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Jewish Education and Jewish Identity

Collegiate Papers

DOES
JEWISH
SCHOOLING
MATTER?

DR. GEOFFREY E. BOCK

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PREFACE

In 1972 the American Jewish Committee created the Colloquium on Jewish Education and Jewish Identity in response to the recommendations and findings of the AJC Task Force on the Future of the Jewish Community in America. The Task Force, which met during 1970 and 1971, dealt with trends and needs in various areas of Jewish communal life. The analysis of the state of Jewish education produced a nearly unanimous opinion that it was in need of fundamental reform.

The perception of the Task Force derived from its observations that most Jewish schools produce graduates who are functionally illiterate in Judaism and not clearly positive in their attitudinal identification, that most graduates look back without joy on their educational experience, and that the relatively low status of Jewish education and educators make it difficult to recruit talented, creative personnel. Nevertheless, it was felt that the Jewish community's ongoing loyalty to Jewish education combined with a growing impetus for reform gave grounds for optimism and a basis for communal planning.

To investigate the implementation of Task Force recommendations and its call for new educational directions and priorities, the American Jewish Committee convened the Colloquium on Jewish Education and Jewish Identity. The Colloquium was an interdisciplinary group which included recognized figures in the fields of psychology and sociology, educational leaders in the Jewish community, and young academics engaged in Jewish educational research. Between 1972 and 1976 the participants met five times for two-day conferences based upon specially commissioned papers on a wide variety of matters touching on the relationship between Jewish education and Jewish identity. The aim of this process was to develop and publish a series of recommendations for Jewish education based upon the research and deliberations of the Colloquium which could serve as a charge and a guide to those in the Jewish community responsible for educational policy and practice.

With this as our goal, we are pleased to publish the commissioned papers presented at the Colloquium Conferences in the following series of pamphlets:

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF JEWISH EDUCATION: A Literature Review -
Geoffrey E. Bock

DOES JEWISH SCHOOLING MATTER? Summary of Research and
Recommendations - Geoffrey E. Bock

ISSUES IN JEWISH IDENTITY AND JEWISH EDUCATION

The Place of Jewish Identity in the Development
of Personal Identity - Herbert C. Kelman

The Components of Jewish Identity: A Social
Psychological Analysis - Simon N. Herman

The Determinants of Jewish Identity: A
Maturational Approach - Mortimer Ostow

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF JEWISH IDENTITY

The Social Background of American Jewish
Education - Nathan Glazer

The Social Background of American Jewish
Education: A Commentary - Marshall Sklare

DETERMINING THE GOALS OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Toward a Philosophy of Jewish Education -
Seymour Fox

Goals and Practice in Jewish Education:
A Personal Perspective - Charles Silberman

Ideological Perspectives

Orthodox - Norman Lamm

Conservative - David Lieber

Reform - Martin Rozenberg

This pamphlet, Does Jewish Schooling Matter? was prepared by Dr. Geoffrey E. Bock. It contains a summary of the findings as well as conclusions and recommendations emerging from his doctoral dissertation, "The Jewish Schooling of American Jew," submitted to the Graduate School of Education, Harvard University. Dr. Bock's research, which utilized relevant data culled from the National Jewish Population Study of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, was funded in part by the John Slawson Fund for Research, Training and Education of the American Jewish Committee.

The conclusions and recommendations in Dr. Bock's paper are based on his research and observations. Thus, while not all of them reflect the consensus of the Colloquium, they do offer additional educational alternatives.

The Colloquium was chaired by Yehuda Rosenman and David Sidorsky. A summary report and recommendations, representing a convergence and consensus among the members of the Colloquium, is available upon request from the American Jewish Committee.

The purposes of Jewish schooling in America have always reflected a compromise between secular and sectarian goals. "The functions of the complementary schools (or supplemental schools)," Isaac Berkson remarked in his foresighted book Theories of Americanization, "is to transmit the culture of the ethnic group and thus enrich the life of the individual Jew and through him that of the total group."¹ Certainly individuals vary in their attachment to the Jewish group. Some are primarily Jewish and secondarily American, while others are primarily American and only marginally Jewish. But, in Berkson's analysis, the Jewish school defines the salient aspects of the American-Jewish experience. Through the cultural enrichment of the individual the entire group gains.

For Berkson and for all other Jewish educators of the early twentieth century, cultural adjustment was the central problem of American-Jewish life--how to adapt Jewish values to meet the norms of the larger American society. Their solution of this problem became the basic rationale of Jewish school in America. Jewish children would learn about the American mainstream through the public schools. Then, after their secular schooling, they would attend supplemental schools to learn Jewish subjects.

In the early twentieth century, the majority of American Jews accepted this compromise. Most sent their children to public schools. Those parents that also cared about their cultural and religious heritage believed that supplemental schooling would teach their children about Jewish values, norms and behaviors. However, a minority of American Jews have always found this compromise unsatisfying. Even sixty years ago, some of the most religious parents sent their children to all-day religious schools.

Within the last two decades, as successive generations of American born Jews have become more 'American' and less 'Jewish' in identifying outlook, the basic compromise has been seriously challenged. For instance, Charles E. Silberman in his colloquium paper observes that when he and other members of the second generation "were rebelling we asked, 'Should we be Jewish?', not 'Why should we be Jewish?' Being Jewish was a fact. One either observed or didn't observe; one either accepted or rejected. One was not indifferent; one could not be indifferent. My children, their friends, their generation are not rebelling in that sense. They are not rejecting their parents because they are too Jewish; ...The question they ask is, 'Why should I be Jewish?'"

Cultural continuity rather than cultural adjustment is now the central problem of American Jewish life. That is, American Jewish parents now expect Jewish schools and other educational efforts to teach their children about a cultural heritage which is no longer primarily reinforced by the home and the community. Sixty years ago, Jewish educators and parents alike assumed that Jewish schooling simply enriched an indigenous cultural heritage. Jewish educators never claimed that their efforts would insure cultural continuity and this task has only recently been thrust upon them.

Thus the change in the structure of American Jewish life from a largely immigrant to a primarily second and third generation community raises serious questions about the present purposes and future goals of Jewish schooling. Can Jewish schools be a force for the continuity of Jewishness? If so, what type of Jewish schooling is best? Is the compromise between secular and sectarian schooling still valid? These issues, in turn, are part of a more general sociological problem: can schools (i.e. formal educational institutions) have an impact on non-cognitive outcomes such as values, behaviors and beliefs? Or compared to family background, generational changes and other factors, are schools weak social institutions that have little or no impact on non-cognitive outcomes?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In this study I have sought to analyze the role of Jewish schooling in terms of the overall process of Jewish identification in American society based on a random sample of all American Jews, aged 18 and above. (93.1 percent of the sample are aged 25 and above. Assuming that the average Jewish child has left Jewish schools by age 15, all respondents were enrolled in Jewish schools prior to 1968. 93.1 percent were enrolled prior to 1961.) I have found that Jewish schooling is an important factor in this process, but I have also found that it is never the most important factor.

'Diversity' is the central axiom of Jewish identification. Not only do American Jews vary in the extent of their 'Jewishness' but they are 'more' or 'less' identified in a number of different ways. Some are 'more religious' than others: they are more observant in their personal life and are more involved in public religious activities. Some are more 'socially Jewish' than others: they are more involved in non-religious social activities with other Jews. Some are more 'ethnically Jewish' than others: they feel more identified with different aspects of the Jewish cultural heritage. Consequently, I have investigated a range of specific Jewish behaviors and attitudes and measured different dimensions of Jewish identification by ten separate scales.

This strategy has led to one basic insight. I have found that Jewish schooling and other social background factors (such as Jewish home background, generation of American birth, sex, chronological age, and present community of residence) have different kinds of influences on different dimensions of Jewish identification. There is no simple causal relationship between being raised in a Jewish home, having had a 'good' Jewish school experience (which might be defined in a number of different ways) and being Jewishly identified in later life.

Part of the problem concerns patterns of Jewish school attendance. Jewish educators have consistently claimed that the observed growth in Jewish school enrollments during the first half of the twentieth century indicated a growth in the demand of educational services. Since more people were receiving a Jewish education, they concluded that Jewish schooling was fulfilling an increasingly important role in group life. By examining who has gone to Jewish schools, I have found that in one important respect, educators' inferences of 'success' have been illusory. There has been little change in the types of people who have enrolled in Jewish schools over the years: generally they have been raised in more Jewish home environments and are men. The major difference has been in the length of time individuals have spent in Jewish schools. Later generation Jews have spent 'more years' attending Jewish schools and nevertheless have received 'fewer hours' of classroom instruction. This means that the later generations have had more years of contact with formal educational institutions but have probably learned less.

Different types of Jewish schools have attracted different kinds of Jews. 'Intensive Jewish schools' (day schools and Yeshivot) have generally attracted first generation men and women from all kinds of home backgrounds. Chedarim generally enrolled only first generation men, again from all kinds of home backgrounds. Supplemental schools have attracted second, third and fourth generation men and women, especially those raised in 'more Jewish' home environments. Three-day to five-

day supplemental schools have been most attractive to Jewish men, regardless of their family background or generation. One-day and two-day supplemental schools have been most popular among later generation Jews, especially women. In general, sex and generation are the principal factors affecting the type of school individuals have attended.

But the larger issue concerns whether attending a Jewish school as compared to not attending, or going to one type of Jewish school as compared to another, or spending more time in Jewish classrooms as compared to less time, has made a difference. After controlling for the effects of Jewish home background, generation of American birth, chronological age, sex and community of residence, I have found that better Jewishly schooled Jews are more identified. However, the relative importance of Jewish schooling, compared to the relative importance of other factors depends on (a) the definition (and measurement) of Jewish school experiences and (b) the conception of Jewish identification in question.

Generally, 'hours of Jewish instruction' is the best predicting measure of most conceptions of Jewish identification. All other factors being equal, those people who have spent 'more hours' in Jewish classrooms are more religious, more involved in informal social networks with other Jews, feel more knowledgeable about Jewish culture and are stronger supporters of Israel. They have either 'learned more' or have been 'better socialized' by their classroom experiences. There are, however, important exceptions. 'Years of Jewish schooling' is the best predictor of involvement in secular Jewish organizational activities. Those people who have been 'better socialized' by the repetitiveness of attending Jewish schools are more likely to become the Jewish organizational activists. 'Simply attending' a Jewish school is the best predictor of attitudes about Jewish self-esteem and attitudes about American political issues. By simply having been inside the Jewish school-house door, individuals are 'more Jewish' in their outlook about these issues.

How important are the effects of Jewish schooling? I find that the best predicting measure of Jewish schooling is an important factor accounting for variations in different conceptions of Jewish identification. But the influence of Jewish schooling, compared to the influence of Jewish family background, generation and other factors depends on the particular conception of Jewish identification in question. Moreover, the relative influence of these different factors suggest two general modes of Jewish identification. In some cases Jewish identification seems to be a reflection of personal values and beliefs; in other cases it basically involves public behaviors and commitments.

Personal Jewishness (such as personal religious observances, Jewish self-esteem, participation in informal social networks and cultural perceptions) is mainly influenced by Jewishness of home background. To the extent that Jewish schooling is important, home background is 1.3 to 2.4 times more important. In addition, generation of American birth has a considerable effect on various conceptions of personal Jewishness. The second and third generations are progressively less identified than the first. There is some evidence of a 'return' in the fourth generation in that it is more personally identified than the third. Furthermore, the effect of generation is roughly as important as the effect of Jewish schooling. This means that the decline in personal Jewishness due to generation is roughly offset by the effects of Jewish schooling. Consequently, with each generation of American-born Jews, Jewish schooling became progressively a more important factor affecting personal Jewishness. But this also means that the effects of Jewish schooling cannot compensate for the effects of home background.

Public Jewishness (such behaviors and activities as attendance at services, participation in secular synagogue affairs, participation in secular organizational activities, support for Israel and attitudes about American political issues) are a different matter. Jewish schooling is often as important as Jewish home background, but both of these factors are only part of more complicated social processes. Public Jewishness in part is a product of communal necessity. Those people who live in 'less intensive' Jewish communities (which in this analysis means residing outside the New York City metropolitan area) have greater incentives to be involved in formal Jewish activities. In part, supporting Israel is the result of personal memories; regardless of their family background or Jewish schooling, immigrants have been much stronger in their support for Israel than their progeny. Political attitudes, by comparison, are indicative of acculturation: later generation Jews, especially men and those individuals raised in less identified homes are more tolerant in their outlook about American political issues.

I have tested for a number of kinds of interactions. In general I find that the effects of Jewish family background, Jewish schooling, generation of American birth and sex are independent of one another. In the more detailed analysis of specific identification scales, there is evidence of a significant interaction between Jewish family background and Jewish schooling. But this interaction is complicated and is not always in the expected direction. That is, those individuals who were raised in more identified homes and have spent more hours in Jewish classrooms are slightly more publicly identified (especially in terms of synagogue attendance and synagogue activities). Thus, schooling supports the public values

initially fostered by the home environment. In practical terms, the time spent in Jewish classrooms has the greatest impact on those individuals least likely to attend Jewish schools.

Findings about the importance of Jewish schooling lead to another question: are some kinds of Jewish schools more effective than others? I find that supplemental schools are not automatically less effective than intensive schools, Yeshivot and days schools; they are simply less efficient.

All other factors being equal, roughly 1,000 hours of Jewish instruction are necessary before schooling begins to substantially affect Jewish identification. Further, the effectiveness of Jewish schooling for positive Jewish identification continues to increase reaching a high degree of effectiveness after roughly 4,000 classroom hours.

Intensive school-attenders attain the critical threshold of 1,000 hours more quickly than supplemental school-attenders. Those individuals who have spent more than 3,200 hours in Jewish classrooms are likely to have attended intensive schools at some point during their childhood. Side effects of intensive schooling are obviously greater than those of supplemental schooling. Yet, the essential factor is the total number of hours spent in Jewish classrooms, rather than specifically the type of schooling. This finding has important implications for Jewish schooling policies.

Finally, I find that Jewish schooling fulfills a specific role in the identification process. Certainly, Jewish self-esteem affects behaviors; those people who feel more Jewish -- those who are more Jewishly self-identified -- are also more likely to act in identifiably Jewish ways. However, the factors involved in Jewish self-esteem differ from those which result in specific Jewish behaviors. Individuals raised in 'more Jewish' home environments are more likely to have greater Jewish self-esteem. Their personal attitudes lead them to behave Jewishly and either to attend synagogue services more frequently, or to practice more religious rituals in their homes or to be stronger supporters of Israel. By comparison, Jewish schooling has little direct effect on Jewish self-esteem. Individuals who have spent more hours in Jewish classrooms are more likely to behave Jewishly, regardless of their Jewish self-esteem. In other words, to the extent that Jewish schooling is important, it affects specific behaviors rather than feelings about Jewish self-esteem. Perhaps those people who have spent more time in Jewish classrooms have learned more; since they are more knowledgeable, they are more likely to behave in identifiably Jewish ways. Alternatively, perhaps better Jewishly schooled Jews have simply been better socialized to follow the accepted norms of group life. Perhaps those people who have spent more time in Jewish classrooms have learned more;

since they are more knowledgeable, they are more likely to behave in identifiably Jewish ways. Alternatively, perhaps better Jewishly schooled Jews have simply been better socialized to follow the accepted norms of group life.

IMPLICATIONS

My findings show that within certain bounds, Jewish schooling does affect various conceptions of Jewish identification. In particular, they lead to added insights about how schools affect non-cognitive outcomes, why the traditional compromise of Jewish educators worked to some extent, and what some of the future social policies about Jewish schooling should be.

The Theoretical Implications

American Jewry has been one of the most successful ethnic groups in American society. Jewish traditions have always emphasized education and learning. American Jews have been able to translate their traditional heritage into secular school achievements, occupational mobility and economic prosperity. Because education and learning are so highly valued in group life, my analysis serves as an 'ideal' case study about more general educational and sociological issues. Consequently, my findings have important theoretical implications.

My findings support some of the previous research about the noncognitive effects of schooling and indicate that value-oriented schooling is one of a number of social factors that affect ethnic identification. The ethnic orientation of the home environment is a second factor; the changes in attitudes and behaviors from generation to generation is a third factor. Moreover, the impact of value-oriented schooling is due to the notion of critical thresholds. Usually, there is a minimal 'floor' and a maximal 'ceiling' between which value-oriented schooling independently affects ethnic identification. All in all, more schooling does not always lead people to be more identified; rather, school experiences must fall within the critical range.

Contrary to previous investigations of non-cognitive educational outcomes, I find slight evidence of 'interaction effects' between family background and schooling and then not always in the expected directions. I find no evidence of interactions between family background and generation and between schooling and generation. My findings tend to contradict the conventional wisdom that schools are only able to reinforce the values and norms that originate in the home, or in the social experiences of a particular generation. Certainly my conclusions about 'interaction effects' are most tentative: there may be methodological problems with my present analytic strategy. More research on interaction effects is necessary

to resolve these methodological issues.

The absence of significant interactions is a striking finding. If it does hold up under more detailed scrutiny, this finding implies that discrete factors affect the persistence of ethnic identification in American society. Value-oriented schooling is an expression of the normative standards of group life. Yet the absence of interactions may be due to the special role of Jewish schooling in Jewish life. In particular, Jews traditionally believed that learning about their history, traditions, religion and rituals was essential for their continuity as an identifiable group. Jewish education always has been a fundamental Jewish value. In contemporary American society, Jewish schooling continues to fulfill this essential social function, independent of the effects of home background or generation.

I have also shown that the impact of schooling depends on the nature of the non-cognitive outcomes in question, which in this study are the public and private conceptions of Jewish identification. In particular, Jewish school experiences are more likely to affect public behaviors rather than personal beliefs. By comparison, family background has a much more substantial influence on personal beliefs. For example, all other factors being equal, Jewish schooling is much more likely to influence involvement with the synagogue than participation in informal social networks or attitudes about Jewish self-esteem. Because schooling has a greater affect on public behaviors it is easier for educators to teach people to identify with the formal institutions of group life than to accept the intrinsic, personal ethnic group values. As an ethnic group comes to rely on its formal educational institutions for the continuity of group life, it stresses identification with specific ethno-religious institutions, rather than with personal values and beliefs. For instance, to the extent that future generations of American Jews are intensively educated in Jewish schools and raised in relatively unidentified homes, they will express their Jewishness in terms of identification with the synagogue, with other formal ethnic institutions, and with public, group-oriented activities. But they will not be especially Jewish in personal outlook. To the extent that personal ethnic values and beliefs are maintained, they depend largely on the value-orientation of the family and on generation of American birth.

Finally, I find that each succeeding generation in the United States is less personally Jewish. However, all other factors being equal, I find some evidence of a slight "reversal" in the fourth generation. Once background factors are taken into account, it is possible that the third generation continues to experience the conflicts of the second; only the fourth generation has the leisure for self-exploration which

would lead to a modest return towards the values and norms of the immigrant generation.

Although ethnic schooling is an important factor affecting the continuity of ethnicity in American society, it can be best understood in terms of its larger social context. "The ethnic group in American society became not a survival from the age of mass immigration but a new social form. . . . Ethnic groups . . . are continually recreated by new experiences in American society."² For group members, ethnic schooling is an important link with their cultural heritage. It contributes to the transformation of the group and to its adaptations to American social norms--in short, to its 'continual recreation.' But the transformation and the adaptation are in a specific direction. Ethnic schooling is especially likely to 'continually recreate' the group in terms of public identification with formal institutions and public group-oriented behaviors but it has relatively less impact on personalized ethnic identification. Rather, these personalized aspects of group life depend on generation and on family background.

Complex factors affect the development of this 'new /American/ social form.' Reliance on formal institutions leads to a particular kind of group life. One must certainly question the authenticity of public identification without the underlying structure of personalized values and beliefs. For instance, what kind of person is publicly Jewish and yet hardly identified with personal Jewish values and beliefs? What is the authenticity of a group which only emphasizes a public identification, devoid of meaningful, personal values and behaviors for the individual?

All in all, the increasing emphasis on ethnic schooling for group survival is only one type of new experience. The emergence of the later generation, ethnic group oriented family is potentially another factor. But American society experts powerful assimilatory tendencies, especially on the personal level. In an open society, assimilation is a legitimate possibility. Thus the dilemma of ethnic identification in American society is that an ethnic group can more easily construct formal institutions (such as schools) than influence the personal loyalties of its members. From a policy perspective, educational policies are easier to formulate and execute than family policies.

Policy Implications

From one perspective, the policy implications of this analysis are relatively straightforward. Even after controlling for the effects of Jewishness of home background, generation and other factors, Jewish schooling is modestly to moderately important. In general, 'more hours' of Jewish

instruction lead to higher scores on different identification measures. Moreover, roughly 1,000 classroom hours form the critical threshold. All other factors being equal, those people with more than this amount usually find that their school experiences positively affect their identification; those with less than this critical amount usually find that their school experiences have little effect on their identification.

What should the American Jewish community do to insure that future generations receive more than 1,000 hours of Jewish instruction? And looking at the simple question of hours raises a more fundamental matter of principle. What should be the future attitude of American Jewry towards its long-standing position that Jewish schooling should be a supplemental activity, that Jewish children should learn about Jewish beliefs, heritage and traditions only after they have finished their secular schooling? At some point in children's lives, should Jewish learning take priority over secular instruction? It seems to me that there are three basic policy options to consider: expanding supplemental schooling; building day schools and harmonizing the relationships between secular schools and Jewish schools.

1. Expanding Supplemental Schooling: If one assumes that the basic problem is the length of the Jewish school day and the number of instructional hours offered each week, then expanding the length of time spent in supplemental schools is a plausible alternative. This may be accomplished either by expanding the number of class-hours offered each week or by increasing the number of years spent in Jewish schools. Few supplemental schools offer instruction at the pre-school or high school level. In principle, if teenagers remained in supplemental schools through their high school years, they would have the opportunity to learn more.³

The logic of this policy option is inescapable. It preserves the traditional compromise between secular and sectarian schooling. Jewish schooling continues to be an extra-curricular activity. Nevertheless, this alternative is not without its pitfalls. Simply enrolling children for more years in a part-time program does little to affect their Jewishness. Those veterans of many years of supplemental schooling are more likely to be the Jewish organizational activists, but they are not notably more Jewish along other salient dimensions. An extra year of afternoon supplemental schooling only results in 240 more hours of classroom instruction. For supplemental high school programs to be effective, individuals will have to spend more years in Jewish schools.

Moreover, I suspect that the issue of time is only symptomatic of the conceptual and curricular problems of supplemental schooling in general--what should children learn

in order to become identifying Jewish adults. By simply encouraging post-Bar Mitzvah/post-Bat Mitzvah schooling, Jewish educators have managed to skirt the more substantive pedagogical issues, the problems of educational goals and curricular objectives. In short, this policy option is the least controversial. It also promises to be the least effective.

2. The Day School Option: If one assumes that the only policy objective is for people to spend more than 1,000 hours in Jewish classrooms during their childhood, then the modern day school is the most efficient alternative. It has the virtue of providing children with intensive Jewish school experiences, unencumbered by the conflicting time pressures of other extra-curricular activities. The day school movement is currently the fastest growing sector of Jewish education: between 1970 and 1972, day school enrollments reportedly increased by 12.2 percent.⁴ Yet most day schools are Orthodox in ideological orientation and enroll students mainly in the elementary grades.⁵ The Conservative movement has also supported serious attempts at day schooling. Its system of Solomon Schechter Day Schools has sought to attract children from less religious homes who would not attend an ideologically Orthodox school. And even the Reform movement has begun to consider day schools, and has already sponsored five or six.⁶

However, the conceptual, political and social consequences of day schooling continue to pose problems for many Jews. The day school is 'private' and 'religiously oriented' in its philosophical outlook. Consequently, from one perspective it represents a "heroic accomplishment because it rejects the assumption of the American Jew (and of many Jewish educators as well) that Jewish culture is secondary to American culture."⁷ From another perspective, it represents an assertion of Jewish separatism, that identifying Jews are different from Americans in general. And this assertion goes against the prevailing communal notions about Jewish survival in American society.

If policy statements of the organized Jewish community are in any way a reflection of the sentiments of the majority of American Jews, the commitment to the traditional compromise of Jewish educators (and to the traditional communal support of public schooling) remains strong.⁸ Thus, while day schools will probably have a larger appeal in the future than they have had in the past, they will probably never attract the majority of American Jewish children. One way or another, less efficient methods of Jewish schooling will continue to be more popular.

3. Harmonizing Jewish Instruction with Secular Schooling: If one assumes that the policy objective is not only having people spend more than 1,000 hours in Jewish classrooms but also maintaining some commitment to secular education, then

the educational alternatives are more complicated. New forums for Jewish learning are needed to modify the present organization of supplemental schools--ones that provide intensive instruction but maintain the traditional compromise between secular and sectarian schooling. New kinds of Jewish learning environments must try to create a new kind of balance between the secular and sectarian impulses of contemporary Jewish life in America.

Jewish studies on the college level are one alternative. College level courses at least can offer intensive instruction within a relatively short period of time. For example, individuals certainly learn more Hebrew in a year of intensive study in college than in any number of years of intermittent supplemental schooling. And since almost all Jewish children now go to college, college level courses may be an efficient way to reach the next generation of Jewish adults.

But there are two problems with this alternative. First, enrolling in Jewish studies courses is a matter of choice, leading one to suspect that those students who were raised in more identified homes in the first place will be the chief beneficiaries. Second, compared to the socialization function of primary and secondary schooling, college courses emphasize the norms of universalism and secular achievement and are not geared to fostering uncritical identification. Rather, their purposes are to transmit knowledge and there is no guarantee that Jewish college students will become more identified.

Released time programs may be a second alternative. Children would spend part of their school day in public schools learning secular subjects; then, being 'released' from public schools for a specific period of time, they would attend Jewish schools to learn Jewish subjects. These kinds of programs would provide an institutional mechanism for Jewish children to spend a more substantial portion of their school day in a Jewish learning environment. Rather than continuing as a burdensome extra-curricular activity, Jewish schooling would become an integral part of children's everyday lives. Perhaps children from relatively unidentified families would be more likely to attend as little else would compete for the time they would otherwise spend in secular schools.

Released time programs are hardly a new idea; they have ample legal, historical, and educational precedents. Constitutionally, they have been judged a legitimate form of 'accommodation' between secular and religious authorities, one where children may be 'released' from their secular studies in public schools to attend religious classes conducted by their respective faiths.⁹ Nevertheless, some claim that released time constitutes a recognition of religious education in the public sector and therefore impinges on the strict separation of church and state.¹⁰

However, from an educational perspective, released time programs potentially are only part of an emerging movement within American education towards nonformal secondary schooling. Many secondary schools now let students out of traditional classes to do a variety of 'creative' or 'vocationally oriented' tasks within their communities. As Americans come to realize that schools are places for cultural enrichment, rather than simply places for occupational, social and economic successes, the tendencies toward de-schooling are likely to grow. Jewish cultural enrichment could be another kind of creative program that interested adolescents could choose. It is altogether possible that existing supplemental schools would expand their programmatic offerings, to provide a released time alternative for those children who would want to study Jewish subjects during secular school hours.

However, released time programs are not without serious problems. One issue concerns implementation. Released time efforts require cooperation and coordination between public school officials and Jewish educators over the basic administrative questions of scheduling and transportation--such as when pupils would be released, whether they would miss important secular classes and how they would be transported from the secular to the Jewish school. Other religious and ethnic groups would have to go along with the proposal. A second problem is philosophical and pedagogical. Released time programs would simply provide the opportunity for Jewish children to spend more hours in Jewish classrooms. They would do little to resolve the ideological and pedagogical disputes about the content and focus of Jewish education--what children should learn and how the material should be presented.

Jewish instruction within secular schools may be another alternative. Since the great majority of Jewish children continue to attend public schools or non-sectarian private schools, efforts might be made to provide Jewish instruction within secular school environments. For example, students might learn Hebrew as a foreign language and Jewish history as part of their social studies curriculum. Hebrew language instruction in the public high schools, in particular, is not a new idea, but it has not been a terribly popular one. In 1973, only about 2,200 pupils in the entire United States were enrolled in public high school Hebrew language classes.¹¹

American Jews have been very reluctant to seek Jewish studies within the public school context for a number of reasons. Jewish courses taught in the public sector may not reflect the prevailing norms of the Jewish community. A 'value-free' Jewish curriculum, where discussion of religious beliefs are prohibited (in order to satisfy the separation of church and state requirements) may do little to foster identification. Second, by advocating Jewish courses in the public

sector, the Jewish community again must enter the political arena. Thus, many Jews might fear that if social cohesion diminishes, over the long run the security of the American Jewish community will be threatened. Moreover, even if Jewish children have a greater opportunity to learn about Jewish subjects, they may have few Jewish socialization experiences and learn little about Jewish social norms. When Jewish parents send their children to public schools, they are sending them as Americans, rather than as Jews. Nevertheless, one could increase the minimal efforts made at Hebrew language instruction within public schools without endangering other values.

Jewish instruction in conjunction with secular schools may be a fourth alternative. Rather than seeking to modify the public school experiences of Jewish children (either through shortening their public instruction or introducing them to Jewish courses in public schools) Jewish educators may seek secular recognition for Jewish learning. That is, if Jewish educators offer a substantial program, Jewish students may seek high school credits or other forms of secular recognition for their Jewish studies. However, this alternative probably only applies to the most Jewishly identified students in the first place who are attracted to serious Jewish studies. It is not specifically a strategy for enrolling more students into Jewish classes. Rather it is simply a way to legitimize and perhaps to provide some modest incentives for Jewish studies.

As a policy objective, harmonizing Jewish instruction with secular schooling leads to a number of intriguing alternatives. They are not without their obvious social costs as well as benefits. But, in my opinion, the specific principle of recognizing the similarities between Jewish instruction and secular schooling, rather than emphasizing the differences between the two, is as important as the variety of educational arrangements that might stem from it. The simple fact is that Jewish communities in America differ in complicated ways and require diverse educational programs, appropriate to their individual communal circumstances. By accepting the principle that Jewish instruction need not be secondary to secular schooling, then a number of plausible ways to harmonize one kind of educational objective with the other emerge. American Jewry can begin to develop new kinds of Jewish educational programs, designed to meet the various changing communal circumstances.

Implications for Family Policies

From another perspective, the policy implications of this analysis are less auspicious. Even considering a critical threshold for Jewish schooling, other factors continue to

affect Jewishness. In particular, Jewish family background has a consistent and considerable impact on Jewish identification, especially on personal Jewishness. And the perceptible changes from generation to generation result in the decline of personal Jewish values, attitudes and behaviors.

Less Jewishly educated individuals will raise their children in less identified families. And regardless of the extensiveness of their Jewish school experiences, individuals raised in less Jewish home environments are likely to be less personally identified. The reliance on schooling for the continuity of identification emphasizes public Jewishness, to the exclusion of personal Jewishness. If one sees personal commitments as essential for the continuity of group life from generation to generation, then formal educational policies are necessary, but not sufficient.

Rather, effective policies require efforts to 're-Judaize' the Jewish family by making a less identified family, more identified. One approach has been efforts at Jewish family life education where trained educators or social workers attempt to teach families about Jewish norms and values, and attempt to use Jewish motifs to resolve family difficulties. Another approach has been family-oriented education. Some Jewish schools offer Jewish studies for parents while the children are attending classes. In this way parents learn how to reinforce the values that their children have been taught in Jewish schools. A third approach has been total family experiences. When the entire family participates in meaningful Jewish experiences, as for instance during a weekend retreat or in a Sabbath meal, they are more likely to accept Jewish values, behaviors and beliefs.

Certainly there are unlimited possibilities for family programming but the more important question concerns their relative effectiveness. Although I have not been able to find any evaluations of any family education programs, it is clear that programming for family education has barely begun. Building the necessary programs is a long range essential which is bound to be time consuming and require new institutions, new organizational efforts, and a great investment of financial resources.

Ultimately, Jewish schooling is only part of a larger social process. Whereas Berkson and other Jewish educators of the early twentieth century had relatively unambiguous educational and social objectives, the present situation is now much more complicated. The central dilemma of American Jewry is no longer cultural adjustment, or the adaptation of traditional Jewish values to American norms. It is now cultural continuity, or how American Jews should organize themselves to insure continuity to the next generation. This is a serious problem. Perhaps for the first time since Jewish life in

the diaspora began, assimilation into the larger society is a legitimate possibility.

Jewish schooling is important, but it is only one factor. It is an act of faith about the possibilities for group life in the future. What is educationally most important is the critical examination of group values and norms. If the next generation of American Jews know about their cultural heritage and their religious traditions, they possibly will be better able to dream and to live authentically Jewish lives.

Footnotes

1. Isaac Berkson, Theories of Americanization (New York: Teachers College Press, 1920), p. 103
2. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot, 2nd edition (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1971), pp. 16-17.
3. Jewish supplemental high schooling has been a growth area of Jewish education. Hillel Hochberg of the American Association for Jewish Education estimates that within the last 15 years, enrollments in Jewish supplemental high schools have increased 76 percent to a record 76,000 students. But within the last few years, there is evidence that the growth has tapered off. See "The Jewish High School in 1972-73: Status and Trends," The American Jewish Yearbook, LXXVI (1975).
4. For a discussion of the current trends in Jewish school enrollments see Harold Himmelfarb, "Jewish Education for Naught: Educating the Culturally Deprived Jewish Child," Analysis (The Institute for Jewish Policy Planning and Research of the Synagogue Council of America) No. 51, (September, 1975), pp. 1-2.
5. In 1967, 78 percent of all day school students attended Orthodox-sponsored day schools. 80 percent of all day school students were enrolled in the kindergarten and elementary school level. See American Association for Jewish Education, 1967 National Census of Jewish Schools (New York: Department of Statistical Research, AAJE, December 1967), tables 3 and 5.
6. Martin Rozenberg, "A Perspective on Reform Religious Education," paper presented at the Colloquium on Jewish Education of the American Jewish Committee, June 9, 1975, p.4.
7. Marshall Sklare, "The Social Background of American Jewish Education--A Commentary," paper presented at the Colloquium on Jewish Education of the American Jewish Committee, October 5-8, 1972.
8. For a recent statement about communal attitudes towards sectarian education and public schooling see Reassessment Committee of the National Jewish Community Relations

Advisory Council, The Public Schools and American Democratic Pluralism--The Role of the Jewish Community, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations of a Conference, May 1-May 3, 1971.

9. However religious instruction must take place outside the public school premises. See Zorach v. Clawson, 343, U.S. 306(1952).
10. David Sanford Cohen, "American Reform Judaism and the Jewish Day School" (M.A. thesis, Department of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University, October 1974), pp. 18-31.
11. The National Center for Educational Statistics of the U.S. Office of Education reports in their forthcoming National Inventory of Curricular Offerings and Pupil Enrollments that an estimated 2,177 public high school students in 57 high schools in 10 states across the nation were enrolled in Hebrew language classes during the 1972-73 school year. This estimate includes both half-year and full-year courses. An estimated 971 high school pupils were enrolled in New York State. NCES estimates are based on a large scale national survey.

The New York City Board of Education reports that in 1974-75, a total of 2,183 pupils (including 1,537 senior high school students) were enrolled in Hebrew language classes. Thus there is a moderate discrepancy between the NCES estimates and the N.Y.C. Board of Education population enrollment figures. But even if the NCES estimates are off by 100 percent (an unlikely occurrence, given their sophisticated design) the national enrollment estimates would still be less than 5,000 high school pupils.

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