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Strangers to the Tradition: Idea and Constraint in American Jewish Education

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The first Jewish school in the United States of which we know was founded in New York City in 1731, seventy-seven years after the arrival of the first group of 24 Jews in the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, and one year after the Portuguese Jewish congregation, Shearith Israel, had completed construction of the first synagogue building in that city. The minutes of the congregation noted that:

> On the 21st of Nissan, the 7th day of Pesach, the day of completing the first year of the opening of the synagogue, there was made *codez* (consecrated) the Yeshibat called *Minchat Arab*...for the use of this congregation Shearith Israel and as a *Beth Midrash* for the pupils... (Dushkin, 1918, p. 449).

The same source remarked that the cantor of the congregation "obliges himself to keep a public school in due form for teaching the Hebrew language..."; subsequent attempts to engage a teacher for the school specify that he be "Capable to teach our children...Hebrew" and that "English and Spanish he ought to know; but he will not suit unless he understands Hebrew and English at least"; several years later, the *Parnassim* (trustees) of the congregation engaged a teacher to "...teach the Hebrew language, and to translate the same into English, also to teach English, Reading, Writing and Cyphering." (Dushkin, 1918, p. 450).

It is reasonable to assume that even before the founding of *Yeshibat Minchat Arab* some form of Jewish tuition, probably private instruction offered either by a paid tutor or the child's father took place in New York and other places of Jewish settlement in colonial America. The significance of the action of Congregation Shearith Israel is that its commitment to the

maintaining of a school – which incidentally still exists today – was the harbinger of the network of Jewish educational institutions which is an integral part of contemporary American Jewish life. It initiated two and a half centuries of uninterrupted educational activity. This is an impressive record by any standard, and even more so considering that we are speaking of educational programs developed and maintained voluntarily by a small minority group without the impetus of the sanctions of compulsory educational legislation or the benefit of government financial aid.

The growth and development of Jewish schooling in the United States has been conditioned by the sometimes jarring interaction of a congeries of factors: the Jewish tradition of learning, patterns of education and behavior which successive waves of Jewish immigrants brought with them from their countries of origin, American law and mores and, above all, the processes of acculturation and assimilation that mark the Jewish experience in America.

When the trustees of Congregation Shearith Israel opened their school they were conforming to the accepted practice of their time: almost without exception, schools of that period were sponsored and maintained by religious institutions and agencies. Toward the middle of the 19th century, Jewish day schools, under either private, congregational or communal auspices, drew from the influx of German Jews, parallelling the rise of the academy in the host society. The first Jewish Sunday School, founded in Philadelphia in 1838, followed upon the spread of this type of school, first in England and then among American Protestants. The Talmud Torah, a mid-week afternoon school which in time was to become the prototypical setting of Jewish education in this country, was an adaptation to conditions in the United States of the Jewish communal school of Eastern Europe.

Not only did the structure of education result from the merger of past experience of newly arrived immigrants with the demands of life in the new country. The search for a teacher who was capable of teaching Hebrew and "English, Reading, Writing and Cyphering" reflects a melding of the secular and religious, which had long been a characteristic of Spanish Jewry; moreover, the maintenance of that tradition was clearly thought critical to successful adaptation to life in New York. German Jews brought with them knowledge of the educational practices introduced by David Friedlander and the adherents of Reform Judaism who followed him (Eliav, 1960). Their sense of America only strengthened their view that traditional Jewish education was no longer a relevant paradigm and that religious studies must be subordinated to secular learning. The adoption of a catechismal mode of teaching and learning in the schools they founded in the United States was an import from Germany, and it was intended to transmit the essentials of Judaism in a manner and style compatible with full participation in the society of which they were now a part (Petuchowski, 1964; Lynn, 1973). The Talmud Torah,

in its earliest stages – particularly after the swell of immigration from Eastern Europe – and in its later transformation into the congregational school, embraced the ideas of the *heder metukan* as well as its explicit purpose of moving beyond the boundaries of subject matter set by traditional Jewish schools.

Jewish education in America was established without any constraints rooted in civil law. During the colonial period and the early days of the Republic, as indicated above, religious agencies were the prominent sponsors of educational institutions, and to this day they remain an important factor among the various supporters of independent schools. The constitutional guarantees of freedom of assembly, religion and speech make it possible for anyone so inclined to conduct educational activities. The advent of the public school and free, compulsory education – as a process which spread unevenly across the continent, led some quarters to press for legislation which would deny parents the right of free choice of school for their children. In a 1925 landmark decision, the Supreme Court, responding to an appeal brought before it by Catholic parochial schools joined for the purpose by a private, non-sectarian school, declared unconstitutional an Oregon statute which required all children in that state under the age of 15 to attend a public school. The incisive language of the Court reminded zealous supporters of the public school that:

> The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in the Union repose excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations (King, 1965, p. 58).

A later decision by the Supreme Court forbids any form of religious instruction in public school buildings and heralds public schools as the "symbol of our secular unity...the symbol of our democracy, the most pervasive means for promoting our common destiny."[1] Implicit in the Court's decision, of course, is a corollary principle: the separation of Church and State which removes religion from the public schools, guarantees the freedom of religion and the right of governmental financial aid. Independent schools, religious or secular, are thus a legitimate form of schooling and occupy a unique place in the history of American education. However, even today – a time of clamorous dissatisfaction with public education – they do not begin to rival the overwhelming dominance of the public school.[2]

The freedom provided by the latitude of the law is the legal basis for the Jewish day school network which dots the country today; the primacy of the

mid-week afternoon school and the Sunday school, however, bespeaks the Jewish commitment to the norms of America in general, and to the public school in particular. If, as one historian has observed, "The moral and social significance of the public school in American democratic thought has probably surpassed that enjoyed by state schools in any Western society" (Gartner, 1976, p. 157), the loyalty of the Jews to that institution and their perception of it as the avenue which leads to success and status is perhaps altogether unparalleled. Unlike Catholics (Ravitch, 1974, pp. 3–76), Jews never challenged the genteel Protestantism of the public schools. Nor did they protest the crude, and often vulgar, programs of Americanization which were calculated to make immigrants "realize that in forsaking the land of their birth, they were also forsaking the customs and traditions of that land; and they must be made to realize an obligation, in adopting a new country to adopt the language and customs of that country" (Richman, 1905, p. 119 as in Tyack, 1974, pp. 50–54). Moreover, in contrast to other religious and ethnic minority groups in the United States, Jews have never looked to public schools for the transmission of their culture. There is no parallel, for instance, in the history of American Jews with that of German immigrants, who, in their desire to maintain the traditions and customs of their homeland, insisted that German be the language of instruction in the public schools their children attended (Troen, 1975, Ch. 3). Neither the introduction of Hebrew language instruction in secondary schools, 'released time' instruction permitted by law, nor the more recent inclusion of the study of the Holocaust in curricula all over the country, challenge the deeply held conviction of most Jews that instruction in Judaism is the concern of the Jewish community and that the interests of Jews and all other Americans are best served by holding fast to the line which separates between Church and State. The men who laid the theoretical foundations of American Jewish education eschewed the model of the parochial school because "it segregates children along lines of creed" thereby contradicting the dictates of democracy, which require that children "during the formative years of childhood, associate with their neighbors with whom they are destined to live together as American citizens..." (Berkson, 1920, p. 42). The overwhelming majority of American Jews clearly subscribe to the notion that Jewish schools must not interfere "with America's cherished plan of a system of common schools for all the children of all the people" (Dushkin, 1918, p. 138; Ackerman, 1975).

The majority of American Jews today are several generations removed from their immigrant origins and in their education, occupations and income have risen significantly above the socioeconomic status of their forebears. The National Jewish Population Study, conducted in 1970–71, paints the following profile: the heads of "Jewish households were divided roughly into 23% foreign born, 58% first generation born in the U.S. and 19% second or earlier generation U.S. born"; among the "heads of households 54 years of

age or younger," that is, those most likely to have children of school age, "the proportion of foreign born was 12% or less", the total Jewish population was approaching the point where 80% would have some college education as a minimum and more than 60% would have acquired a first degree, with a substantial proportion going on to post-graduate work. Occupational distribution was heavily skewed toward the professional and managerial categories. In 1969, some 43% of the Jews in America reported annual incomes of $16,000 or over (Massarik and Chenkin, 1973).[3] Today, fifteen years later, we can safely say that Jewish schools in America cater to third generation Americans, children of highly educated parents whose training, occupations and income place them well above the national average. These data are a key to the understanding of Jewish education in its American context.

Ever since the time of the first Jewish settlement in the U.S., the Jewish passion for learning has been transferred from its original (religious) focus to secular learning. As do American Jews today, the early Jewish settlers who were concerned about the Jewish education of their children by and large chose settings which nevertheless did not interfere with the general education or other activities considered more critical to their personal development and future career opportunities. There may be some exaggeration in the observation of a 19th century visitor who thought "...that men of great learning will never arise among the Jews of America" (Benjamin, 1936, p. 83); it is, however, undeniably true that the traditional ideals of *Torah l'shma* (learning for its own sake) and *lamdanut* (Jewish erudition) never did, and still do not, figure prominently in the value system of American Jews. A study of 230 participants in leadership programs sponsored by local Jewish Federations together with the National Council of Jewish Federations and the United Jewish Appeal – ostensibly a strongly identified group – discloses that less than 50% of those questioned thought that a knowledge of the fundamentals of Judaism was essential to the making of a good Jew and only 22% considered being "well versed in Jewish history and culture" necessary (Woocher, 1981, p. 297). This attitude evidently distinguishes between the educated Jew and the identified Jew as expressed by Borowitz (1961, p. 149). "What the child should know about Judaism is not so important as that he should want to be a Jew", and to "want to be a Jew" does not necessarily require more than a rudimentary knowledge of Judaism.

Notwithstanding the continued growth of day schools, the interplay between Jews, Judaism and life in America has resulted in a system of Jewish education which consists mainly of supplementary schooling conducted in mid-week afternoon schools, meeting for four-six hours a week, and one-day-a-week Sunday or Sabbath schools, offering two-three hours of weekly instruction. This educational enterprise represents the voluntary effort of autonomous institutions, mutually bound more by common aspirations than by formal structure. Since the end of World War II the virtual demise of secu-

lar Hebrew nationalist and Yiddish schools has made Jewish education almost entirely a function of the synagogue. The vast majority of Jewish schools – close to 90% in the early 1970s (Hochberg, 1972) – are sponsored, maintained and controlled by individual congregations. Even in the case of schools under communal auspices, the support and active participation of local synagogues is essential to their functioning. The perception and practice of Jewish education as religious education stems both from Jewish tradition and from minority group identification compatible with American mores and norms.

American Jews join synagogues and send their children to Jewish schools because they genuinely want to identify themselves and their children as Jews. They are able to do so, however, because neither synagogue membership nor school attendance dictate behavior that conflicts with what they perceive as the American way of life. While parents often speak of the school as the guarantor of Judaism, they are rarely prepared to accept the implications of this position. They shy away from the recognition of Judaism as a code of behavior central to self-definition. The discrepancy between the desire for Jewish identification as such and the unwillingness to accept Judaism as a formative factor has led one perceptive observer to describe involvement in Jewish education as an exercise in self-deception. More than a year of close study of an afternoon congregational school led to the conclusion that

> ...the goals, the values, and the emotions of...parents seemed tied to a system that appeared little different than that of the non-Jews residing about them. Although these Jews did identify with a Jewish people, history, culture and religion, they did not, in their own suburban American lives, live according to any Jewish way of life. It wasn't that these Jews didn't want to be living a Jewish way of life, but rather they seemed to find the demands of modern life uncompromising. The Jewish way, as they understood it for their own lives, could not serve as a standard of living that suited the modern circumstances of life in America...They have been unable to interpret their Jewish heritage so that it makes sense in their American life... (Schoem, 1978, p. 32).

It is axiomatic that schools function within parameters set by the community which supports them. Close harmony between the values of school and society creates the context of mutual support, necessary for the transmission of culture across generations. If there is a gap between the two, the aspirations of the school are generally subverted by the more powerful impact of the society. Jewish schools are no exception to this rule, and there can be no constructive understanding of the issues confronting Jewish education without acknowledging the disparity betweeen its aims and the leanings of the population it serves.

Goals

While statements of aims and objectives in Jewish education generally lack philosophical rigor, thereby confounding attempts to develop logically consistent programs of instruction (Chazan, 1978, pp. 42–56), their intent is quite clear – to inculcate pupils with the desire and ability to conduct their lives in keeping with Jewish tradition. The various components of that tradition – God, Torah and Israel – are broadly interpreted and their valence, whether separately or in concert, differentially measured and assessed. The same words placed in the context of statements of goals, prepared by different ideological groups, mean very different things.[4]

In recent years there has been a perceptible shift, in some quarters at least, in the focus of Jewish educational purpose. An earlier emphasis, which stressed the centrality of the collective and considered the "fostering of Jewish group life" (Chipkin, 1936, p. 31; Ackerman, 1977) the major goals of the school, has been modified by new attention to the individual and his Jewish identity. This change from public to private concern and its curricular consequences are easily traced. It is rooted in the writings of the radical school reformers; the influence of Piaget's psychology and the theories of Erik Erikson in teacher-training programs and graduate schools of education; the teachings of the 'human-potential movement'; and, as some observers have noted, the narcissism which pervades contemporary American culture. The distressing fact that few Jewish schools in this country have succeeded in imparting any real Jewish knowledge to their students, or in developing even the minimum of intellectual competence required of the literate Jew, has undoubtedly also contributed to the assignation of greater importance to what a person is than to what he knows.

When group survival – and the complementary idea that self-fulfillment is realized only through group membership and a willingness to subordinate personal concerns to the interests of the group – is a dominant motif in educational goals, it determines much of the curriculum. The well being of the group, both present and future, depends upon shared experiences and knowledge as well as a collective commitment to the values of its common tradition. A subject is placed in the curriculum according to its power to move children toward loyalty and identification with the group and not because of any intrinsic quality it may possess. Hebrew as a language and literature, for example, gained high priority, perhaps more than any other subject, since it was thought capable of tying children "with bonds of love and reverence to their people and its land" and of awakening in them "the desire to dedicate themselves to the service of their people and to contribute to the national rebirth" (Ginzberg, 1947, p. 33).

Identity formation as an educational goal brings with it a somewhat different conception of the relationship between the individual and the group.

While one's definition of "who he is and what he is over time and across situations" (Kelman, n.d., p. 3) is conditioned by his cultural, ethnic and religious heritage – that is, the accumulated historical experience of the group into which he was born – it does not follow that one automatically will incorporate the values of that group. Indeed, there is evidence which suggests that the development of personal identity demands some repudiation of one's background (Erikson and Erikson, 1981, p. 254). An authentic personal identity is reflective rather than reflexive; its commitment to group attitudes, norms and behaviors is conditional and not absolute (Kelman, n.d., pp. 26–27).

Identity is complicated, and not easily translated into school practice. A spate of recent books reflects both the current interest in problems of identity formation and the manner in which a profound social science concept can be reduced to triviality or even perverted. The point of the games and exercises in these books, in themselves valuable teaching aids, is to cultivate personal feeling and to encourgage students to articulate their attitudes and beliefs. However, the process itself has become the subject matter rather than the knowledge and skills in language, literature and history which are the essential components in formation of an authentic identity (Resnick, 1981, p. 6).

Structure

American Jews who are concerned about Jewish education today cannot complain of a lack of opportunity. From nursery school through Ph.D. programs and beyond, one can attend institutions sponsored and maintained by Jews for the purpose of teaching Judaism. Only the commitment to learning, first by the family and then by the student himself, sets the boundaries to Jewish studies. Jewish education in America is available in varied structures and hues: Sunday Schools which provide a bare minimum of Jewish tuition exist alongside Hasidic yeshivoth hardly tolerant of secular studies; these yeshivoth introduce children to Torah at the age of four, and three years later, allot as much as eight hours a day to Talmud (Schiff, 1966, p. 89); *yeshivoth gedoloth*, similar in form and spirit to their East European predecessors, are available as college level programs of Jewish studies conforming to the standards of the modern academy. The basic school unit, whatever its type, is surrounded by a network of ancillary settings which extend the range of educational activity well beyond the limits of formal schooling.

There are three types of elementary and secondary Jewish schools in the United States: the day school, which combines general and Jewish studies, although there is considerable variation in the time alloted to the latter; the afternoon school, which meets two or three times a week, including a session on Sunday or the Sabbath, for four to six hours; and the one-day-a-week

school, Sunday or Sabbath, which requires two to three hours of weekly attendance. The average number of pupil hours per school year was estimated at 248 in the late 1970s, an increase of 35% since 1966–67, largely attributable to a rise in day school enrollment.

The day school is most often associated with the Orthodox movement, the one-day-a-week school with the Reform, and the weekday afternoon school with both the Conservative and Orthodox movements. But these lines are neither hard nor fast: one-day-a-week schools may be found in both Orthodox and Conservative congregations, and more and more Reform communities are offering midweek afternoon school programs. Furthermore, spurred by the example of their Orthodox colleagues, Conservative and Reform rabbis and educators in growing numbers have committed themselves to the development of day schools.

As indicated earlier, almost 90% of Jewish schools are autonomous units maintained voluntarily by individual congregations which, through their boards, have authority over the schools, generally through appointed school committees. Non-congregational schools, a distinct minority, have their own school boards which are responsible for every aspect of the school's activities.

Recent years have witnessed a noticeable trend toward consolidation and merger of these small congregational schools – even those of different religious orientations – and the formation of communal schools under community auspices. Once more common at the high school level, the movement has by now reached the elementary school as well. The creation of intercongregational community-wide schools is not the result of a change in the position that the synagogue is the most appropriate context for Jewish education; rather, it is a pragmatic solution to problems of finance and personnel that strain the resources of all but the largest congregations (Pollak and Efron, 1976).

The idea of community control derives from several sources: the example of the communal Talmud Torah of Eastern Europe, the model of the American public school system and finally, the ideas of Mordecai M. Kaplan. The concepts of peoplehood and community, so integral a part of Kaplan's philsophy of Judaism, lead quite naturally to communal authority in education. Kaplan and his followers, who include among them the architects of modern American Jewish education (Ackerman, 1975; Ackerman, 1981), were convinced that no one agency, congregational or otherwise, should be the basic unit of Jewish life, but rather that the "entire aggregate of congregations, social service agencies, Zionist organizations, defense and fraternal bodies and educational institutions should be integrated into an organic or indivisible community" (Kaplan, 1948, p. 114). From here, it is but a short step to the conclusion that education – "the transmission of the social and spiritual heritage of the Jewish people" in order to create "a bond of unity and brotherhood" – is a primary communal responsibility. The community,

working through a central office of education, is thus called upon "to create schools, to supervise them, to train teachers, to establish curricula, and conduct all other educational activities" which are the hallmark of "a well organized civic community" (Kaplan, 1970, p. 171). This is, of course, a blueprint for the Jewish common school, modelled on the pattern of the American public school. Rising above sectarian differences, at least in theory, this institution provides children of diverse backgrounds and outlooks with common experiences, and fashions those shared beliefs and behaviors which bind them together and distinguish them as Jews.

The predilections of American Jews led in other directions than those so rationally charted by Kaplan. His idea of a community was unequal to the task of winning primary allegiance away from the synagogue which was nearer at hand, both physically and symbolically, and more in keeping with American patterns of voluntary religious association. Moreover, the fact that the synagogue is the location of the bar mitzvah, a focal point of Jewish education, strengthened its position in the contest for the control of schooling.

The principle of local community responsibility for Jewish education is commonplace today. Nevertheless, local Bureaus of Jewish Education are merely service agencies which perform functions beyond the ability of the individual school – in-service training for teachers, supervision, central audio-visual and pedagogical libraries, testing programs, placement of teachers, publications, subsidies and a wide variety of other educational activities. The national educational commissions of the major synagogue organizations, as well as the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), the new designation of the reorganized American Association for Jewish Education (AAJE), operate in much the same way – they define broad educational policy for their constituencies, design curricula, attempt to set standards, conduct regional and national conferences, and sponsor extensive publication programs. Meaningful control and direct influence are possible only when a bureau or a national agency contributes directly to the funding of a project or program. Otherwise, their effectiveness depends, in no small measure, upon goodwill and a delicate pattern of personal and institutional relationships.

This loose federation of schools, communal agencies and national commissions clearly safeguards the independence of the individual school. Whatever the advantages of this Jewish counterpart of the American passion for 'local control' in education, the price is extraordinarily high. The absence of definitive boundaries to partisan initiative works against publicly recognized standards and responsibility, and encourages wasteful duplication, school units too small to be educationally viable, and underutilization of limited resources. It also prevents rational, long range, community-wide planning for Jewish education.

The school is surrounded by a variety of informal educational activities. The latter sometimes cooperate with the school, sometimes compete with it,

most often ignore it. For those who are interested, youth groups are easily within reach. Zionist youth groups of all ideologies - the distinctions between which are comprehensible only to the initiated - can be found in every metropolitan center; they are generally independent of the schools and are rarely in contact with them. The largest youth organizations are those sponsored by the national synagogue organizations. These are part of the same congregational framework as the schools, and contribute to the creation of a setting which affords innumerable possibilities for the integration of formal and informal programs.

Camping as an educational tool has been a significant development since the end of World War II. Hebrew speaking camps such as Massad, Yavneh, the Ramah camps sponsored by the Jewish Theological Seminary and the network of camps connected with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations – all of which reach their campers through the schools – have had a profound influence on thousands of youngsters who, long after their days in camp, carry the stamp of an intensive educational experience. The expansion of educational camping probably ranks alongside the growth of the day school as a major achievement of American Jewish education in the last 25 years.

The success of summer camping programs has led many schools to utilize camp settings during the school year. Weekend retreats and camping programs, conducted during public school mid-year vacations sponsored by individual schools or organized for groups of schools by a bureau, are by now a common and important part of the curriculum. In many places monthly weekends in camp combined with guided work at home have replaced the Sunday school. We do not know whether this form of schooling is more effective than the conventional pattern, but there can be no doubt that a formal school setting cannot duplicate the special resonance of a shared experience of study, prayer and play in a camp environment.

College age students can study in *yeshivoth gedoloth*, colleges of Jewish studies or Jewish studies programs at regular universities. The former are essentially private institutions built around a respected rabbinical authority who sets the style of learning and who personally attracts the necessary support. The *yeshivoth gedoloth* draw their students from lower schools, which provide the background required for advanced Talmud study, but they have recently been joined by a proliferation of yeshivoth geared to young people with little or no previous preparation. Other than those maintained by the major rabbinical schools, colleges of Jewish studies are community institutions funded primarily by Federation allocations. Students attend schools of this sort – originally conceived as teacher training centers and the capstone of a local system, simultaneously with a regular university. Several of these schools have developed co-operative arrangements with neighboring institu-

tions of higher learning and enjoy the advantages of cross-registration, cross-listing of courses and transfer of credit.

University-based programs of Jewish studies, another major development in American Jewish life, are less easily defined as Jewish education (Adar, 1970, pp. 11–13). Although many such programs owe their existence to Jewish initiative, which often includes initial and continued funding, once introduced into the university, they are subject to its rules and regulations. Moreover, it is doubtful that university instructors of Jewish studies view themselves as 'Jewish educators' or that their goals are similar to those of Jewish institutions. Students who participate in these programs, however, undoubtedly do so because they are interested in deepening their knowledge of Judaism (Band, 1966).

Adult education is also widely available, especially in the major urban centers which contain the overwhelming majority of America's Jews. Congregations, acting alone or in cooperation with others serving the same geographical area, Bureaus of Jewish Education, adult education departments of the national synagogue organizations, Zionist organizations, and fraternal and defense agencies – the entire panoply of organized Jewish life – produce a wide array of material and sponsor programs in every imaginable setting. A particularly interesting development in the area of adult activity is the spread of *havuroth*, in a certain sense the revival of a traditional Jewish institution. There are currently some 500 such groups all over the country, either within congregations or as independent entities without any broader affiliation (Bubis, Wasserman and Lert, 1981, p. 12). The *havura*, a relatively informal grouping which often serves as a surrogate for the traditional extended family, is evidently a response to its members' need for "intimate personal association, autonomy/ participation, ties to the Jewish tradition and transcendence – the opportunity for a significant spiritual experience" (Bubis, et al. 1981, p. 14; Reisman, 1977). This wide range of adult learning opportunities, here described only sketchily, rarely has any connection, administrative or other, with the school system.

A list of the various institutions and agencies involved in formal and informal Jewish education and an attempt to trace the skein of their interaction with one another can mention only a few of the many and varied factors which contribute to the education of the growing child. Historians of education and others point to the importance of many other elements - the family, neighborhood, media, peer groups, voluntary organizations, social service agencies, to name but a few – which are at least as significant as the school, if not more so, in the forming of the individual and his loyalties. To examine the Jewish school in America is to discover, among other things, its detachment and lack of contact with the many factors shaping its character and mediating its effectiveness.

Enrollment

The voluntary nature of Jewish education lends particular importance to the enrollment statistics in Jewish schools. The number and ages of children enrolled, the number of years of attendance and other relevant data are an index not only of the school's ability to attract and hold pupils, but also of its effectiveness. While enrollment in non-governmental schools is often affected by events and circumstances beyond their control, patterns of recruitment and retention still remain important indications for their assessment as educational institutions.

Immediately after World War II, Jewish school enrollment began to rise steadily, reached a peak in the mid–1960s and has been declining since. Between 1946 and 1956, the number of children attending Jewish schools of all kinds more than doubled – from 231,028 to 488,432. In the 1957–58 school year, registers counted 553,600 pupils (Dushkin and Engelman, 1959, pp. 39–40) and in 1966–67, the figure stood at 554,468. Data for 1970–71 show a decline of 17.5% over the four year period to 457,196 (Hochberg, 1972, p. 199); by 1974–75 there were 391,825 pupils enrolled, and a later tally counted only 344,251 (American Association for Jewish Education, 1976; 1979). The pattern is unmistakably clear: Jewish school enrollment suffered a decline of close to 40% in the period from 1960 to the end of the 1970s. The most recent data available show that the downward trend has stopped, and some numerical recovery has actually occurred (Dubb and DellaPergola, 1986).

Year	Pupils
1945–46	231,028
1955–56	488,432
1957–58	553,600
1960–61	588,955
1966–67	554,468
1970–71	457,196
1974–75	391,825
1978–79	357,107
1981/2–1982/3	372,417

Not less important than the absolute number of children enrolled in Jewish schools is the percentage of all Jewish children of school age which they represent. A series of school surveys conducted during the 1950s and 1960s revealed that close to 80% of all Jewish children in the United States received some form of Jewish education during their elementary school years. These findings were corroborated by the 1970/71 National Jewish Population Study. The percentage of children actually enrolled in Jewish schools at any

given time, however, is considerably lower – in 1957–58 it was estimated at 40–45% of all Jewish children of school age (Dushkin and Engelman, 1959, p. 44); the enrollment rate estimated from the 1981/82–1982/83 census of Jewish schools was quite the same: 39–43% (Dubb and DellaPergola, 1986). It is further worth noting that comparable figures for the period immediately prior to World War II suggested that only 25–30% of school age children then attended Jewish schools.

There are various explanations for the numerical drop in enrollment - a decline in the Jewish birthrate, population shifts which have taken families with school age children away from areas served by existing Jewish schools, the increasing rate of intermarriage and dwindling parental interest (see also the chapter by DellaPergola and Schmelz in this volume). One study (Pollak, 1978a) that addresses these problems, although conducted in a medium sized community not really representative of American Jewry, provides some possible answers. During the five year period between 1966/67 and 1970/71 Jewish school enrollment in Buffalo, New York declined at a mean annual rate of 5.4%. This figure reflects a significant demographic change among Buffalo's Jews: a lower birthrate among younger families and a growing percentage of adults beyond childbearing age. The combination of these two factors caused a decrease in school registration and indicated a continuation of the downward trend. In 1975, the year of the study, there were 1,708 children between the ages of 4–17 enrolled in Jewish schools - 61% of the Jewish school age population. The highest rate of attendance was among children aged 6–13; more than 80% of the youngsters in this age bracket were in Jewish schools. Those parents who did not send their children to a Jewish school gave as their primary reason either lack of interest or the fact that none of the Jewish schools in the city offered the sort of Jewish education they considered appropriate. Neither the cost nor the quality of schooling appear to have been major factors in their decision.

When the enrollment statistics are analyzed by sex, it becomes apparent that there has been a decided increase in the percentage of girls who attend Jewish schools. The mid–1950s study, *Jewish Education in the United States*, reported that boys and girls were enrolled in equal numbers in one-day-a-week schools, that almost twice as many boys as girls were in day schools, and that boys outnumbered girls by a ratio of close to three to one in afternoon schools (Dushkin and Engelman, 1959). The NJPS reported that "While differences in Jewish education exposure between boys and girls to age nine are small, they become important at age ten and beyond...Among women age 20 and older, typically somewhere above 60% have some exposure to Jewish education, while for men the corresponding figure generally exceeds 80%." Equally important, however, is the observation that among female adolescents and post-adolescents there is a marked increase, approaching 75% in the percentage of girls who attend a Jewish school. The

study remarks that "we may predict that an increasingly high proportion of young Jewish women, exceeding the comparable proportion of their parents' generation, will ultimately receive the benefit of some Jewish primary or secondary school experience." This generally optimistic appraisal must, unfortunately, be tempered by the fact that there has been a decline in the number of children of intermarried couples who are reported as Jewish and the conclusion that "if the birthrate remains low and if the rate of intermarriage continues to rise, or holds at high levels...school enrollment," among both boys and girls, "may be expected to decline...." (Massarik, 1978).

Data regarding affiliation in the Jewish community provide yet another perspective of school enrollment. A little more than a decade ago, some 59% of the Jewish heads of households in the United States were 'affiliated', that is, they identified with a Jewish ideology and held membership either in a congregation or Jewish organization or both (Massarik, 1978, pp. 262, 270). Approximately 50% of Jews then in their thirties were affiliated, and among older Jews the percentage hovered around 60%. There is a close correlation, if not a total overlap, between Jews who are affiliated and those who send their children to a Jewish school.

When we examine enrollment by sponsorship and type of school, the following pattern emerges for the late 1970s: some 35% of the students attended schools under Reform auspices; approximately 27% were in schools affiliated with the Conservative movement; and about another 27% were enrolled in Orthodox-sponsored schools; the remaining 11% were in communal or independent schools. One-day-a-week schools accounted for 25% of total enrollment (a sharp drop from an earlier level of 42%); afternoon schools enrolled 49% of the student population (a rate which has remained quite stable for more than a quarter of a century), and day schools accounted for 26% of all registrations (an increase of close to 30% relative to the figure ten-years earlier) (American Association for Jewish Education, 1976; 1979).

Most Jewish education today, as in the past, takes place at the elementary level. Despite a reported rise in high school enrollment – that is, programs for youngsters above age thirteen which meet at least once a week – the majority of pupils in Jewish schools drop-out upon completion of the elementary level. Even the most generous estimate of high school registration is only around 15% (Hochberg and Lang, 1974, p. 237), and a high drop-out rate remains one of the most intractable problems confronting Jewish educators. A whole complex of factors outside the school itself conspires to thwart even the most carefully designed and executed programs. If, as some recent studies suggest, supplementary schooling can be effective if students stay in school long enough, good high school programs are a first order priority for Jewish education.

One positive factor on the Jewish educational scene today is the trend toward more intensive schooling. In Orthodox circles, one-day-a-week

schools have all but disappeared; a similar tendency is evident in the Conservative movement; and the number of midweek afternoon schools in Reform congregations is on the increase. As indicated above, the average number of pupil hours per school year in Jewish schools has risen from 182 to 248, an increase of 35% since 1966–67. However, it is the growth of the Jewish day school movement which is surely a distinguishing characteristic of American Jewish life in our generation. In 1944, there were 39 day schools in the United States, most of them in New York City; today, there are more than 550. Of these, 86% are under Orthodox auspices; 8% are Conservative; 5% designate themselves as Communal or Independent; and 1% identify with the Reform movement. Over the 15 years from 1962 to 1977, day school enrollment jumped from 60,000 to 92,000 pupils (Schiff, 1977). Approximately one out of every four children receiving Jewish education at the elementary level is in a day school.

The day school is a signal achievement of Orthodox Jewry, whose steadfast adherence to the religious imperative of *Talmud Torah* (learning of Torah) influenced both Conservative and Reform Jews. In many instances day school supporters established schools despite indifference and even opposition from official quarters. They were frequently accused of parochialism, ghetto thinking and the worst sin of all – un-American behavior. Their persistence, coupled with the manifest failures of the one-day-a-week and afternoon schools, accounts in no small measure for the turnabout in the position of Jewish federations, which were once centers of determined resistance to day schools. In 1971, Max Fischer, then president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, urged communal leaders "to re-examine their obligations to the day schools...for the day school holds one of the very best answers to further Jewish continuity and has earned our most careful consideration of what could be done to help."

The day school can probably be seen as a combination of the traditional yeshiva and the modern secular school. There was a time, not so long ago, when the mere mention of a yeshiva was enough to irritate those who thought it "...an anachronism for which the United States had neither the time nor the place...A legitimate use can be found for every dollar that the Jews of the United States can spare and there is none to waste for transplanting in American soil an institution of the medieval ghetto" (Klaperman, 1969, p. 137). The process of recognition and acceptance of the day school as a legitimate form of Jewish education in America is strikingly illustrated by the change in the attitude of one of America's most prominent and influential Jewish educators. Writing in 1918, the late Alexander Dushkin, then one of the dedicated young men attracted by Samson Benderly to the newly founded Bureau of Jewish Education in New York City, expressed his reservations about day schools by stating that Jews "must develop schools which will preserve Jewish life in this country without interfering with America's cherished plan of a

system of common schools for all the children of all the people" (Dushkin, 1918, pp. 21, 137–138).

This statement was addressed to a community of recently arrived immigrants whose uncertain place in American life was bounded by grinding poverty and the travail of adjustment. Fifty years later, at the close of a long and distinguished career, Dushkin would declare:

> ...There has grown up a third generation of American Jewry whose parents are American born and who...feel themselves at peace as citizens of the American democracy...the Jewish community is now larger, better organized, more influential, actually and potentially than it was fifty years ago...In the years ahead it will be increasingly obligatory for Jewish educators to promote the establishment of day schools as the intensive core of the American Jewish school system...to include 25% of our children.... (Dushkin, 1967, pp. 44, 48).

The striking rise in day school enrollment is evidence of a telling change in the image Jews have of themselves and of their relationship to American society.

There has been much discussion about the motives which cause parents to send their children to day schools. In the case of religiously and otherwise committed families the reasons are obvious. There is also no question that the heightened sensitivity to ethnic identification which has characterized American society in recent years has been a contributing factor. Dissatisfaction with supplementary Jewish schools, busing and the alternative school movements, which legitimized withdrawal from the public school, should also be noted. A recent investigation of parental attitudes toward the day school based on a small sample was conducted in a large midwestern city, a setting which is perhaps more instructive than the traditional centers of Jewish population (Adams, Frankel and Newbauer, 1972–73, p. 28). Responses to a questionnaire indicate that "the most important considerations for the parents in sending their children to this school seem to be the study of the modern Israeli state, the acquiring of a sense of belonging and pride in being Jewish, participation in the religious aspects of Judaism, and the small number of students per teacher." Another study (Kelman, 1978), conducted in Los Angeles in 1977, discloses that while parents who send their children to a non-Orthodox day school are further motivated by specifically Jewish concerns, the primary reason behind the decision is the desire for general education of a high quality.

Any reckoning of the number of people involved in some form of formally structured Jewish learning must include students on college campuses. Over 300 different institutions of higher learning in the United States now offer one or more undergraduate courses in Jewish studies; at least 40 universities offer a major in the area and 27 sponsor graduate programs (Maslow, 1974).

Some estimates suggest that in the 1973–74 academic year as many as 50,000 undergraduates took courses in Jewish studies. That same year the National Foundation for Jewish Culture received grant applications from 125 doctoral candidates in the various disciplines of Jewish studies (Silver, 1978, pp. 212–213). Before World War II less than a dozen scholars taught Judaic Studies on a full time basis in American universities; perhaps an equal number taught Hebrew, mostly in divinity schools. Today the Association for Jewish Studies, the professional organization of university instructors engaged in teaching and research in Jewish studies, counts close to 1,000 members. Nearly 250 have full time appointments and another 400 teach on a part time basis. The majority are American born and trained. Little is known about the students enrolled in these programs – previous attendance at a Jewish school, religious orientation, career plans and the like. One conclusion, however, is permissible: more college students than ever before are now involved in Jewish studies.

The reasons for the growth and expansion of Jewish studies are varied. The general broadening of undergraduate curricula beyond the traditional parameters of the liberal arts – one of the major characteristics of American colleges and universities in the years immediately following World War II – is certainly a factor. Prodding by students and faculty, demands of blacks and other groups for ethnic studies, pressure from local Jewish communities all helped move institutions of higher learning to recognize Judaica as a legitimate area of study for inclusion among their course offerings. Student interest attests to the coming of age of a generation of young American Jews, sure of their place in American society, who looked to their university years as an opportunity for "exploring themselves and their roots as well as their world" (Silver, 1978, pp. 212–213). Faculty support, always decisive, often came from unexpected sources. At one university, a Jewish studies program "emerged out of a Jew in the English department whose interest was radical literature, one Jew in anthropology whose interest was in the shtetl, and a Jew in history who was a specialist in labor organizations" (ibid.).

Curriculum

Two parallel strands are discernable in programs of curriculum development of recent years: heightened attention to the affective component in learning now occupies a prominent place alongside the approach which places a premium on cognitive development and the acquisition of intellectual skills. A new generation of Jewish educators has shifted the focus of Jewish schooling from the traditional pre-determined subject matter to an active concern for the self-expressed needs and interests of the student. These young

educators, many of whom have been trained in America's best graduate schools of education, are committed to "...uncovering the thoughts and feelings of the kids themselves, not on a specific issue but rather in a free wheeling open-ended way. This should allow the kids to bring in their own experiences with very little intervention on the part of the teacher...." (Jacobson, 1970, pp. 45–46).

On the high school level this approach involves a high degree of student involvement in all phases of planning and execution, a heightened emphasis on the affective attention to inter-personal relationships, a readiness to move beyond the framework of prescribed forms and structures, and an acceptance of the legitimacy of a wide variety of views and patterns of personal expression. The acknowledgement of the centrality of mitzvoth in Judaism is accompanied by a view of religion as a continued search for self-realization rather than a closed system of preordained imperatives. Religious practice, as a consequence, becomes a highly personal matter, with the final determinant of the student's religious behavior being his own feelings. The legitimacy of Jewish nationalism finds expression in a commitment to the State of Israel and a recognition of its crucial role in the Jewish future. At the same time, the American Jewish community is also accorded a place of primacy. This conception of learning affords place to traditional modes and methods of study but finds them lacking when isolated from broader and more encompassing experiences. The task of the educator then is not simply to direct a school or to inculcate a point of view, but rather to create an environment in which the student is free to experiment in a variety of settings and with an assortment of materials, in an encouraged attempt to define a style of Jewishness which suits his own needs and tastes.

At the elementary level this manner of dealing with the child has led to experimentation with the 'open school' and, to a lesser extent, to the establishment of 'free' or 'alternative' Jewish schools. The 'open school' seeks to create a better environment for learning; the 'alternative school', usually found in university centers and conducted by students, constitutes a protest of sorts against what is thought to be the lack of Jewish 'authenticity' in the organized Jewish community and its schools (American Association for Jewish Education, 1972; Koller, 1971–72).

Much of what has been discussed here has found expression at the annual conferences sponsored since 1976 by the Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education (CAJE), a loosely knit group of young educators which is an offshoot of the North American Jewish Students Network. These conferences, held on college campuses around the country and attracting over 1,000 participants, are a pot-pourri of educational method and technique, conducted by imaginative teachers and administrators who prefer their own instructional and curricular material to that prepared by national agencies. The workshops and other activities at a CAJE conference concentrate on the

'doing' of Jewish education and, in their emphasis on the affective, challenge the position of dominance accorded the cognitive domain.

Attention to the affective along with concern for the involvement of students in the development of programs is by no means limited to CAJE. For almost a decade the Rhea Hirsch School of Education of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles has conducted a project in 'confluent education'. This project is an adaptation, in the setting of the Jewish school, of work done at the Esalen Institute and the University of California at Santa Barbara. As described by one of its major theoreticians, confluent education calls for the "integration or flowing together of the affective and cognitive elements in individual and group learning..." (Brown, 1971, pp. 10–11). Teachers who participated in the training program reported that they had gained a great deal. Unfortunately, there has been no published report of a systematic empirical investigation evaluating the impact of confluent education on children in Jewish schools.

On a larger scale we may point to the curriculum development program announced several years ago by the Commission on Jewish Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Spiro, 1971). The conceptual framework of the undertaking rests on the assumption that "...educators must be receptive to the problems and needs of the students and attempt to create a synthesis between ...traditional values and present concerns. The focal points of the curriculum are both what the learner wants to learn and what he ought to learn". Student input was achieved through a "national survey...conducted to determine the interests, concerns and problems of students on all age levels...". Whatever the ultimate form or effectiveness of the curriculum, there is no question that that approach represents a fundamental commitment to responding to student interests.

A study of religious education in the reform movement published in 1977 states that "...it is impossible to identify anything that resembles a uniform curriculum for the Reform movement" (Gertman, 1977, p. 34). Several explanations suggest themselves: the curriculum currently suggested for Reform religious schools was first published more than 25 years ago and has been revised only slightly since then; or perhaps, the diversity of opinion and outlook which characterizes Reform Judaism in the United States militates against uniformity in curriculum. Yet, there appears to be agreement among Reform educators regarding the subject matter areas of the curriculum. Whatever the content of specific courses on the fifth grade level, history, the holidays, Israel and the life cycle are extensively taught. Current Jewish issues and history are wide-spread in the seventh grade; theology, sex ethics, Israel and the Holocaust figure prominently in upper level programs. Curricular concern for students' personal needs is reflected in the observation that "students begin to have sexual experiences at a much earlier age"; hence, what "Judaism has...to say about sex ethics should be said at a time when

teenagers are beginning to explore their sexual feelings rather than at a time when their ideas about sex ethics are already formed" (Gertman, 1977, p. 38).

Orthodox day schools, whose curricular options are relatively clear-cut, have also explored the significance of the experiential. There is a familiar ring to the observation of a leading day school spokesman that "too many of our schools are satisfied with formal education conducted in and around the classroom. If our goal of commitment is to be a realistic one we must look for opportunities for students to act out the values and life style we are teaching ...students will 'learn' more about the plight of Soviet Jewry in two hours devoted to neighborhood campaigning for signatures on a petition...than in two weeks of classes on Soviet-Jewish problems..." (Lookstein, 1972, pp. 113–114). A similar motif is evident in the Moral Sensitivity Training Program prepared by *Torah U'Mesorah*, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools. This program provides a variety of instructional materials, including specially prepared texts, model lessons in print and on tape, and teaching guides for schools interested "in expanding the moral sensitivity and understanding of their pupils" (*Torah U'Mesorah*, 1975–76). This program, building on the knowledge and skills which distinguish the day school pupil from his peers in other settings, addresses itself particularly to the growing number of youngsters from non-observant homes enrolled in Orthodox day schools.

The Curriculum Guide for Afternoon Religious Schools, recently published by the National Commission on Torah Education, is more conventional. Based on a questionnaire survey which elicited responses from over 200 Orthodox educators, the Guide is intended for afternoon schools which offer six hours of instruction per week over a five-year period. Suggested courses of study generally include Hebrew, Torah, Jewish social studies, *mitzvoth ma'asioth* (practical commandments) and synagogue/prayer. Perhaps the most interesting of the Guide's recommendations is the suggestion that the traditional chronological approach to Jewish history which attempts to cover thousands of years in an hour a week over a period of five years be eschewed in favor of a concentration on contemporary Jewish affairs – Israel and Jewish-Arab relations, the Holocaust, Soviet Jewry, the North American Jewish community, and the world-wide Sephardic community (Baum, 1979).

Day school educators have long been interested in defining a relationship between Jewish and general (secular) studies. While some schools, primarily Hasidic and other Orthodox yeshivoth, maintain a strict line of separation between the two, many others, Orthodox as well as Conservative, Reform and communal, seek to create some measure of correlation between the two. Proponents of integration stress the idea that attendance at a day school does not mean being cut off from the mainstream of American life; they want to achieve a measure of parity between Jewish and general studies and avoid the

"split personalities within the compartmentalized minds" which result from teaching that the Torah cannot be questioned or criticized while instruction of general studies encourages independent judgement and the challenging of authority; and they prefer uniting the two traditions, the Jewish and the American, to which the child is heir. A symposium directed at this question reveals a wide range of meanings attached to the concept of 'integration' and even greater diversity of practice (Integration in Day School Programs, 1978).

The curricula developed by the Melton Research Center and the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education stand apart from the trend described above. While certainly not unmindful of the affective aspects of learning, the materials produced by these two agencies of the Conservative movement emphasize subject matter and the development of cognitive skills. The curriculum of the Melton Research Center is "...designed to teach information, skills and competencies" and is based on the assumption that "Jewish education must embody the thinking and the wisdom found in Jewish texts – Bible, the prayerbook, Talmud, Midrash and historical documents - and that it (is) desirable to have the students confront those texts directly and extract from them the themes which are basic to Jewish life and religion" (Morris, 1979, p. 6). Along with a strict definition of subject matter, provided by members of the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Melton material mandates a very specific method. The new Curriculum for the Afternoon Jewish School, published by the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, is another example of a subject-centered program of study (United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, 1978). Though different in structure from the Melton program and more flexible in method, it too rests on the assumption that knowledge is central to the life of the Jew and that what a Jewish child should know is best determined by scholars and educators. Both of these programs reflect a renewed commitment to formal schooling, and a belief in the potential efficacy of the supplementary afternoon school. Whatever the power of other settings, the new curricula of the Conservative movement, like that currently under development in the Reform movement, assume that the great majority of children will receive their Jewish education in the afternoon school. Moreover, they reflect a heightened sense of ideology, and stress the religious rather than the nationalist dimension of Jewishness.

The stated goals of the United Synagogue curriculum are noteworthy from yet another point of view. When they proclaim that "...the whole point of studying in the religious school is to learn what makes the Jew different...and to make a decision as to why you should be different" (United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, 1978, p. 505), they reveal a shift in the definition of Jewishness and Americanism and the relationship between the two. An earlier generation of Jewish educators stressed the similarities

between Judaism and the norms of American democracy. This posture is easily understood when we remember that the perception was mainly shaped by the immigrant experience. A curriculum which consciously teaches the importance of difference is clearly addressing itself to a changed America and to another sort of Jew.

The specific contents of current curricula, whatever their thrust, are by and large drawn from the time-honored subjects of Jewish study. The individual school, working by itself or guided by outlines prepared by national agencies, chooses the material of instruction and the mode of treatment. Both the time available to the school and its ideological orientation determine the curriculum space allotted any particular subject. As a rule, the more intensive the school the greater the concentration on traditional texts or on material drawn from that source. Only day schools are able to introduce students to the Talmud and cognate Rabbinic literature. There is probably no Jewish school in the country which does not teach Bible and history in some form. Hebrew remains a problematic area for afternoon supplementary schools unless they are willing to devote most of their time to language instruction. The new curriculum of the United Synagogue, mindful of the low level of achievement which characterizes most of its affiliated congregational schools, advises that unless there is a commitment to a concentration in Hebrew, language instruction should be restricted to a basic phonics program geared to preparing the pupil to follow the synagogue service.

The core subjects of Bible, history, and Hebrew are surrounded by a wide array of courses, reflecting particular educational outlooks. In recent years Jewish religious thought has been emphasized. As in the case of other subjects, the more intensive and traditional the school – and the two generally go hand in hand – the greater the reliance on classical texts. Mention should also be made of the near-universal inclusion of Israel and the Holocaust in the curricula of Jewish schools. These two topics, more than any others, pose problems for Jewish educators; when treated as 'subjects' they are threatened by the heavy hand of trivialization; when viewed as the central events of modern Jewish existence, they call into question many of the assumptions which guide Jewish schools in the United States.

The manner in which American Jewish schools deal with the Holocaust is worthy of special note. The growing sense of security which characterized a generation of American Jews born to affluence and seemingly limitless opportunity lent support to the view that 'America is different' and complicated the search for an approach to a theme whose details are witness to the fragility of Jewish existence. It was not until well into the 1950s that Jewish educators began to grapple with the educational problems posed by the Holocaust. This delayed reaction is wholly understandable given the enormity of

the events themselves and the time required for comprehension of their meaning, the absence of scholarly research in the years immediately following the war, and not the least, the deterring influence of the fact that most children in Jewish schools were of elementary school age. The central issue, of course, was and still is the purpose of teaching the Holocaust.

While some Jewish educators might question the wisdom of dealing with the subject at all at such young ages, most shy away from such a suggestion even as they remain uncertain in their approach. Proposals such as "The *Shoah* should become part of our tradition...a day of rememberance in the calender" (Pilch, 1964, p. 164); the teaching of the Holocaust should "...evoke sentiment for the 'world that is no more'" and provide "the link that the American Jewish child needs in order to identify with that which we wish him to identify with in his own heritage;" ..."the facts of Jewish history may perhaps succeed in inspiring strength,...security and a sense of inner purpose" (Frank, 1964, p. 178); and "the teaching of the historical facts of intergroup conflict and of persecution and discrimination (should include) some elementary information on the findings of the social sciences (on) the psychological structure of prejudiced people and the social and political structures under which prejudice and group hostility manifest themselves" (ibid., p. 174) – all these seem to suffer from a prosaism which denies the cataclysmic nature of the actual events. Moreover, adult needs are rarely translated into educational experiences which are meaningful to children.

A far more powerfully generative approach is to be found in the position of those who would teach the *Shoah* as a subset of an all-embracing theory of Jewish life and experience. It is difficult to cavil with those who hold that

> To teach the *Shoah* in isolation...will not suffice. Instead, the *Shoah* must be treated within the framework of our essential theological concepts, the nature of Jewish existence, and a critical approach to Western civilization...only after the student is exposed to the major issues in Jewish history and thought, can he be ready to grasp some of the awesome and mystical implications of the *Shoah* (Ury, 1964, p. 169).

Without such a context, the tragedy which befell the Jews of Europe is inevitably reduced to an indifferent recitation of meaningless facts and figures. Within such a context, the telling acquires purpose" ...neither to sadden, nor frighten, nor embitter the young, but to strengthen them with mature understanding..." (Schulweis, 1964, p. 187).

The gradual inclusion of the Holocaust as an accepted subject in the Jewish school has not quieted debate. Educators continue to look for new ways to insure that children will come to know and feel the events which changed the physiognomy of their people. Techniques of simulation, role-playing and group dynamics have been employed to create empathy, shock, and even fear. In some instances, that which is specifically Jewish in the Holocaust has

been blurred in favor of a more generalized approach in which the *Shoah*, American involvement in Vietnam, and discrimination against blacks and other minority groups are all presented as equally relevant examples of man's endemic propensity for evil. Those who would argue that the child should be exposed to the full brunt of the Jewish catastrophe in Europe are firm in their conviction that the

> ...study of the Holocaust must not be wrapped in the gauze of abstractions. If the child is not to be pampered, he cannot be spared learning... that Jews are especially vulnerable to the worst excesses of history. He cannot be spared reading about the agony of the boy who dies slowly on the gallows in Elie Wiesel's *Night*. He cannot be spared the photographs in albums on the Holocaust; the frightened little boy who has his hands up in the air...the pious-looking, elderly Jew whose beard is being snipped off by an amused German lout. Though such photographs are hardly things of beauty and joy forever...they can be an occasion for underscoring the truth that to be human is to be open to the suffering of others; that to be human is to look on the other as a brother and not as a stranger...a hard light needs to be kept on the atrocities and suffering (Schulweis, 1976).

The patent intractability of this view is countered by those who maintain that a 'hard line' is neither good history nor good education. "To see only man's *yetzer hara*, or view history's evil acts alone, is to distort both men and history, both our past and more significantly our future." The idea that a relentless recounting of Jewish suffering will somehow result in a heightened identification with Jews and Judaism is a vain and unfounded hope; the denial of the human capacity for compassion as exemplified by the selfless acts of those many Gentiles who risked their lives to save countless numbers of Jews produces an imbalance which enthrones death over life. "The wholesale condemnation of the non-Jewish world blurs all real distinction, blots out the memory of saintliness, records only the acts of infamy and reduces us all to a paralyzing despair" (ibid.).

Despite the wide variety of material currently available for the teaching of the Holocaust, it is difficult to measure its effectiveness. The absence of data based on carefully controlled research restricts evaluation to information garnered from impressionistic inference. While the testimony of pupil reaction derived from such sources is slanted in the direction of indifference and ignorance of basic facts, it also discloses instances of profound empathy and identification. Unfortunately, we know too little to be able to account sensibly for either type of reaction. Reliable conclusions which may serve as the legitimate ground for future curriculum development will require a more rigorous and detailed analysis of the teaching and learning of the Holocaust than has been the case to date (Roskies, 1975).

The gloom of the Holocaust was pierced by the establishment of the State of Israel. The wave of enthusiasm which swept American Jewry in 1948 left an indelible imprint on Jewish education. The birth of the new state infused Jews with pride and purpose reflected in increased school enrollments, a renewed interest in the study of Hebrew, a rash of instructional materials, and in countless other ways.

Over the years Israel as subject matter has permeated the overwhelming majority of Jewish schools in the United States. A study conducted shortly after the Six-Day War in 1967 noted that modern Israel was treated as a distinct and definable topic in more than half of the 700 responding schools in the sample. In schools where the study of Israel was not an independent element, various aspects of life in that country were integrated into the curriculum through work in Bible, history, Hebrew language instruction, current events, customs and holidays. In short, there is hardly an area of curriculum which is without some degree of attention to, and emphasis on, Israel. In addition to formal instruction, the relationship to the Jewish state is expressed through special events such as the celebration of Israel's Independence Day, bulletin board materials, exhibits and art objects from Israel in the school building, visits by Israelis to the school, music and dance, penpals, and numerous other activities (Schiff, 1968; Chazan, 1979).

The school, however, is only one locus of Israel-centered activity. The deep concern of American Jews for the welfare of Israel serves to reinforce the work of the school and very often draws youngsters of school age into the circle of community-wide activity. In addition, and perhaps most important, are the educational programs in Israel developed by American Jewish educators working together with, and sometimes prodded by, agencies and institutions overseas. Over the years, thousands of youngsters have spent varying amounts of time in Israel in an almost endless variety of educational settings. Many of these young people have benefitted from scholarship programs established in their communities. Indeed, in a great many Jewish circles, a trip to Israel during the high school or college years has come to be considered an integral part of the Jewish educational experience. This position is mirrored in a statement issued in the aftermath of the Six-Day War by the American Association for Jewish Education, the umbrella organization for Jewish education in the United States: "It should...become part of the responsibility of the organized Jewish community to help American Jewish young people enrolled in our high school programs to have at least one summer of personal experience in Israel." (American Association for Jewish Education, 1969).

The idea of a learning experience in Israel rests on the same assumption that guides all programs in international education – without a living contact with a land and its people, one's knowledge of a country is incomplete. The use of Israel as an educational resource and the large investments of effort

and money involved in sending students there are geared to more than getting to know the country, as important as that may be. Jewish schools in America look to programs in Israel as a means of strengthening the Jewish identification of their students; as an experience which affirms and strengthens the bond with the Jewish people; as an opportunity to create some sort of relationship with the Jewish state; and as a source of motivation for continued study and activity at home. Israeli educators and agencies see these various programs as the first stage of a process they hope will culminate in aliyah.

The manner in which Israel is treated, in formal and informal settings both here and abroad, has undergone noticeable change over the years. In the period immediately following the establishment of the state, the dominant tendency was to picture a utopia inhabited by fearless pioneers concerned only with the future of their people. The passage of time, the constant flow of information from Israel, the adaptation of methodological conceptions developed in the public schools and, above all, a deep commitment to Jewish life in America all worked together to force instruction to move closer to the reality of life in the Jewish state. A striving for cogent analysis and balanced criticism replaced the romanticism of an earlier time.

The degree of interest in Israel is in no small measure influenced by events there. Periods of crisis evoke heightened activity and are the occasion for new expressions of loyalty and support. The Six-Day War, for instance, led to the publication of a statement of objectives for the teaching about Israel which urged schools "to present to the student...the very real options which Israel offers to him as a Jew and as a loyal citizen of the land in which he resides. The needs of Israel and the needs of the Jewish people in America require that we explore the critical question of how the individual Jew can best fulfill himself – whether by the enrichment of his Jewish life in America and/or by aliyah to Israel" (American Association for Jewish Education, 1969). The full implications of that declaration can be comprehended only in the context of the events of June 1967.

However, neither the recognition of aliyah as a legitimate goal nor the wide range of activities which focus on Israel has substantially affected the basic orientation of Jewish education in America. Despite the valence of Zionism and its offshoots in the curriculum, Jewish schools are still concerned primarily with educating their pupils to live as Jews in the United States. Israel is, therefore, most often perceived and used as a means of strengthening Jewish life in America – a posture, incidentally, which permits something less than the fullest utilization of the possibilities for education.

The lack of relevant data prevents us from estimating the effectiveness of the various programs cited above – that is, the achievement of their stated goals. We do not know how many schools actually use the curricula prepared by national education commissions; nor do we really know what happens once a curriculum is adopted by a school and introduced into the classroom.

We do know, however, that there is no shortage of curricula and instructional materials: local agencies and individuals rival national agencies in the production of courses of study and learning units; textbook publishers, a more potent influence in curriculum development than generally acknowledged, have attained a level of sophistication which often compares favorably with that of the general field; teachers' centers, a phenomenon of the last decade, encourage teacher initiative and autonomy and provide guidance in the preparation of materials needed for a particular class; a cottage industry of sorts, reflected in the advertisements which dot the pages of educational journals, produces a wide array of classroom aids. It seems safe to state that teachers in Jewish schools today enjoy a choice of materials beyond anything available in the past.

A brief study of the programs and materials we have mentioned is required to discern the pervasive influence of American educational thought and practice on Jewish schools. An examination of a recent issue of *The Pedagogic Reporter*, a quarterly which regularly reports on trends and developments in Jewish education, reveals the extent to which innovations in American education – both those which have been proven effective and those which are little more than passing fads – have been adapted for use in the Jewish school (*The Pedagogic Reporter*, 1976). The fact is that the Jewish school in the United States has modelled itself after the public school in almost every respect – organizational patterns, administrative techniques, means of pupil control and discipline, and methods of instruction.

The 'Americanization' of the Jewish school is surely understandable and perhaps unavoidable. Jewish schools all over the world definitely carry the mark of their host societies, and schools in one country are different from those in another precisely because of the varying contours of local educational environments. One can, however, question the desirability of a process which denatures the distinctive attributes of a culture to the point where specific ethnic and religious components are barely perceptible in the ambience of the school. What a child learns in school derives as much from his total experience in that setting as from the content of instruction. The structure of the school, the methods of instruction it employs, the sanctions it invokes, and the relationships it fosters all denote a particular view of man and the world and are vital to the internalization of the values which the school holds. When Jewish schools adopt the models and manners of American schools, they all too often neglect the relationship between method and principle and deny the practical implications of the tradition they teach. There is much to consider in the observation that

> We have not looked at our own tradition for the kinds of directions we can find for developing our own responses to the need for self-direction and the striving to integrate the roles of emotion and intellect to which

> the open and affective education movements have been the responses in the general field...The best thought of general education is certainly necessary...but it is not sufficient without the Jewish core (Lukinsky, 1974, p. 11).

Current curricula exhibit another characteristic, in some ways related to the emphasis on the affective and the interest in identity formation already noted. In its classical formation, Jewish education is a religious imperative. Traditional Judaism required no justification for the education of children other than that contained in the divine command: "Take to heart these words with which I charge you this day. Impress them upon your children." (Deut. 6:67). The study of the sacred texts is a form of worship and the acquisition of knowledge the key to human perfectibility. The vicissitudes of Jewish life and the secularization of modern culture have contributed noteworthy permutations of the original concept. Zionist thought viewed education as the means of fostering national pride and will. The Jewish socialist movement through its network of Yiddish schools stressed the importance of education in the development of class consciousness and an egalitarian society. Jewish education in pre-World War II America, heavily influenced by the work of Kurt Lewin and the mental hygiene movement, was regarded as a means of avoiding social marginality and an important line of defense in the struggle against antisemitism. These latter varieties of Jewish educational ideals offered the individual transcendence through identification with an overarching social purpose. The authority of the divinely ordained principles serves Orthodox Jewish educators to this day. Their colleagues in other quarters, subject as they are to the demands of modernism, enjoy no such sanction, and the materials they produce celebrate a privatism somewhat punctured by appeals to group survival.

Personnel

Whatever the achievements of Jewish education in the United States, it has not succeeded in providing the Jewish teacher with a status commensurate with the importance of his task. There is still much truth to the bitter comment, made many decades ago after repeated failures to guarantee a living wage for teachers, which notes that "Among the guilty must be counted all those organizations, Zionist and others, and their members who speak so eloquently of a renaissance of our national spirit and culture, but who are no where to be found when it comes to doing something tangible about education, the key to national rebirth" (Whitman, 1918, p. 6). The rhetoric of public forums still proclaims the pivotal role of education in the maintenance of Jewish life; words, however, continue to run far ahead of deeds and we are witness to the virtual demise of the profession of Jewish training.

By the late 1970s, there were approximately 3,500 Jewish studies teachers employed in day schools and some 5,500 in weekday afternoon schools. Of this number, less than one-third may be considered full-time teachers, if full-time teaching in day schools is set at 20 hours per week and in afternoon schools at 12 hours per week. We have no exact figures on the number of teachers working in one-day-a-week schools, although it is safe to assume that declining enrollment and school considerations have reduced this number considerably below the 9,559 reported 20 years earlier in the National Study of Jewish Education (Pollak, 1978b). Except in day schools, there are almost no full-time teaching positions available in Jewish education today. During the 1978–79 school year only 15% of 116 teachers appointed to Conservative afternoon schools in the Chicago area were in full-time positions. In the entire Greater Boston area there were only 12 full-time positions available in afternoon schools. The situation was much the same in Cleveland.

Current salary schedules deter all but the most dedicated and compound the difficult problem of developing a corps of teachers committed to Jewish education. A study conducted in the 1975–76 school year by the American Association for Jewish Education found that "teacher salaries in Jewish day and supplementary schools are too low to afford a head of family a decent, comfortable standard of living as the sole wage earner." The analysis of the data gathered from 382 schools in 31 metropolitan areas showed that the median maximum salary of a full-time day school teacher was $13,433 per year, while that of a full-time teacher in a supplementary school was $9,400. The salary for day school teachers was 13.2% below what public school teachers earned. This situation has made it impossible to maintain rigorous standards of certification and professional requirements which are the hallmarks of professionalism.

There has been no dearth of sensible suggestions for improving the economic situation of teachers: employment by the community rather than by individual schools of limited resources; consolidation of schools to increase teaching loads; training teachers to work in both formal and informal settings; and establishing clearly-defined promotion procedures leading to administrative posts.

Teachers in Jewish schools are a varied group: yeshiva graduates who have opted for teaching careers in day schools; graduates of Jewish teacher-training institutions; Israelis in this country either permanently or temporarily; college students, with or without training and background, whose teaching in a Jewish school is just a stop along the way to another profession; and those who arrive at a Jewish school through no recognizable route of Jewish learning or training.

Yeshiva graduates are the backbone of the Orthodox day school system. Israeli teachers, both in day and afternoon schools, pose particular problems, as they are separated from their students by deep cultural differences. While

the conscientious teacher from Israel may succeed in bridging the gap, his very residence in the United States seriously compromises a curriculum in which Israel is an important element. The penalties of an excess of imports are as severe in education as in economics.

The diversity of background, training and experience which characterizes teachers in Jewish schools today points to a troubling disparity between their attitudes and beliefs and the stated objectives of the school. Any assessment of school effectiveness must weigh the influence of teachers whose personal life style, frequently seen by pupils, differs significantly from the values they teach. Jewish schools attempt to lead their pupils to a Jewish way of life, but more than one will find a disquieting reflection of itself in the congregational school whose "...teaching staff...was a diverse group within Jewish terms. It included some who were anti-religious, some who were very observant, and a great majority who...were...very confused about their Jewishness..." (Schoem, 1980, p. 39).

No other institution involved in Jewish education has undergone as much change in the last decade as the Hebrew teachers college – even the name is no longer appropriate. Once the pinnacles of non-rabbinic Jewish learning in this country, these schools are now hard put to maintain their undergraduate programs. Enrollment at the undergraduate level, which requires simultaneous attendance at two institutions of higher learning, is considerably below the peak of 1,812 reported in the mid–1960s (Ackerman, 1967). The reasons for the decline are many: an unwillingness to carry the load of two schools; the growth of Jewish studies programs on college campuses, viewed by many as equivalent to Hebrew teachers college programs; the decrease in the number of lower-level schools which provide the knowledge and skills required for admission; skyrocketing college tuition fees which force many people to work during the time formerly available for study in these schools. The decline of undergraduate programs has meant a narrowing of opportunities for comprehensive Jewish socialization of young people. Hebrew teachers colleges, also known as colleges of Jewish studies, were more than schools. Attendance at one of these institutions circumscribed the life of the student; it determined his friends, limited his time for non-Jewish activities, and set the boundaries of possible interests.[5]

Several Jewish teacher training schools have developed imaginative new programs. Spertus College in Chicago supplies Jewish studies programs to several colleges in the area. Hebrew College in Boston is developing a program to attract students who do not meet formal admission requirements but are prepared to do make-up work. At the same time, the College has invested heavily in adult education. The various units of Yeshiva University offer a wide variety of pre-professional and professional programs. The Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary and its West Coast School, the University of Judaism, as well as the Rhea Hirsch School of Education of the

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, have successfully launched Master's degree programs for college graduates interested in careers in Jewish education. It is doubtful, however, whether these students will long remain classroom teachers; those who do remain in Jewish education have clearly set their sights on administrative posts.

In contrast to the situation in teaching is that in administration. There are currently some 1,300–1,400 administrative positions in Jewish schools, Bureaus of Jewish Education, and national agencies (Pollak, 1978b). Reform congregations employ 245 full-time principals; the remaining 775 Reform schools employ part-time educators, rabbis who perform other duties, or lay administrators. A number of Reform congregations have charged educators with total responsibility for the congregational educational program, formal and informal, from pre-school through adult education. Conservative congregations employ 350 full-time principals, and day school principalships are almost always full-time positions. There is no question that administrators in Jewish schools are as well qualified as their counterparts in public education. The problem is the lack of qualified personnel to meet the demand; each placement season resembles a game of musical chairs. Salary schedules range from $15,000 per year for principals to as much as $50,000 for directors of central agencies. These salaries, which compare favorably with those paid in similar occupations, have not succeeded in attracting the number of people needed to staff positions currently available.

Finances

Adequate financial resources are required for schools to initiate and maintain quality programs. The recruitment and retention of teachers, curriculum development, and the production of instructional materials – even for the less intensive afternoon and one-day-a-week schools – require large investments of money. Although around 1980 the total expenditure for Jewish education in the United States was estimated to be $280,000,000, almost three times the amount expended ten years earlier, it is clear that traditional patterns of funding are inadequate, given the demands of expanding programs in a context of variable levels of inflation.

An analysis of pupil costs by type of school indicates national averages ranging from $2,300 per year (around 1980) in day high schools to $500 in three-days-a-week supplementary schools. Elementary day school expenditures amount to $1,500, communal elementary school expenditures to $750, and communal high school expenditures to $550. Costs for one-day-a-week school pupils are not known.

Varied patterns of record-keeping, coupled with a frequent lack of relevant information, make it difficult to ascertain the exact amounts contributed by synagogues to the maintenance of their schools. One estimate places

the allocation of Reform congregations to educational programs at an average of about 15 to 20% of the total institutional budget. The more intensive the program, of course, the larger will be the share of congregational expenditures. It is reasonable to assume, however, that in a period of decreasing membership and increasing operational costs, there will be no significant rise in direct subventions to schools from congregational budgets.

The data on tuition fees for three-day-a-week schools indicate that there is little relationship between charges to parents and the actual costs of maintaining a child in school. Over the 20 years between 1951–52 to 1969–70, tuition fees rose from $50 a year for members and $65 a year for non-members to $85 and $150, respectively (Hochberg, 1972, p. 221). A more recent survey of some 30 Conservative congregational schools shows that tuition fees in 1975–76 averaged $115 (United Synagogue of America, 1975–76). Tuition schedules are also affected by the fear that an increase in fees will result in a decrease in enrollment and perhaps synagogue membership.

Day school tuition is an entirely different matter; here, there is a real possibility that ever higher fees will move intensive Jewish education beyond the reach of many families. Whereas in the 1973–74 school year, day school tuition outside New York City was about $1,000, by 1978–79 fees were around $1,500. At the same time in the New York City area, tuition was $2,000 (United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, 1979).[6] Tuition is a major source of day school income, but it does not cover the cost of operations, and schools are increasingly forced to look for outside sources of funding.

Since the end of World War II there has been a steady increase in the amount and proportion of federation funds allocated to Jewish education. In 1947, the sums earmarked for Jewish education represented 8.9% of the total funds budgeted for local needs (Dushkin and Engelman, 1959, p. 148); by 1970 this figure had risen to 13.3% (Hochberg, 1972, p. 209); in 1977, allocations to Jewish education totalled 23.3% of all local disbursements (Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, 1978). In dollars, federation allocations for the period cited (1947–77) rose from $2,215,911 to $27,492,216. A breakdown of the figures reveals the following pattern of disbursements, expressed as percentages of total allocations to Jewish education in 1977 (Ibid., p. 5):

Total	100.0	
Allocations and subsidies to schools	59.8	
Day schools		44.0
Congregational schools		2.3
Other schools		13.5
Jewish institutions of higher learning	8.5	
Services and programs of central agencies	30.8	
All other	0.9	

As encouraging as the trends reported here may sound, total federation allocations in 1977 represented 10% of the costs of Jewish education – an increase of only 3% over 1947. While day schools have been the major beneficiaries of federation financing, the sums allocated in recent years cover only about 13% of their budgets. Thus, parents who want intensive Jewish education for their children must, by and large, pay for it themselves.

The relatively minuscule allocation of federation funds to congregational schools, an anomalous transfer of the principle of separation of Church and State to Jewish communal life, is today under review. Whereas previously neither federations nor synagogues sought to force the issue, declining enrollment and rising costs pose menacing threats to this type of school. Some communities have designed formulas which make afternoon schools eligible for subsidies (Pollak, 1981; Schwartz 1981). The practice, however, is not yet common and it is difficult to identify a consistent pattern.

The never-ending search for additional funds has led some day school supporters to look to the government. They argue that government support falls in the category of aid to children, that it is fully permissible under the equal protection and free exercise clauses of the Constitution, and that the funds made available would be used only for the secular studies component of the day school curriculum. To date, court decisions have approved the use of public tax funds by Jewish day schools only when applied to textbook loans, transportation as a public safety measure, school lunch programs, and certain therapeutic programs. The eligibility of Jewish day schools and other religious elementary and secondary schools for participation in tax-supported school tuition voucher plans remains a moot constitutional issue (Skeoff, 1975).

There is a clear need to rethink the issue of responsibility in the funding of Jewish education. Congregations should review their fiscal procedures to determine what obligations they can sensibly carry. If tuition is primarily the responsibility of the parent, steps must be taken to relate fees realistically to the costs of instruction in a synagogue setting. The readiness of Jewish parents to shoulder the burden of a high tax rate in support of quality public education must find its counterpart in Jewish education, even if this means a decrease in enrollment. Tuition increases alone, however, cannot solve all the financial problems of day schools, and their supporters must discover new funds (Hershberg, n.d.; Schiff, 1973). The stance of federations must similarly be subjected to a searching review.

Effectiveness

The information available on the effectiveness of Jewish education is divided. Considerable data seem to indicate that schools have very little

effect either in terms of cognitive outcomes or in terms of attitude and personality change; other studies argue just as persuasively that schools do make a difference in matters such as political information, 'modern' attitudes and behavior, religious behavior and attitudes, and general information.

The conventional wisdom of the Jewish community is that Jewish education, especially in its supplementary form, has little impact on students. Indeed there are those who argue that Jewish schools not only fail to achieve their goals, but actually have a negative effect on children in that they confirm the impression that Judaism is irrelevant to their lives.

We have no reliable empirical evidence concerning the effectiveness of Jewish schooling when the criteria are the acquisition of knowledge or the development of skills. Published curricula materials sometimes tell us what schools intend to teach, but we know little about what is actually taught, and even less about what children actually learn. We are similarly ignorant regarding the efficiency of the Jewish school – the relationship between what is learned and the investments involved. While critics are quick to charge that Jewish schools provide their pupils with very little knowledge, it is not clear that they achieve less, all factors considered, than other kinds of schools, public and private. Both the critics and the defenders of Jewish education are all too often unmindful of the fact that the object of their concern is a child between the ages of seven and twelve. Even under the best of circumstances we can hardly expect such a young child to acquire anything more than a rudimentary knowledge of Judaism. The postulated ineffectiveness of the Jewish school may very well be the ineluctable consequence of the constraints within which it is forced to function.

Some recent studies, marked by a methodological sophistication all too rare in research on Jewish education, report findings which seem to indicate that Jewish schooling does make a difference. One investigator studied adults between the ages of 30 and 45 who had been exposed to Jewish education of varying intensity to determine "what, if any, residual effect Jewish secondary school education in Philadelphia had on the Jewish life style of its graduates" (Ribner, 1978). The findings of the study indicate that those respondents who had had an intensive Jewish secondary school education were more involved in Jewish affairs than those with a more limited Jewish background. Members of the 'intensive' group rate parents and Jewish schooling as the two most important influences on their Jewish identity.

Two other studies suggest that under certain conditions Jewish schooling has an effect which is independent of familial background and other socializing influences (Bock, 1976; Himmelfarb, 1977). According to Geoffrey Bock, better-schooled Jews are more Jewishly identified. He found that, all other things being equal, there was a positive relationship between a child's time spent in Jewish classrooms and his religiosity as an adult, involvement in informal Jewish social networks, knowledge of Jewish culture, and support

for Israel. When identification is defined as public Jewishness – attendance at synagogue services, participation in secular synagogue affairs, support for Israel, and attitudes about American public issues – schooling is often as important a factor as home background. However, approximately 1,000 hours of instruction are necessary before Jewish schooling begins to affect Jewish identification significantly. The relationship between Jewish identification and schooling appears to reach its peak at about 4,000 hours of attendance in a Jewish school.

Harold Himmelfarb attempted to determine the relationship, if any, between adult religious involvement and the intensity and extensity of Jewish education. He reported that Jewish schooling does not have any statistically significant impact on adult religiosity until there are approximately 3,000 hours of attendance. The discrepancy between the two studies regarding the minimum number of hours of instruction required for Jewish schooling to have any effect may be a function of the criteria measured. Both identification and religiosity are complex constructs and the various elements of which they are composed may each require different minimums of instructional hours to have any impact. Himmelfarb also found that there is a steady increase in adult religiosity as attendance moves from 3,000 to 4,000 hours; however, beyond 4,000 hours increased schooling does not result in increased religiosity unless reinforced by other factors, particularly the spouse. If such reinforcement occurs there is another significant increase in religiosity when schooling approaches approximately 10,000 hours. Instruction beyond that point does not appear to have any significant impact on religiosity as defined in this study. These two studies suggest that current curricular changes, no matter how refined and sophisticated, will have little long-range impact on students if they do not inspire attendance at a Jewish school well beyond the elementary level.

Bock's and Himmelfarb's threshold figures place the statistics of Jewish school enrollment in painful perspective. More than 75% of the children who receive a Jewish education attend schools which meet for 2–6 hours a week; the full program of these schools extends over 4–7 years; the overwhelming majority of these children do not continue their studies beyond bar/bat mitzvah or Confirmation, and a large percentage do not get even that far. Even those youngsters who complete the first level of the most intensive kind of supplementary education fell short of the minimum number of hours judged essential for a long-range impact.

The foregoing supports the long-standing contention of Jewish educators that children do not stay in Jewish schools long enough to permit anything positive to happen. The data suggest that it makes little difference what the schools do, and how they do it, if the children leave before a certain point.

An interesting perspective from which to view the impact of Jewish education is gained from the findings of a study designed to gauge the effectiveness

of Catholic parochial schools. A relationship between adult religious behavior and Catholic schooling was found only among those students who came from religiously observant families; a datum which leads to the conclusion that "...without the predisposition created by a religious family the school was not likely to accomplish very much." Catholic religious education, independent of familial influence, produces "the effect its supporters seek for it only when it is comprehensive (from first grade to college degree)" (Greeley and Rossi, 1966, pp. 87, 88, 223).

The time, effort, and money which provide young people the opportunity to spend some time in Israel also raises questions of impact and influence. Evidence shows that a sojourn in the Jewish state heightens pride in one's Jewishness, strengthens the sense of kinship with fellow Jews, helps in the definition of one's Jewishness and stimulates a desire to become more involved in Jewish affairs and a readiness to consider the possibility of aliyah (Herman, 1970; Ronen, 1966). Programs whose purpose, among other things, is the development of specific skills, i.e. Hebrew language fluency, usually achieve positive results (Shefatyah, 1974). These findings are not unexpected and can be explained without reference to complicated theories. Unfortunately, we do not know whether the immediate enthusiasm inspired by the experience generates any significant long-term change in attitudes and behavior.

Information about the long range effect of a camping experience is largely impressionistic and hardly the basis for objective evaluation. A survey of graduates of Brandeis Camp Institute, a summer program for college students, reveals that "Alumni take an active interest in Jewish activities, have a strong commitment to Jewish activities; have a strong commitment to Jewish history and tradition and are motivated to provide their children with the tools for leading Jewish lives" (Levine, 1972). The majority of the respondents, already well into adulthood, felt that the camp experience "had exerted a measurable and positive experience on their lives." The study did not attempt to investigate the relationship, if any, between reaction to the month's stay at camp and familial background and/or previous Jewish educational experience.

Jewish educators, like their counterparts all over the world, bemoan the absence of parental interest in the work of their schools; and like their colleagues everywhere they tend to get anxious when parents get too involved. The assumption that cooperation between home and school positively influences children's behavior and attitudes in school led one Reform congregation to initiate a parent involvement program. The results were disconcerting: parental participation in the program "had no effect on their childrens' attitude toward religious education" (Knoff and Smith, 1980). One possible explanation for the failure of the program to generate change in the children may be the nature of the 'parent involvement' activities: they were all short-

term and required no significant change in the religious behavior or attitudes of the participants. The parents did much the same as their children; what happened in school had little bearing on what they did at home.

Research: A Caveat

Throughout this paper we have made repeated reference to the results of research. As a result, the reader unacquainted with the workings of Jewish education in the United States may conclude that a wealth of data is available, but the opposite is true. Most writing on Jewish education is hortatory and informed opinion at best. A high percentage of the studies which supply empirical evidence are doctoral dissertations whose importance should not obscure the fact that the choice of topic and strategy of investigation are tailored to the needs of the student. Independent investigators whose experience and sense of the field lead to significant questions are thwarted by the lack of funds. Bureaus of Jewish education and other central agencies have rarely sponsored research beyond the gathering of statistical information.

We know very little about the attitudes of teachers in Jewish schools; no one has studied the results achieved by the different Hebrew language programs currently available; there is no information which tells us whether different curricula affect motivation and attitude while a child is in school; no one has examined the consequences for Jewish education of the changing role of women in America; we know next to nothing about the long-range effect of camping and other forms of informal education or whether a combination of formal and informal educational experiences offsets the negative influence of Jewishly disinterested homes; only a bare beginning exists in the exploration of the climate of the Jewish school; no one has studied decision making processes in Jewish education or the way in which policy questions are identified and translated into programs of practice – the list is endless.

Research does not produce solutions to vexing problems, but without the data base, which only research can supply, proposals for improving the quality of Jewish education fall somewhere between educated guessing and an inexcusable waste of time, effort and money.

Conclusion

Jewish education in the United States is still largely supplementary schooling which engages children of elementary school age. These children are primarily second and third generation Americans. This is a fact of considerable consequence for schools charged with the task of developing the Jewish identity of their students. The enrollment of 372,000 pupils in all kinds of

Jewish schools around 1982 reflects a decline of about one third from the peak of approximately 550,000 reported in the middle of the 1960s. This downturn, largely a function of an aging Jewish population and a lower birth-rate among young couples, has not been accompanied by a parallel decrease in the percentage of children of school age attending Jewish schools. The continued growth of day schools, the decline in the number of one-day-a-week schools, the small but encouraging rise in secondary school programs, and the spread of university-level Jewish studies programs suggest that an increasing number of young people are investing more time over a longer period in Jewish education. That gain, however, is still not large enough to offset the fact that the vast majority of children who enter a Jewish school terminate their studies long before they can be expected to have attained any recognizable or long-lasting skills and competencies. The rate of continuation, surely one of the most critical measures of a school's influence, remains disturbingly low.

Recent research findings lend empirical support to what Jewish educators have long known: as long as Jewish education remains mainly elementary education, restricted to 2–5 hours a week of instruction, there is little reason to believe, or even hope, that it can have any long-term impact. The perennial problems of Jewish education – personnel, curriculum, and finances – are in no small measure a function of its limited range. While the schools themselves contribute to drop-out rates, their efforts at self-improvement through the introduction of new curricula and more sophisticated methods and materials are inadequate for the reversal of long-standing attitudes and practices among parents and children alike. The extension of the reach of Jewish schooling into adolescence and beyond must assume the place of first priority for all those concerned about the future of Jewish life in America.

Recognition of the importance of secondary Jewish schooling, if it is to have any meaning, must bring with it economic and other conditions which will attract able and talented Jewish youth to careers in Jewish teaching. It should also give rise to systematic planning, adequately financed research to help us understand the complexities of Jewish schooling, sophisticated teaching strategies and curriculum development, and working arrangements with all those agencies which impinge upon the lives of those who grow up in the American Jewish community. Without such concerted effort, the Jewish school cannot possibly function as the "treasure house of our people's soul."

Notes

1. "McCullum vs. Board of Education 303 U.S. 203 (1948)", as quoted in Butts, 1950, pp. 203–205.

2. In 1978, 39.5 million elementary and secondary school pupils were enrolled in public schools as compared to 4.7 million in independent schools (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1979, p. 139).

3. For the total U.S. population, the median school grade completed was 12.4; 30% had attended school through one year of college or more, while first degrees or higher were achieved by 16% in 1969, some 22% of American families reported annual incomes of $15,000 and above (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1979, pp. 145, 750).

4. Compare, for instance, the use and meaning of the words Torah and mitzvoth in the following statements: "Jewish education...will enable children, youth and adults to become...Jews who bear witness to the *brith* (the covenant between God and the Jewish people) by embracing Torah through the study and observance of mitzvoth (commandments) as interpreted in the light of historic development and contemporary liberal thought" (UAHC-CCAR, n.d.); and "To engender in our students a love, reverence and appreciation of the Torah, halacha, and teachings which have enabled Judaism to survive...(and) to stimulate our students to learn by doing – fulfillment of the Torah and its mitzvoth..." (Baum, 1979, p. 2).

5. Some sense of the spirit of these institutions may be gathered from the following: "The Seminary College was theoretically committed to what Jewish tradition calls *Torah l'shma*, learning for its own sake, but in actual fact its purposes were very far from being disinterestedly academic. The literal meaning of *Torah l'shma* may be 'learning for its own sake,' but the true, the theological meaning of the idea is 'studying the revealed word of God for the sake of heaven.' The Seminary College did not, I think, consider that it was teaching the revealed word of God for the sake of heaven; it did, however, consider that it was teaching the heritage of the Jewish people as a way of ensuring the survival of that people (my father knew what he was doing when he sent me there). This is not to imply that there was anything covert or devious going on; on the contrary, most professors of the Seminary simply and frankly took it for granted that their business was to deepen the Jewish commitment of their students by making them more fully aware of the glories of the Jewish heritage. There were not training minds or sensibilities; they were training Jews!" (Podhoretz, 1967, pp. 43–44).

6. Although the United Synagogue Commission study deals only with Conservative schools, fees in Orthodox and Reform day schools were comparable.

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