Yiddish as the language of instruction and emphasizes the study of Talmud as early as possible; (2) the school which uses ivrit-b'ivrit as the language of instruction and

concentrates on the Hebrew language as the vehicle to teach the classic Jewish texts; and (3) the ivrit b'anglit school which bypasses the language problem, in a sense, because of its desire to stress subject-matter and essential Jewish ideals and practices. In all cases, however, the educational program suggested for each school is an intensive one. The accent is "on meat and not on spices or dessert." The typical curriculum emphasizes the study of Humash in the makor (the original), with Rashi added as soon as possible, leading eventually to Mishnah and Gemarah - not forgetting, however, careful study of the Hebrew language and present-day Israel.

It has been no easy task to stress this intensive and traditional approach. Standards of Jewish education have been tremendously watered down in this country. People are still too much used to ersatz, to substitutes for meaty Jewish learning. The constant inspiration given by our teachers to live by the Shulhan Arukh is often met with suspicion and cries of "fanaticism!" We are very often accused of creating religious conflicts in the home, since many parents do not wish to practice what their children's teachers preach. Yet, thanks to the efforts and devotion of the teachers in the field, Orthodoxy and its values are making their way into thousands of Jewish homes.

As to the organization of the schools themselves, these are purely local matters. For to a large extent each school is an independent entity by itself. Torah Umesorah does not require affiliation in any legal sense. There is no attempt at central control and the building up of a hierarchy. While all efforts are made to bind the schools spiritually to the ideals of Torah Umesorah, authority in fiscal and other matters is left to the schools themselves. Hence, for instance, the matter of the language of instruction is left to the local spiritual leaders who constitute the school's Board of Education. Torah Umesorah insists, however, that these be observant Jews. The matter of schedule, too, is dependent upon local conditions. Torah Umesorah suggests and prefers that all religious studies be held during the morning hours so that the best hours of the day are devoted to limudei kodesh. Yet, in many out-of-town communities "double-sessions" are held, i.e., the religious studies are given to some grades in the morning and to others in the afternoon. This situation is brought about mainly by the lack of adequate personnel, budgetary problems, and the like.

The financial strain and the non-availability of enough teachers have handicapped the growth of our Day Schools in many other respects, too. Not enough time can be given to in-service training, educational research, and the writing of proper texts in language, history, and Dinim Uminhagim which stress the traditional approach and are geared to the program of the Yeshivah Ketanah.

As a matter of fact, in working out the educational program for various Day Schools, Torah Umesorah has through the years indulged in some real exploration and research. Even many Day Schools officially unaffiliated with Torah Umesorah have joined in this process, as have teachers trained in all of the major teachers' institutes in the country whom Torah Umesorah places in its various schools. In all, some 100-odd Day Schools participate regularly in the periodic conferences, seminars, and workshops conducted by Torah Umesorah's Department of Education. In 5713 (1953), the Rabbinical Administrative Board of Torah Umesorah brought further creative endeavor into the Day School movement through the formation of the National Yeshiva Teachers Board of License. This Board issues licenses to teachers in the Day School field, after examination and evaluation by a designated Board of Examiners, setting uniform professional standards for Yeshiva personnel - a long overdue necessity.

Torah Umesorah has also taken cognizance of the great need for specific publications to service the Hebrew Day School field. It publishes textbooks, manuals, workbooks, evaluations of books already available, as well as supplementary reading material for parents and children - The Jewish Parent and Olameinu ("Our World"), respectively. Through its Department of Publications, it is endeavoring to fill the gap in this area.

The integration of parental and educational efforts toward the fullest development of their children's growth has been facilitated by Torah Umesorah's most energetic affiliate - the National Association of Hebrew Day School Parents and Teachers Association. Through its National Board, regional officers and groups it has developed a widespread program of activities designed to deal with the problem of active, informed, and intelligent parent participation in the educational process. National P T A sponsors a parent-education program, a series of program-guides, and regular conferences to achieve these aims.

Thus, alongside Torah Umesorah's pioneer endeavor in winning over Jewish communities to yeshiva education, other important designs have been woven. Through its major departments - School Organization, Education, Publications, Public Relations, and the National Parent-Teachers Association - Torah Umesorah has set up a smooth-working, efficient machine for servicing new and existing schools.

These services of Torah Umesorah can be briefly summarized as follows:

- (1) the founding of Hebrew Day Schools;
- (2) the planning and implementation of public relations program for the Hebrew Day School idea;
- (3) the supervision of the Hebrew and general studies departments of Day Schools;
- (4) the training and placement of teachers and administrative personnel;
- (5) the administration of a teachers' licensing program for the Day School movement;
- (6) the sponsorship of programs dedicated to the professional growth of Day School personnel;
- (7) the publication of texts and supplementary reading materials for children and adults;
- (8) the direction and guidance of model programs of activities for the P T A.

The patterns of intensive Jewish education in the present and future have been blueprinted by Torah Umesorah. Torah Umesorah looks to mutual cooperation with other agencies, groups and individuals, in achieving its aims - which, we like to believe, are the aims of all intensivists in Jewish education.

make them attractive to the children. The response to this phase of our work was very gratifying. Forty-one publications have been published, of which a quarter of a million copies were sold in the past 15 years. Today, Orthodox Jewry vies successfully with all others in this important sector of Jewish educational work. Our children drink from our own traditional sources without fear of meeting contradictory material which might confuse them. They take as much pride in Hebrew textbooks as they do in their secular ones, and are attracted to continue along parallel paths in their search for academic and Jewish learning and knowledge of American ideals.

This bird's-eye view of Mizrahi's accomplishments in furtherance of intensive Jewish education in America reflects the importance of this phase of its American program.

THE WORK OF THE MIZRACHI NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

By
ISIDOR MARGOLIS

The establishment of the State of Israel, its successful heroic defense against seven Arab nations, and its admission to the United Nations, brought to a close a decisive era in Jewish history. The realization of this age-old dream set the national Jewish organizations thinking about reorienting their activities. Committees were appointed to chart new directions and prepare new programs to meet the needs of the American Jewish community. When the reports were presented, Jewish education was found to be the core of the new blueprint. The program advocated by the Mizrachi National Education Committee during the decade and a half of its activities was vindicated. It needed no new orientation. Our Committee has been proclaiming the basic role of Jewish education in American Jewish life for the past fifteen years.

At the time of the Vaad's inception in 1939, no central agency existed which spoke for Orthodox Jewry in educational matters. Individual institutions, large and small, offered elementary and higher courses of study in consonance with Orthodox philosophy and tradition. Communities and schools boasted of capable boards of education interested in high educational standards and achievements. However, when spokesmen presented the views of American Jewry on the philosophy of Jewish education, courses of study, and methods and textbooks for attaining them, the voices of all other segments of the Jewish community rang out clarion-clear, but that of the Orthodox wing was notable for its almost complete silence. No wonder, then, that the ordinary Jew and parent accepted the status quo of poor standards, minimum goals and third or fourth-rate instruction as inevitable and desirable; the existence of a mere handful of intensive Jewish schools as normal, as evidence of the inhospitality of American soil to more meaningful Jewish education. Such an educational climate brought in its wake landslides of decreased hours, days, and years of instruction, and amalgamation of classes. Salaries dropped, and rumblings of catastrophic educational earthquakes drove teachers and children from the crumbling schools as soon as the first fissures became evident in our general economy, and therefore in our communal economic structure. To allow such a leaderless vacuum to exist in traditional Jewish education was to invite chaos and complete decay. To prevent this, the Mizrachi took the initiative in organizing the Vaad Hachinuch Hachareidi. This central educational agency was to provide the leadership and be the pioneering force in opening new and ever-diversified roads to greater educational heights.

The Vaad set about with determination and vision to halt the deterioration of Jewish education. Its program was unique in that it was rooted in three major indivisible premises: study of Torah in its broadest sense, individual observance, and the centrality of Eretz Israel in Jewish religious life and observance. It maintained that any Jewish school deleting any one of these premises removed itself automatically from the continuity of Jewish Orthodox education as taught throughout the centuries. Each of these premises was of equal importance, and no Orthodox Jew or school could agree to teach any one or two of these and accept the third conditionally and still be Orthodox. The Vaad defended the need for intensive Jewish education and pointed out the fallacies in temporary palliatives. Its work soon showed effective results, and its leadership aroused other potent forces that had been silenced by the great number of opponents to support this position. It can be said without fear of exaggeration or contradiction that it succeeded in stemming the tide. It gave Orthodox education a capable and recognized spokesman who has been invited to present the Orthodox point of view for Klal Israel and Eretz Israel and made it welcome at all educational gatherings.

Having accomplished this much it set about presenting a positive program for intensifying and improving Orthodox Jewish education. It called regional conferences to awaken interest in better Jewish education. Its representatives traveled to distant parts of the country to grapple with local educational problems and to introduce better curriculums and methods. It prepared the ground for opening new Day Schools in small and large communities and then opened them despite all predictions to the contrary. It opened the deep, and what seemed hopeless, South, to yeshiva education, and now there are eight Day Schools in the South. Fifty-eight Vaad yeshivos dot the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Portland, Me. to Los Angeles, Calif.

Nor was it merely a question of opening new Day Schools. The existing Day Schools also needed direction and guidance. This was even more true of the Talmud Torahs which were in a very bad educational shape and were fast losing much of their effectiveness. Our Committee engaged highly competent educators to act as consultants. They met with administrative and teaching personnel as well as with the lay leadership of the schools. They visited the classrooms and observed the process of instruction, and in each case sought to bring solutions to the many knotty problems confronting us. This was a service of the highest importance, as evidenced both by the increasing demands for it as well as by the improvement it brought about in the schools supervised. For, unless the Day School and Talmud Torah can be helped to produce good results, the effort and money expended in conducting and maintaining them is wasted. Here was a serious effort to apply technical knowledge and modern skills and techniques to traditional subject matter by educators competent to do so, in place of ineffective floundering by men of good will and little professional training.

In the very early stages of our work, we were confronted with the lack of properly trained Jewish teachers and administrators on all levels. Consultation and guidance is only effective if the educational personnel has the minimum educational preparation necessary to benefit by it. New schools can be opened only if trained teachers are available to man them. Educational propaganda for intensifying Jewish education has lasting value only if it is followed by opening a proper school or improving the existing one. Thus, the fundamental requirement for improving Orthodox Jewish education was good teachers, and these were very scarce. Our Committee did not accept this condition as inevitable. It set up in-service courses and lectures for teachers and principals in local, schools and city-wide. It conducted workshops and seminars for kindergarten teachers, and ultimately founded the Institute for Hebrew Pre-School Education, a college-level course which gave specialized kindergarten and Hebrew academic training for kindergarten teachers. Its graduates were welcomed eagerly by Day Schools, and ultimately the Institute became an integral part of the Teachers Institute for Women of Yeshiva University.

Just as barren and forsaken was the field of textbooks for the Orthodox Jewish school. It seems that in theory, at least, the tradition of oral instruction was in complete control. No Orthodox institution or agency concerned itself with publishing textbooks and educational material, Orthodox in content and up-to-date in techniques and approach. Yet, since our children were using books in their secular studies and needed texts for their Hebrew studies, any book that was published on the subject studied, even if it contradicted the underlying philosophy of our Hebrew schools, was used without any hesitation. Some Reform textbooks had their greatest sale in our Orthodox schools.

Our Committee set out to do away with this paradox. It invited capable educators to prepare textbooks and then had artists illustrate these books to

make them attractive to the children. The response to this phase of our work was very gratifying. Forty-one publications have been published, of which a quarter of a million copies were sold in the past 15 years. Today, Orthodox Jewry vies successfully with all others in this important sector of Jewish educational work. Our children drink from our own traditional sources without fear of meeting contradictory material which might confuse them. They take as much pride in Hebrew textbooks as they do in their secular ones, and are attracted to continue along parallel paths in their search for academic and Jewish learning and knowledge of American ideals.

This bird's-eye view of Mizrachi's accomplishments in furtherance of intensive Jewish education in America reflects the importance of this phase of its American program.

THE JEWISH FOLK SCHOOLS

Their History, Ideology and Development

By

LEON RUBINSTEIN

The Jewish Folk Schools of the Labor Zionist Movement in the United States and Canada will celebrate this year the 45th anniversary of their existence.

In December, 1910, the first Jewish Folk School, called Jewish National-Radical School, was founded in New York. The establishment of this educational institution in America was the result of the resolutions of the constituent conference of the National Jewish Workers Alliance in Rochester, June, 1910, and of the Poale Zion convention in Montreal in October of the same year.

Those familiar with the history of that period can appreciate the historical importance of this enterprise.

It was a period of Jewish self-denial on the part of important leading circles in Jewish life in America, both from the Right and from the Left. Assimilationism was propagated among the immigrant masses pouring into America from Eastern Europe under the guise of Americanization or Cosmopolitanism.

The Yahudim, the Reform Jews, preached that the Jews were not a people, but a religious denomination. Consequently, these Reform Jews built institutions for the sole purpose of Americanizing the new immigrants.

On the other hand, the Jewish Labor Movement was at that time dominated by socialist and anarchist leaders, who propagated assimilationist cosmopolitanism.

After the Russian Revolution of 1905, there came to America many Jewish public workers of various political shades, among them Poale Zionists (Labor Zionists) and Socialist Territorialists. These elements launched a campaign against assimilationism and amaratzuth, as propagated by the old-time Jewish labor leaders. A prominent role was played by the Poale Zion, who started their activities in America in 1903. Later they were joined by the Socialist Territorialists. In 1906 the Poale Zion established a weekly called Yiddisher Kemfer, which became the organ of the nationally conscious Jewish intelligentsia.

Gradually, the influence of the assimilationist labor leaders declined, and a considerable part of the Jewish working people began to show an interest in Jewish national and cultural problems.

As already mentioned above, at the convention of the Jewish Workers National Alliance in 1910, and later at the convention of the Poale Zion, it was decided to establish Jewish schools. The underlying principles of the new Jewish National-Radical School were as follows:

(a) The Jews are one people throughout the world. It is the ardent desire of the Jewish people to organize and renew its national life through the establishment of a Jewish State.

(b) The Jewish people created and continues to create its own culture, which, beginning with the Bible, developed throughout the ages and finds its expression at present in modern Jewish creations in Hebrew and Yiddish.

(c) Jewish workers should help in the struggle for a better society to be built on the principles of social justice.

On the basis of these principles, a proper school program was worked out. Yoel Entin, who was one of the main promoters of modern Jewish education, became the principal of the first school in New York. In the course of time, similar schools were established in New York and in other cities of the United States and Canada.

At the third school convention in 1917, it was unanimously decided to change the name of the school and to call them Jewish Folk Schools, inasmuch as the name radical was associated with anti-religious tendencies.

The Jewish Folk School movement spread throughout the United States and Canada. As there was a shortage of trained teachers for the schools, the second school conference in 1914, decided to establish a seminary for Yiddish teachers, for which the conference adopted an appropriate program, which included both general and Jewish subjects. The seminary was established in 1918.

In the more than 40 years of their existence, the Jewish Folk Schools have laid much emphasis on the intensification of Jewish education. Some schools have a program of six years; all others have one of five years. In all schools instruction is given five days a week, and half of the schools have two or more teachers each. The pupils are taught for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day, and in schools with one teacher - one hour a day. Every effort has lately been made to the end that schools employ at least two teachers so that the pupils may receive more than one hour of instruction a day.

The Jewish Folk Schools today comprise 74 institutions of which 10 are high schools and 7 all-day schools. In the all-day schools the children receive their entire education, both general and Jewish. In the all-day schools, two and a half hours are devoted daily to Hebrew and Yiddish subjects. A number of new all-day schools are scheduled to be opened both in New York and elsewhere in the country.

The total number of teachers in all the institutions of the Jewish Folk Schools is about 150, apart from the teachers of general subjects in the all-day schools.

The Folk Schools are supervised by a Central Schools Committee, composed of elected members and representatives of the Jewish National Workers Alliance, Poale Zion, and Pioneer Women.

The Central Schools Committee publishes textbooks, a pedagogic journal called Yiddish Dertsiung, and literature for children.

The school publishing division is at present called The Pinchas Gingold Publishing Foundation in memory of the late Pinchas Gingold, who was one of the pioneers of the Jewish Folk Schools, and for several years director of the Jewish Teachers Seminary, as well as director of the Central Schools Committee.

The schools hold periodical conferences. In August, 1950, a special educational conference was held with the participation of representatives of the Labor Zionist Movement, educators, and teachers. The conference adopted the following "Principles and aims of the Jewish Folk Schools of the Labor Zionist movement:

1. "The Schools are conducted in the spirit of Labor Zionism.
2. The Schools should provide enough basic knowledge in Hebrew cultural treasures in both languages.
3. Through teaching, through the school environment and extra curricular activities the schools should provide the pupil with a democratically progressive world outlook, the ability for independent thinking and grasping of Jewish and world problems.
4. The Schools should continuously foster in the children the idea of the unity and significance of the Jewish people; of the great importance of Medinat Israel and Kibbutz Galuyot (in-gathering of the exiles) and inspire them with the ideas of Halutziyut. The goal of Ahavat Israel (love for Israel as a people) and Ahavat Ha'aretz (love for the land of Israel) should be achieved through the subjects taught as well as through various other activities.
5. The Schools should acquaint the pupils with the Jewish, religious and ethical approach to life and educate them in the paths of Jewish traditions.
6. The Schools should develop in the pupils a genuine interest in Jewish social and communal life in America; in the democratic life of the American Republic and in the institutions and organizations which contribute to the continuity of Jewish life."

In elaborating on the religious phase of the curriculum, the 1952 conference stated that the instruction should include the study of the Sabbath, holidays and week-days and the order of praying and the meaning of prayers. As a result of this study, the child should be able to participate in the traditional Jewish way of life at home and in the synagogue.

The Jewish Folk School has always followed its own course in regard to Jewish education.

The Jewish Folk School teaches Yiddish, but has never been Yiddishist and never called Yiddish School, as frequently misrepresented even by official educational bodies.

We have been a Hebrew-Yiddish or Yiddish-Hebrew school system from the very inception to the present. On the contrary, we now have more schools starting with Hebrew, since we have decided, for pedagogical reasons, to begin the first year with one language, leaving the choice to the local school management. In the second year, both languages are taught.

We want the child to be attached to the Jewish people, to love Jews and Judaism, and to become acquainted with the treasures of our culture throughout the ages, - both in Hebrew and in Yiddish.

Our motto has always been: The Jewish child for the Jewish people.

THE SHOLEM ALEICHEM SCHOOLS FACE THE FOURTH CENTURY

By

SAUL GOODMAN

The Thirty-First Conference of the Sholem Aleichem Folks Schools, held at the end of May, 1954, met under the sign of the Tercentenary celebration of American Jewry. The conference not only took stock of the achievements of the Sholem Aleichem Schools, their ups and downs during the 41 years of their existence, but also gave thought, in special addresses and symposiums, to the past epochs of Jewish history in this country and marked out ways and means to strengthen the Sholem Aleichem Schools, as well as plans for adapting them to the changed conditions of life. From the report rendered at the conference it was evident that the Sholem Aleichem Schools had come to the thirty-first gathering with important accomplishments, but also with a number of difficult problems demanding a speedy solution. Let us outline the most important of them.

In the past three years seven new Sholem Aleichem Schools were opened in a number of suburbs of New York. Three of them are 1-day-a-week (Sunday) schools; one is a 2-day school, and three are 3-day schools. The combined enrollment of the 17 Sholem Aleichem Schools is now about 1,000, a little more than a year ago. Fifty-four per cent of the pupils are boys. Fifty children graduated this year from the Sholem Aleichem Folks Schools, and 11 from the Sholem Aleichem High School (Mittelshul). In 4 schools each class receives from 2 to 3 hours' instruction a week; in another 4 schools, from 3 to 4 hours a week; in 5 schools, from 5 to 6 hours a week; and in the remaining 4 schools, from 6 to 7 a week.

Grave doubts exist as to the effectiveness of the Sunday Schools. But I think we must be patient with the Sunday Schools, especially as the American-born generation is beginning to draw ever closer to Jewish life and Jewish affairs. We should encourage and not turn away those who go only part of the way with us and not all the way. But I want to underscore heavily that the Sholem Aleichem School will remain a school for intensive Jewish education, and it will have a raison d'etre only if its standard is high, otherwise it would not pay to make sacrifices to maintain a minority school. Accordingly, we establish Sunday Schools not as a norm, but as a temporary measure which in due time is to lead to increased hours of instruction.

The last conference adopted the following declaration of principles governing the education provided at the Sholem Aleichem Schools:

1. As Jews identified with the Jewish people, we feel that our schools ought to develop in the children a sense of belonging to our people throughout the world, with all the duties that this entails:

- (a) To help Jews in other countries and to be actively interested in the upbuilding of the State of Israel.
- (b) To preserve and develop further those parts of the Jewish tradition which harmonize with Jewish life in America.

2. To develop in them a feeling of personal security in order to avert an inner conflict which may arise in members of a minority group.

3. To implant in the children the consciousness that Judaism has its universal aspects which play a special role today; for example, the ideals of peace and democracy.

4. To acquaint the children with the role of Jews in the development of universal culture.

5. To stress the ideals of noble human traits in the Jewish conception of life (such as repugnance to bloodshed and man's duty to study).

6. To acquaint the children with the great accomplishments and the patterns of behavior of our fathers and forefathers in Eastern Europe, and to instill in them devotion to and respect for this cultural heritage and for the language-Yiddish-which is so intimately bound up with it.

7. To acquaint the children with the Hebrew language, which has been so closely linked with Jewish spiritual life through the ages .

This year, seeing how urgent it has become to standardize the observance of Jewish holidays and especially the inauguration of the Sabbath in our schools, we have concentrated on ceremonials. In accordance with the accepted principles, our secular Judaism must rest on such traditions and customs as are widespread and not confined to particular Jewish groupings. In keeping with the same principles, the word, the poetic formula, the prayer, must also play an important part in every Jewish rite.

Survey of Parents

It is worth dwelling on a basic fact, namely, that 80 per cent of today's Jewish parents are native Americans. This means, first of all, that Yiddish is no longer spoken in the homes of most of our parents. Second, that we cannot expect the children of these parents to use Yiddish as the language of their daily life; and thirdly, that, while these parents want their children to get a Sholem Aleichem School education, the main thing to them is not so much the linguistic knowledge of their children as intimate connection with Jewish life, participation in Jewish celebrations, public and private, holidays and Oneg Sabbaths, participation in communal activities, etc.

In response to a questionnaire we sent to the parents of our children we received the following answers:

1. Sixty-four per cent consider the study of Yiddish the most important; the rest are divided between the Bible and Jewish history.

2. A hundred per cent of the parents regard the celebration of bar mitzvah and Jewish holidays as very important. To the question, "Do you consider the study of Yiddish tremendously important?" 87 per cent answered in the affirmative. The remaining 13 per cent also consider it important, but not tremendously important."

Extremely encouraging are the answers to the question, "Why do you consider the study of Yiddish so important?" Among the reasons given are the following:

1. Yiddish is a link in the chain which binds the generations together.

2. Yiddish is a precious heritage which must not be discarded nor allowed to die.

3. Yiddish affords an intimate bond with the Jewish tradition.

4. Yiddish is employed by Jews the world over, and Jewish children ought to know the principal language of the Jews.

5. Yiddish possesses a rich literature which can best be appreciated in the original.

6. A knowledge of Yiddish gives one a better understanding of Jewish problems.

From the foregoing one may conclude that nearly all American-born parents of Sholem Aleichem School pupils want their children to learn and know Yiddish.

The Mission of the Sholem Aleichem Folks Schools

It will be of interest to conclude with a few brief excerpts from the solemn Declaration adopted by the Thirty-First Conference, because in it the spirit and complexion of the Sholem Aleichem Schools is sharply etched. In it there comes to expression the concern for a creative Jewish life in America and the right of minorities among Jews. In it one perceives the evolution which the Sholem Aleichem Schools have gone through from the former native attitude of "Let us be like all the other nations" to the present distinctly Jewish secularism with its balanced curriculum of modern and traditional studies embracing Yiddish and Hebrew, history and Bible, literature and selected prayers, an inauguration of the Sabbath ceremony every Friday night and preparation for bar mitzvah; Jewish customs and tradition, as well as Jewish life in America and Israel.

Here are some excerpts from the Declaration:

"We consider it our mission to preserve the cultural heritage of Eastern Europe, especially the flowering of the distinctive and comprehensive Jewish culture during the last few generations in Eastern Europe. We will endeavor to hold before the gaze of the present and succeeding generations all that was wholesome, genuine, and eternal in the destroyed Jewish life in Eastern Europe, which is the cultural background of nearly all of American Jewry. After the destruction of the old home, after the horrors of the slaughter of six million Jews in Europe, we feel that it is our tenfold duty to continue to draw living water from the old and new folk springs which well up within us and in our work for the people and for each individual Jew. We promise to remain true to the ideals of human freedom and equality and of our own national advancement with which, inspired by them, we began our work decades ago.

"We will place in the center the people and its interests -- the whole people, in all lands. In a libertarian, secular spirit we evaluate the traditional which helped to keep us together, and we will endeavor to extract from it what is permanent and valuable for our continued existence here and everywhere...

"We will continue to labor for the preservation of the vitality and vigor of Yiddish, which is both the expression of our collective experience during the East European era and the strongest link with Jews the world over and with the recent past, and which was the wonderful instrument of the cultural renaissance, of the unforgettable efflorescence of our literature, of the spiritual growth of the common man. Together with our ancient and reborn Hebrew language, the Yiddish tongue was, is, and will be the most suitable medium for preserving Jewish values, serving as a bridge and connecting link between separate parts of our people, and safeguarding the possibility of distinct and creative otherness.

"On the basis of these principles which express our course in Jewish life, and armed with faith in the possibility of further creative existence in this country, in Israel, and everywhere in the world where there are democratic forms for it, we solemnly pledge to continue our cultural work generally and the building and development of schools where the curriculum and educational activity will reflect our principles and aspirations."

HEBREW IN THE GENERAL SCHOOL SYSTEM -
AN AMERICAN PHENOMENON

By
JUDAH LAPSON

During the past twenty-five years, we have witnessed a sui generis development in American secondary education. Hebrew has been admitted into the foreign language program of American public -- state or municipality supported -- secondary schools, on a par with the modern European languages that have long been integral to the curriculum of the "high school," the American secondary school, namely: French, German, Spanish, and (to a lesser extent) Italian.

Hebrew instruction in a general school system is without precedent in modern education. French, English, German, and several other European languages, have for some generations been taught in secondary schools in various countries because of their cultural significance for the Western world. The inclusion of Hebrew in the program of American secondary schools is an innovation which betokens the acceptance of Hebrew as a living, spoken language and the recognition of its cultural value for American education. The scope of Hebrew as a subject of instruction encompasses not only modern Hebrew, but also the study of Jewish civilization, culture, and literature, past and present.

In striving to preserve its cultural identity, American Jewry has been painfully aware of the problem of keeping its younger generation interested in Jewish studies and activities. Therefore, the significance of Hebrew instruction in the American public high schools cannot be overemphasized. The very fact that Hebrew is taught in the public high schools reassures the Jewish youth that his father's ideals are worthy of respect, and he comes more easily to accept his family and himself. From a scholastic standpoint, it has been found that interest in the cultural background of one's family has shown itself to be a better motivation for learning than intellectual interest alone.

When Hebrew was first introduced in two secondary schools in New York City, it was offered on an experimental basis. Ten years later Hebrew was already being taught as a full fledged subject in eleven schools in New York. In October 1954, Hebrew was included in the language program of seventy-one secondary schools in twelve American cities.

It is noteworthy that this unusual growth has been demonstrated during a period when, on one hand, the study of foreign languages on a secondary school and college level in the United States was on the decline, while, on the other hand, only 3.8 percent of the American Jewish population of secondary school age were estimated to attend any kind of school under Jewish auspices. This unusual success of Hebrew as a subject in the public secondary school, coupled with the unusual pupil-participation in extra-curricular activities emerging in conjunction with the Hebrew studies, points to the holding power of Hebrew when presented to the Jewish adolescent in the setting of the general American school, with State examinations and college entrance credit.

In addition, almost every school teaching Hebrew can point to some non-Jewish students who have enrolled in the Hebrew courses.

The experiences of these students as well as the accessibility to all students of the extra-curricular activities which have been developed in connection with the Hebrew program, have contributed considerably to the development of more positive attitudes towards the Jewish people and its culture. All these factors account for the awakening of the Jewish adolescent's dormant interest and pride in things Jewish. Thus the morale and self respect of the Jewish student is strengthened, and his opportunity to develop into a better integrated personality, i.e., both a better citizen

and better Jew, is enhanced.

PEDAGOGIC PROBLEMS ARE MET

When the first two high schools undertook their pioneering tasks twenty-five years ago, a number of serious problems claimed immediate attention. These problems included the need for an adequate course of study, new textbooks, and the lack of qualified teachers.

To begin with, it was necessary to formulate and clarify the objectives and to adopt a course of study. A suitable curriculum in Hebrew did not exist, simply because the problem of presenting Hebrew as a secular, cultural subject to beginners of adolescent age in non-Jewish schools had never arisen elsewhere. Needless to add, there were no textbooks that could be readily introduced into the American public high school classroom. It is important to bear in mind an American public school requisite, which is that courses of study and their textbooks must be free of all religious subject matter, in support of the principle of separation of Church and State. Committees of pedagogues were set up to take the first steps and to provide for a solution to this basic problem. For five years, until 1935, mimeographed sheets were used on an experimental basis in the classrooms. Materials that stood the test of usefulness served as a basis for the first textbook. It is symbolic that the first edition was published in Jerusalem. Since then, the original book, as well as another beginner's book, both approved by educational authorities, have run through several editions and have sold over 100,000 copies.

The officially adopted course of study for the Hebrew classes set down the following objective: "To develop to the point of enjoyment the ability to read Hebrew, and to instill an appreciation for Hebrew culture and civilization." Since Hebrew was to be taught as a living language, it was decided to employ the Sephardic pronunciation as spoken by the Yishuv in Palestine. The course of study today includes several thousand fundamental Hebrew words, expressions, and idioms, as well as a grounding in the grammar of the language.

The cultural content of the course of study is particularly rich. While religious material is excluded, the curriculum provides the student with a bird's-eye view of all Jewish history and literature, an acquaintance with Jewish folk-ways and customs, and an orientation in the life and problems of the reborn State of Israel. The geography of Israel as well as its folk songs and folk dances are also studied. In the upper grades, selections from ancient, neo-classic, and contemporary Hebrew writers are studied. The outline of this course of study covering four years of instruction was formalized in a syllabus published as an official document by the education authorities of the State of New York in 1948. The school systems in the cities of other states where Hebrew is taught have used this program as their model.

TEACHING PERSONNEL IS RECRUITED

Today, eighty-five teachers are engaged in the teaching of Hebrew in American high schools, on a full-time or part-time basis. The majority of these have received licenses to teach Hebrew as their major subject in the secondary schools. The remainder are teachers with licenses in other fields of instruction who have been borrowed from their departments. In the beginning, Hebrew courses depended exclusively on the availability of such borrowed teachers. Fortunately, there were found men and women who possess not only a knowledge of modern Hebrew but also a deep love for it and a true pioneering zeal which inspired the students with devotion for the subject. This enthusiasm on the part of both students and teachers assured the success of the subject in its initial stage.

The educational authorities soon recognized that Hebrew was here to stay. Accordingly, they instituted special examinations for licensing teachers of Hebrew

for secondary schools. The examinations are now given periodically, and the requirements are very high. A thorough knowledge of Hebrew language and Hebrew literature is necessary to pass these tests. In the State of New York, the increasing need for teachers of Hebrew has moved the State government to open courses on a graduate level at some of the colleges, for the training of qualified candidates for these examinations. Last summer, more than twenty candidates were certified by the City of New York as secondary school teachers of Hebrew, and most of these have already been placed.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES AND THEIR REASONS

While the problems of curriculum, textbooks, and adequate teaching personnel can be solved by educational experts interested in the success of the subject, the expansion of Hebrew in the secondary schools nevertheless encounters obstacles which cannot be overcome by pedagogic measures. A major one is created by the large number of high school principals who oppose the introduction of Hebrew into their schools, regardless of the need. This negative attitude has manifested itself on the part of school principals despite the favorable policy proclaimed by state and local educational authorities and despite the positive evaluation of Hebrew as a high school subject from a social and pedagogic standpoint by educational administrators in the upper echelons.

The principal in the American school system enjoys a large degree of autonomy in executing the general curricular policies and requirements of central educational authorities. A number of principals, confronted by parents who request the introduction of Hebrew, refuse to recognize the need and deny the request. Some principals sustain their position by creating difficulties of a technical nature in order to discourage the students from their desire to study Hebrew, while others will not balk at intimidating their children, hinting or openly stating that Hebrew would handicap their adult careers.

Some opposition to Hebrew is due simply to an uncritical allegiance to outdated educational concepts. A number of principals, choosing the comforts of the status quo, have not yet adopted the progressive approach to foreign language instruction which is in consonance with the demands of our ever-shrinking world.

Regrettably, it must be admitted that many of the obstructionist principals are Jewish men and women. It is difficult to explain the roots of their resistance. Too many of them associate Hebrew (as well as all other Jewish interests or activities) with the poverty, the backwardness, the "foreignness" of their childhood homes. Some of them have broken the Jewish world of their parents and grandparents (without having built anything to take its place), and have concentrated diligently upon rising above the immigrant station in American cultural and economic life. Subsequently, guilt feelings and hostility are aroused in them by a subject whose chief aim is to rescue present-day American-Jewish youth from proceeding down the same barren path of self-concealment along which so many of the principals themselves are still travelling.

Moreover, a principal whose chief desire is to be accepted by his colleagues as an "impartial American educator" may also fear that the introduction of Hebrew into his school will not only emphasize his Jewishness but will be taken to imply his own partiality. Thus some principals are tempted to display an opposition to Hebrew which no "neutral" foreign language would encounter.

THE COMMUNITY IN ACTION

It is necessary to enlist diverse community forces and to secure the active cooperation of local community leaders not only in order to overcome the recurrent obstacle of obstructionist principals, but also in order to stimulate and foster student enrollment for Hebrew, which still is a new subject, lacking academic tradi-

tion, in many general secondary schools. Such motivation activities require the guidance of experts possessing vision and devoted to the cause of Hebrew. In New York City, the Hebrew Culture Council *) has extended its assistance and counsel to parental and communal groups interested in the introduction of Hebrew into the public secondary schools of their neighborhoods, or in the strengthening of the Hebrew language courses already in existence, since the very first inception of the study of Hebrew in the high schools.

ACTIVITIES OF THE HEBREW CULTURE COUNCIL

The Hebrew Culture Council also provides a number of educational services which are warmly welcomed by the school authorities, since they fit into the framework of the schools and their educational practices. The Council furnishes teaching aids to schools, books for school libraries. It conducts a film lending service and speakers bureau for the Hebrew Culture Clubs in the schools, sets up and circulates educational exhibits dealing with Israel and with Hebrew culture, and cooperated with schools in arranging Hebrew assembly programs by making available professional dance and song coaching. The Hebrew Culture Council furnishes medals, "Ayin" (named after the first letter of the word 'Ivrit') pins, and books as prizes to outstanding students from the community. For several years, the Council has encouraged students in teacher-training schools and colleges to prepare for teaching Hebrew in the public schools. By maintaining a registry which serves teacher candidates, as well as schools, the Council has provided significant help for both.

HEBREW IN THE COLLEGES

During the past three years, the pattern of consultation and services established by the Hebrew Culture Council has been extended to communities in other sections of the country by the Hebrew Culture Service Committee for American High Schools and Colleges. Under its aegis, this writer has edited "Hebrew for College Entrance," a guidebook listing more than 1,400 American colleges and universities which now accept Hebrew for entrance credit on a par with other languages. The booklet, distributed to schools and libraries throughout the United States, has been acknowledged as an impetus for the study of Hebrew on the secondary level.

Through the efforts of the Hebrew Culture Council and the Hebrew Culture Service Committee, the instruction of Hebrew in the secondary schools as an accredited subject has given impetus to the spread of modern Hebrew in a number of colleges and universities. Especially in the New York area, extraordinary progress has been recorded by local colleges and universities, since they were enabled to offer courses in advanced Hebrew literature for students who had already taken three or four years of Hebrew in the high schools. It has been estimated that the number of students who have studied Hebrew during the past twenty-five years in all these courses exceeds 75,000.

ISRAEL SUMMER SEMINAR

Last summer the Hebrew Culture Council of the Jewish Education Committee of New York and the Hebrew Culture Service Committee launched a new educational

*) The writer has been director of the Hebrew Culture Council since its inception twenty-five years ago. Since 1941, the Hebrew Culture Council has been a department of the Jewish Education Committee of New York.

project, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Scholarships were granted to twenty-nine outstanding students from five cities enabling them to spend five weeks in Israel as participants in the First Israel Summer Seminar for High School Students of Hebrew. The Seminar was designed as an incentive educational project to encourage students to take third and fourth year Hebrew. These students were escorted by two teachers of Hebrew in public secondary schools. On their way to Israel, they were tendered a warm reception by the Jewish communities in Amsterdam and Paris. Plans are under way to develop the Israel Summer Seminar into an annual project with a more considerable number of participants.

In closing, it should be stated that the writer has not attempted fully to describe the history of modern Hebrew instruction in the American public high school system. A detailed account of this amazing development would fill a fair-sized volume. The writer has only touched upon a few of the outstanding problems and accomplishments of this undertaking, and has tried to draw the reader's attention to the great benefits that might be derived from it. The success of the program under consideration will spell out a great two-fold achievement: the strengthening of the American Jewish community and of its ties with Jewish life all over the world, and the furtherance of stronger bonds between the United States of America and the reborn State of Israel.

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