The Educational Philosophy of Conservative Judaism and the Curriculum of Its Elementary Schools

Herbert K. Lerman
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Abstract
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THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

and

THE CURRICULUM OF ITS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

Herbert K. Lerman

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H.K.L.
Abbreviations

AJYB-American Jewish Year Book
CJ-Conservative Judaism
EA-Educators Assembly
JE-Jewish Education
PAJHS-Proceedings American Jewish Historical Society
PEA-Proceedings Educators Assembly
PRA-Proceedings of Rabbinical Assembly
PRAJE-Proceedings of Rabbinical Assembly on Jewish Education
PUSY-Proceedings United Synagogue Biennial Convention
RA-Rabbinical Assembly
SYC-Synagogue Center
SYS-Synagogue School
USy-United Synagogue
USCJE-United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education

Note

In the footnotes, if the place of publication was New York, it was omitted. This was done to save space, since most publications appeared in New York.
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Our Design. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the element of philosophy in Conservative curricula. We shall seek to determine the extent to which the curricula designed for the Conservative congregational elementary schools reflect the philosophies of Judaism and of education advocated by the leaders of the movement. In the present introductory chapter we shall take a brief glance at the historical and sociological background of the Conservative movement. In the second chapter the main philosophical and theological trends among Conservative thinkers will be described. The third will detail the educational aims of the Conservative school system. The fourth will examine the Jewish and educational philosophies of past and present Conservative curricula. The fifth and concluding chapter will contain a brief summary of our findings and conclusions.

This chapter deals with the external events that gave rise to the movement. It tells of the first signs of Conservatism in Europe, of the leaders in America who at first made common cause with Reform, but who finally went their own way by establishing a seminary and a wide network of local and national institutions. Finally, the social forces conditioning all these developments are outlined.

European Antecedents. In America the Conservative movement is as recent as some of its oldest adherents. In historical perspective, therefore, it is extremely young, one of the
youngest on the Jewish scene. Its beginnings, however, can be traced to an earlier period in Europe.

In Germany Conservatism first appeared as the Positive Historical School. Back of this new religious orientation was the Science of Judaism (Wissenschaft des Judentums), the attempt to comprehend the Jewish past by means of the historical method. But neither in Germany nor in England, where Conservative thought spread, did the movement flourish as it did in America.¹

American Antecedents. In America Conservatism can be traced directly to early Reform and to Western European Orthodoxy, both of which combined to form the Historical School. At first there was hope that Reform would not depart appreciably from the mainstream of Jewish religious life and that it should be possible to combine Orthodoxy with modernism. But this was not to be. The Pittsburgh Platform adopted by the Reform in 1885 caused the decisive split; the existence of three religious wings in American Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform—then became a fact.

The Historical School (1840-1885). Towering above all his peers was Isaac Leeser (1806-1868)² who pioneered in almost

¹ The beginnings in Germany are described in David Philipson, The Reform Movement (1931).

² The ensuing section is based on M. Davis, Yahadut Amerika Behitpathutah (1951). Parzen's "A History of Conservative Judaism" CJ, III (July 1947) to VIII (January 1952) presents the lives and thoughts of Schechter, Adler, Ginsberg and others.
and preacher: Benjamin Szold (1820-1902) of Baltimore, father of Henrietta Szold, both of whom advocated moderation; Marcus Jastrow (1829-1903), lexicographer and scholar; the brothers Frederick de Sola (1850-1927) and Henry Pereira (1852-1937) Mendes; Alexander Kohut (1842-1894), author of an encyclopedic dictionary of the Talmud; and Sabbato Morais (1823-1897), founder of the Jewish Theological Seminary. These spiritual leaders of congregations were joined by two laymen: Mayer Sulzberger (1843-1923), father of Jewish libraries in America, and Solomon Solis Cohen (1857-1948), poet and communal leader.

These were some of the early leaders of the Conservative movement who, as protagonists of the Historical School, were not at all aware that they were creating a new religious group. They advocated moderate reform and throughout this period were aligned with the Reform group, especially its right wing, which was itself embattled with the extremists of the eastern seaboard like David Einhorn (1809-1879). Already the Minhag America of Isaac M. Wise, which had eliminated all prayers for the return to Eretz Israel and other national aspirations, had convinced Leeser that separation from Reform was imminent. The final break came in 1885 when so-called classical Reform was formulated in the Pittsburgh Platform and the Jewish Theological Seminary was founded.

The Seminary was from the outset not identified with a new movement. On the contrary, its leadership carried the banner of Orthodoxy. Of the thirteen signers of a call for an Orthodox Jewish Congregational Union in 1898, eleven were from the
Seminary faculty and board. This spirit prevailed during the presidency of S. Morais (1886-1897) and continued for a while during the incumbency of his successor Solomon Schechter who took over in 1902, after an interval of five years, during which time the Seminary was closed.

Expansion of the Seminary. Originally designed as a rabbinical school, the Seminary gradually expanded its activities to include a large variety of schools and projects for the propagation of Jewish scholarship. The library which was started in 1902 became one of the largest collections of Judaica and Hebraica in the world with some 200,000 printed books and 9,000 manuscripts. The Teachers Institute (1909) became one of the leading American teacher training schools. Its extension department, the Israel Friedlaender Classes (1921), offered courses to adults. The Seminary College of Jewish studies (1929) was created as an academic department. Other projects included: the Museum of Jewish Ceremonial Objects (1931); the Institute for Religious and Social Studies (1938) for clergymen and other religious teachers; The Eternal Light (1944), a weekly radio program, and Frontiers of Faith (1951), eight annual TV programs; the University of Judaism in Los Angeles (1947); the American Jewish History Center (1953) to stimulate the writing of local Jewish history, and the Cantors Institute.

Evolution of National Agencies. In 1913 Schechter organized the United Synagogue of America. He envisaged it as a union

4 M. Davis, in Finkelstein The Jews, I, 391.
of all traditional synagogues, both Orthodox and Conservative. It was to embrace both congregations headed by Seminary alumni and by others who believed in a united front of traditionalists. For a while Orthodox rabbis affiliated themselves with this organization. But this was not to last long. It only caused the rallying of the Orthodox around their own banner, thus forcing the Conservatives to carry on as a distinct and separate party. This process took many years.

The rabbis who were ordained by the Seminary formed an alumni association which in 1919 launched the Rabbinical Assembly. They soon welcomed all other rabbis who headed Conservative congregations.

As the number of congregations increased, a need arose for coordinating the activities of their auxiliary groups. The first to organize was the National Women's League in 1917, the Young People's League in 1921, and the National Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs in 1929. In 1957 a World Union of Synagogues was formed.

Local Developments. On the local level the development of the synagogue centers was of greatest significance. These institutions aimed to integrate religious, recreational and educational activities under one roof.

Of the original eleven congregations which helped initiate the Seminary in 1885 not one stayed with it after a short

5 Parzen, SJ, V (January 1949), 42f.
6 Data mainly from Jewish Theological Seminary Register, 1957.
7 Push (1957), 9-16.
period. Only 16 congregations were affiliated with the United Synagogue when it was organized in 1913. But in 1919 fully 110 congregations were listed as members; a year later there were 130.

No data are available for the next two decades. In 1940 the number of Conservative congregations was 275, then it rose to 365 in 1949, to 460 in 1952 and in the following year they overtook the Reform movement with 483 units, 508 in 1955 and 559 the following year. Present claims are as high as 700 Conservative congregations with a membership of over one million.

In 1955 there were 615 sisterhoods with 160,000 members, 210 men's groups with 30,000 members, and 240 Young Peoples' League chapters with 16,000 members. The expansion of the Conservative movement has been extraordinary.

The Conservative Synagogue: A Sociological View. Under what circumstances did these Conservative congregations originate? A recent study summarized herein, showed that they prospered in the third area of Jewish settlement. The first area was populated by recent immigrants. Here patterns of behavior were those of the Shtetl, the congregation in most cases an Anshe, that is it belonged to a Landsmanshaft, a mutual aid organization of Jews who hailed from the same

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8Parzen, CJ, III (July 1947), 15.
9USY Report, VII, VIII.
10Data in this and the following paragraph are from the American Jewish Year Book, Volumes 46, p. 495, 50 p. 154, 53 p. 158f., 54 p. 100, 55 p. 80f., 56 p. 231, 57 pp. 190, 197, 58 p. 152f.
townlet in eastern Europe. The Jewish school by and large was a private Heder. The service was Orthodox, the language was Yiddish. After a while those who had started their climb to the status of middle class moved into the second area of Jewish settlement. Here the synagogue was still Orthodox, usually a large structure, where worship was the chief function. The school was an afternoon Talmud Torah sponsored by an independent membership association. In the first and second areas the Jews constituted a preponderant majority; their non-Jewish neighbors were also largely immigrants and most of them—the Italians and Irish, for example—were Catholic.

In the second and third decades of this century the second generation of middle class Jews moved to a third more fashionable area on the outskirts of the city; the process repeated itself in the decades that followed, especially in the course of the migration to suburbs after the Second World War; it is still under way.

In these newest areas the Jews find themselves among a preponderance of old American Protestants of middle class status. The traditional sacred system imported by east-European Orthodoxy, in process of disintegration under the impact of the American environment, is no longer feasible here for a majority of Jews. In other climes the choice might have been total assimilation. Not so here. Instead of assimilation a process of acculturation sets in—an adjustment of the sacred system to the mores of western culture, on the one hand, and to the secular forms of Jewish living, on the other. A compromise is effected whereby Jewish survival is made poss-
ible by a modus vivendi for the alienated. The synagogue gath-
ers under its roof and under legitimation of religion all that is Jewish and universally human. It fosters the ethnic elements of a folk culture - Jewish art and learning - as well as those social and recreational activities - dances, clubs, sports - which meet the needs and interests of the different age groups. The religious school is no longer an independent entity. It is part and parcel of the congregation. The broader base in popular acceptance also results in an attenuated education - Sunday school and confirmation are sanctioned. Belonging does not involve ideological commitment.

This multifunctional synagogue also practices a form of religious worship that is a compromise between the Orthodox and Reform service. Women are granted full equality in seating and social affairs, a share in synagogue government, but they are barred from the Torah reading ceremonies. There is considerably more decorum and elimination of commercialism - the selling of certain honorific privileges. Friday evening services are a major innovation. Prayers in English, sermons, abbreviated services, are some of the other changes. Withal, only the form is changed, the content of the service is little different from the Orthodox.¹²

As a result of all these transformations the role of the rabbi has also changed. In addition to a central position as leader of the worship service, he is an executive of a highly

complex organization. The cantor, the educational director, the sexton and office staff are his subordinates.

The rabbi in turn is an employee of a congregation which is autonomous, a law unto itself. There is no hierarchy, no supreme authority. Except for the strains and stresses of a constituency of varying backgrounds and the mediating influence of the national office, the lay leadership of each congregation is in full control.

This leadership consists of 55% businessmen and 30% professionals, but intellectuals such as writers and academicians are poorly represented. This fact plus the general anti-intellectualism of American society result in a lack of interest by laymen in ideological issues. The intellectual ferment that bred Haskalah, Zionism or early Reform is absent here. Decisions are made on a practical, matter of fact level; philosophy, principles or dogmas have little place in the councils of the lay leaders. In short, viewed from the vantage point of the local congregation and its lay leadership, the basis of the Conservative movement is not ideological but sociological, that is, it is not the realization of an a priori philosophy of Jewish life, but is due to social forces.

13 USY National Survey on Synagogue Leadership (1953), p.5.
Chapter II

THE MAIN PHILOSOPHIC TRENDS OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM.

Guiding principles of Conservatism have neither been formally adopted by the official bodies of the movement, nor has any one attempted a scholarly systematic presentation of that philosophy. All we have are some popular brochures and anthologies on the subject published by the United Synagogue\(^1\) as well as brief summaries in a variety of general studies. There has been a conscious resistance to a formulation of principles. Moreover, as Salo W. Baron points out, Conservatism "has not yet succeeded in developing an all-embracing philosophy, common to all who, though estranged from orthodoxy, are reluctant to join the Reform".\(^2\) Mordecai M. Kaplan, the only one among Conservatives who attempted to formulate a complete system of the underlying conceptions of Judaism, has had only a limited following within the movement.

The survey of Conservative thought in this chapter is divided into two periods: past and present. The early beginnings are grouped under four headings: the positive historical school and spiritual Zionism in Europe, the historical school, and the traditional period in America.

A. HISTORICAL SURVEY


1. The European Positive Historical School. The European roots of Conservatism were nurtured by the Science of Judaism whose origin may be dated back to 1820 when a Society for the Culture and Science of Judaism was founded in Berlin. A small group of scholars had set out to apply modern methods of research to the Jewish literature and history of the past. Those among them who applied their new-found knowledge to religious thought and did not depart from tradition identified themselves as "the positive historical school," that is, they had a positive attitude toward the values evolved by our people in our long historic experience. 3

We shall begin our story with several scholars and end it with the man who walked out of a conference and started a new religious movement.

Leopold Zunz

Leopold Zunz (1794-1886), the father of the Science of Judaism, was a rabbi and then the head of a Jewish teachers seminary in Berlin. He tended to Reform until he realized that they stood for opposition to Jewish law and nationhood. He defended Tefilin, circumcision and other observances as a means of preserving the Jewish people. The abstract religious conceptions and universal moral principles advocated by Reform were to him the essence of any true religion, but only Mitzvot could assure Judaism of distinctiveness and survival. He wrote in a letter to Abraham Geiger: "We must reform our-

3 On the influence of German Romanticism on this early period, see M. Kaplan The Greater Judaism in the Making (1960), pp. 350-57.
selves and not our religion. We should attack only evil practices that crept in our religious life whether from within or without, but not the holy heritage. The attack against the Talmud which is at present carried on expresses the attitude of apostates."

In his magnum opus Gottesdienstlichen Vortraege der Juden he proved conclusively that the sermon in the vernacular was a part of the religious service for many generations and there should therefore be no objection to it by either the Orthodox Jews or the government.

Nachman Krochmal

Nachman Krochmal (1785-1840) in his Guide for the Perplexed of the [Present] Time shifted the center of philosophical discussion from religion and theology to history and its philosophy. Each nation, he taught, has a dominant quality which is its spirit. There is a law in human history which causes nations to rise, develop and then decline. Other nations have disappeared at the end of such a cycle but only the Jews are eternal. This is because the Jewish national genius was chosen to embody the Absolute Spirit (Haruhani Hamuhlat), which is the God of Israel who is also eternal. Jewish history has thus already survived three such complete cycles. Thus "Krochmal changed the center of the individuality of the Jewish people from religion to a certain abstract concept which he named the

4 A. Geiger Nachgelassene Schriften (Berlin, 1876), V, p. 184.
5 L. Zunz, Die Gottesdienstlichen Vortraege der Juden (Frankfurt, 1892), p. x.
spirit of the nation. It is true that in that spirit religion and morality are the most important elements. It is in this sense that Krochmal can be considered the father of the modern Jewish view of nationalism."6

Heinrich Graetz

Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891), the historian, agreed with Krochmal that "the historic course of the Israelite nation not only shows, as with other nations, the stages of growth, bloom, and decay, but it exhibits the extraordinary phenomenon that the decay was succeeded, on three different occasions, by a new budding and blossoming time".7 He then proceeded to identify the secret of Israel's immortality.

Whereas the Greeks brought to light the ideals of art and science and did it unconsciously, the Jews evolved a conception of the divine that combined ethics with an affirmation of life; they also did it consciously in dedication to the discharge of a preordained mission.8

Zechariah Frankel

Zechariah Frankel (1801-1875) is generally regarded by historians as the ideological founder of the Conservative


8Ibid, V pp. 709, 711f, 718.
movement. He served as rabbi in Dresden and then headed the Rabbinical Seminary in Breslau. He developed a modern approach in his several works on the Talmud and other rabbinic sources by applying the methods of scientific historical research to Jewish sources. He participated in the Frankfort Rabbinical Conference convened by the Reform group in 1845, but there and in his writings he emerged as a staunch opponent of radical Reform.

Frankel countered the Reform return to prophetic Judaism and their deprecation of rabbinic Judaism by a positive attitude to the entire stream of Jewish tradition starting with the Bible and continuing through the Talmudic period and the later east European crystallization of that tradition into a way of life. As Graetz put it: "He justified and glorified the Talmud" and had "true regard for inherited forms" (History V p. 684). This was the meaning of the label he adopted of "positive historical Judaism," namely a positive attitude to rabbinic interpretation of Jewish law and the popular acceptance of that law.

However, this traditionalism did not imply a rigid resistance to change. Change must take place with a view to strengthening Jewish tradition after research by rabbis and scholars. Above all the warm feeling of the masses of Jews toward customs and traditions must be respected. Frankel stressed the unity of Israel and opposed creation of secessionist religious parties. He held out hope and faith in the restoration of Zion. He believed that Hebrew must be retained as the predominant language in the religious service and
must be cherished for a true understanding of the Bible. 9

We might add that in the preoccupation of all the four men listed above and of their disciples with law, history, and restoration as the core of Judaism they set the Jewish people, the bearer of Judaism, in the forefront of their thought. Whereas their thinking was basically religious, there arose a thinker who set Jewish nationalism, in the center of his thought.

2. European Jewish Nationalism. The nationalist philosophy that emanated from Europe likewise influenced American Conservatism. While the political Zionism of Theodor Herzl strengthened the bonds of Conservative Jews with their brethren throughout the world, the Spiritual Zionism of Ahad Haam influenced the thinking of the leaders of the movement.

Spiritual Zionism. Ahad Haam was the pen name of Asher Ginzberg (1856-1927). His views may be found in his four-volume collection of essays, Al Parashat Derakhim (At the Crossroads). 10

Ahad Haam taught that it is not assimilation which constitutes the gravest threat to Jewish existence; it is rather a break-up of the nation into unrelated tribes by an atrophy of spiritual powers, of the religious and national feeling and

9Waxman, Tradition and Change, pp. 43-50. The English version is a condensation of the lead article in Frankel's Zeitschrift fuer die religioesen Interessen des Judenthums II (1845), 1-21. See also Kaplan Judaism as a Civilization, pp. 160-163.

10Berlin, 1921. The references in the text will be to these volumes. See also Leon Simon, Selected Essays by Ahad Haam (1912).
of the messianic ideal (I pp. 24, 176). The solution of this problem lies in the creation of a national center in Palestine and the nurturing of a feeling of unity, of constituting one nation (I pp. 13, 24f., 55f.). Hibbat Zion, love of Zion, can then embrace the spirit of the nation (I p. 96).

A nation is a biologic entity, with a national ego, an "I," which consists of a common past, a common present and a common destiny and aspirations. Each nation has an inborn will to live, which makes it struggle for continued existence, for self-preservation (I p. 158, III p. 225). Historically the Jewish religion played an important role in this struggle for existence, yet religion was only a part of the national spirit (I p. 96). The true essence of the Hebraic spirit lay in a desire for ethical perfection. It was ethicism which distinguished us from all other nations and made us a Chosen People (II pp. 71ff.). It was the prophetic sense of justice, of the value of the individual, of equating individual welfare with the welfare of the group that animated Judaism throughout the ages and poured over national bounds ultimately to embrace all of humanity (IV pp. 44-46). This is Israel's mission among the nations (II p. 73). This mission idea differs from that of Reform in that the latter divested Judaism of all national traits and reduced it to an abstract religion with the center in the Diaspora only (I pp. 124-31, II pp. 23f.).

It is therefore necessary to strive for "a revival of the heart", for imbuing the modern Jew in dispersion with a positive ideal. That ideal is Jewish culture. The legalism of
the ghetto, the continuance of minute regulations and prescriptions, served its purpose under conditions of isolation. A Jew who does not believe in God, who views the Bible merely as literature, not as an embodiment of the spirit of a people, is not even a national Jew (IV pp. 127f.). A study of Jewish history, literature, the Hebrew language and the rest of our cultural heritage are important nationalist activities; but positive Judaism must serve also as a guide of life for the individual Jew (II p. 82). One may remain a Jew even without religious beliefs, but a Jew who condones intermarriage thereby endangers our national existence (II p. 89).

Even historically belief in God was more than abstract faith. It was embraced in the national ideal of restoration of the Holy Land (I pp. 154f.). Such striving for national restoration will supply the Jew with a positive goal; instead of persisting because we cannot die, we shall have a reason for living (I p. xvi). Antisemitism is an external hatred for an eternal people and will persist even under progress and liberalism (I pp. xv, 75, 169). To give the Jew under such conditions a sense of idealism, he must feel a part of one people with its center in Palestine. Finally, spiritual Zionism is not attempting to solve the problem of the Jew — antisemitism, economic insecurity — but that of Judaism, of giving meaning to Jewish life wherever the people may be (passim).

3. The American Historical School (1840-1900). Like twentieth century Conservatism the Historical School was also divided into a right wing which was completely orthodox with
very moderate allowances for change — men like Leeser, Morais and H. Mendes; a center group with Kohut and others; and a left wing which sided largely with Reform — men like Szold, Jastrow and F. Mendes.

All these men were exercised by three theological issues: God, the authority of the Bible and the Talmud, and Israel's mission. Morais declared his faith in an omnipotent God who reveals Himself to man by superhuman means. Leeser also believed that religious truth was revealed. Even F. Mendes denied the validity of evolution in view of his faith in a creator. Leeser asserted his belief in reward and punishment in the world to come. While Morais, H. Mendes and Kohut believed in resurrection, Szold and Jastrow sought to interpret it as immortality of the soul. Yet they left the prayer for resurrection in their prayer book. Kohut defended the ideas of creation, revelation and Kashrut, but sought to reconcile them with the scientific knowledge of his time (Davis, Yahadut Amerika, pp. 291-97).

Leeser stated that all miracles in the Bible must be regarded as true, especially if they support ethical and religious truths. The entire Bible was revealed, including the prophetic portions. Left and center, however, questioned whether all the utterances of the prophets were true. Both Leeser and Morais combated the attacks of Bible criticism on the divine origin of the Book of Books. As to Mitzvot, the right wing sought to follow the Shulhan Arukh. Some of the others acknowledged the authority of the Talmud, not of the later halakhists. Others denied the full authority of the
Talmud placing custom above its laws (ibid, pp. 297-305).

The right wing hoped for a personal Messiah who would bring the Kingdom of God and a universal acceptance of that Kingdom. Others conceived the idea to mean chiliastic redemption, but not a Messiah. Szold and Jastrow emphasized the mission idea in their prayer book Avodat Yisrael. While they considered Judaism a universalistic religion, they held that the Jews were given special commandments, laws and institutions that helped preserve the eternal verities contained in them. Most of the leaders were Zionists; even Szold and Jastrow in later years, although earlier they had omitted Zion from their prayer book. There was lack of agreement on a hope for temple sacrifices. On one issue, however, all three wings were united — on the importance of Hebrew. Above all, they were all agreed on the need for national preservation, albeit "as a light unto the nations", as Morais saw it (ibid, pp. 305-19).

4. The Traditional Period (1900-1930). The first three decades of the twentieth century were dominated by four persons who clung tenaciously to traditional views. Two of them were outstanding scholars — Schechter and Ginzberg. The nationalistic ideas of Friedlaender were a novel addition. Adler was an administrator and man of affairs.

Solomon Schechter

His Life. Solomon Schechter (1847-1915) was born in Rumania and was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Vienna. In 1882 he went to England as tutor in rabbinics of Claude G. Montefiore. In 1890 he became lecturer in
Talmudics at Cambridge University. He distinguished himself as a scholar in rabbinics and achieved world fame with his discovery of the Geniza in Cairo. After long negotiations he was persuaded to assume the presidency of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1902.

His Writings. Solomon Schechter's views of Judaism are easily accessible. We not only have five volumes of his own writings which are replete with philosophical observations; we are also fortunate in possessing an excellent biography of him which utilized his correspondence, magazine articles and published evaluations of his work.

Yet nowhere did he present a systematic formal outline of his own theology, philosophy of history or his views on contemporary issues. His philosophy must therefore be gathered from scattered references throughout his writings.

Nature of His Views. Schechter was one of the first to attempt a systematic treatment of rabbinic theology. His love of Judaism was boundless. He loved the simple piety of the Rumanian Shtetl of his childhood, the colorful legal, spiritual and mystical traditions of Jewish lore, and the scientific

11 Three volumes of Studies in Judaism (hereafter: Studies) entitled First, Second and Third (posthumous) Series, each had several reprints, the first one with different pagination in the later printings; Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (hereafter: Aspects, 1909); Seminary Addresses and other Papers, (hereafter: Addresses) Cincinnati, Ark (1915). His Geniza studies and several editions of rabbinical texts should also be mentioned.

12 Norman Bentwich, Solomon Schechter, A Biography (1938). See also Memorial Addresses Delivered on the occasion of the second anniversary of the death of Dr. Solomon Schechter (1917).
study of that lore. As a result, consistency is not his forte. "His genius had the inconsequence of great characters" (Bentwich, p. 281).

Another aid to understanding Schechter is to identify his use of certain terminology as originating from his years in England and his analogies with the Anglican Church. Such, for example, is his use of the adjectives Universal, High, Low and Broad which modify the noun Synagogue.

Synagogue, as he employs the term, denotes a communion of persons bound together by one religion, or the religion itself; that is the Jewish people, or Judaism. The adjectives are attached rather loosely and their meaning must be surmised from the context.

Similarly, the semantics of "Catholic Israel." Leeser first used the expression "Catholic and Reformed Israelites," Catholic meaning Orthodox (Davis, Yahadut, p. 168). Schechter popularized these hybrid words as his conception of Judaism; in the course of time it meant different things to different persons. A careful analysis of his usage of the phrase Catholic Israel shows that implied was the body of Jews throughout the ages that were loyal to tradition as it was evolved by the rabbis; or, as he himself defined it, "the religious consciousness of the bulk of the nation" (Aspects p. viii). Hence he identified Reform with "Jewish Protestantism," that is, a secessionist group (Studies III, p. 74). Thus to both Leeser and Schechter Catholic was synonymous with Orthodox, except that for Schechter it became identified with his particular brand of Judaism.
Nature of Judaism. To Schechter the Jews were a world people, carrying on a living tradition, with a distinct philosophy, a positive system of beliefs and rules of conduct. Their philosophy or theology may never have been precisely spelled out, but it lives on in the hearts of a consecrated Israel. He did not hesitate to identify himself with rabbinism, although he advocated the principle of change.

The rabbis did have a theology, he believed, but they were unaware of it. It came to the surface spasmodically, by impulse, on the occasion of a visit to the sick, or some public event. Such impulses are of necessity uncertain, incoherent or even contradictory, but they nevertheless express the reality of a deep faith (Aspects, p. 12). With all its inconsistencies Judaism taught the Jew very distinctly what to do and what not to do; it offered a Torah as a guide of life (Addresses, p. 22). For two thousand years Judaism has been synonymous with rabbinism. It drew its strength from the Talmud, the purpose of which was "to fill and penetrate the whole of human life with religion and the sense of law and right" (Studies, III, p. 192).

Dogma. The God concept occupied a central position in Schechter's thought. He took it for granted, as something not subject to reason. The very essence of Judaism was its divine inspiration. Judaism is "a divine religion, not a complex of racial peculiarities and tribal customs...it regulates not only our actions, but also our thoughts" (Studies, I, p. 180). Judaism is not a religion without dogmas, as so many theologians aver. "To declare that a
religion has no dogmas is tantamount to saying that it was wise enough not to commit itself to any vital principles. But prudence, useful as it may be in worldly affairs, is quite unworthy of a great spiritual power" (ibid, p. xxiii). He wrote an essay to prove his point (ibid, pp. 147-81). He emphasized, however, that Judaism does not ascribe to dogmas any saving power. "The belief in a dogma or a doctrine without abiding by its real or supposed consequences (e.g., the belief in creatio ex nihilo without keeping the Sabbath) is of no value" (ibid, p. 147).

Torah. Schechter distinguished between "the Law as personified in the literature" and Law as commandment, or "Torah and Mizwoth," the spirit of the law and its practices. The former he conceived as "the sum total of the contents of revelation, without special regard to any particular element in it, the Torah as a faith...It is the Torah in this abstract sense, as a revelation and a promise, the expression of the will of God" (Aspects p. 127). As to the aspect of Mitzvot, he showed that of the 613 commandments "barely a hundred laws are to be found which concerned the everyday life of the bulk of the people...relating to different sections of the community and to its multifarious institutions, ecclesiastical as well as civil, which constituted...the Kingdom of God" (ibid, p. 142).

He elaborated on the essence of the spiritual Torah. It started with the Bible, of course. But the Bible cannot be understood in its literal or simple meaning. Its true meaning was evolved through centuries of consecrated Jewish
living. The following passage contains the core of Schechter's teaching on the need for authoritative interpretation of the Bible in the spirit of Catholic Israel, or as he called it, the Secondary Meaning.

"Since then the interpretation of Scripture or the Secondary Meaning is mainly a product of changing historical influences, it follows that the centre of authority is actually removed from the Bible and placed in some living body, which, by reason of its being in touch with the ideal aspirations and the religious needs of the age, is best able to determine the nature of the Secondary Meaning. This living body, however, is not represented by any section of the nation, or any corporate priesthood, or Rabbihood, but by the collective conscience of Catholic Israel as embodied in the Universal Synagogue [tradition evolved by the spiritual leadership]" (Studies, I, p. xviiif.).

Mitzvot. To Schechter religious observance was of the very essence of Judaism. In 1911 he wrote to Dr. S. Schulman, a Reform rabbi: "The so-called Conservatives consider certain things generally described as small and little to be of vital importance for the maintenance of Judaism" (Bentwich, p. 296). And to Professor Max L. Margolis he wrote in 1905:

"We have to bear God's decree and listen patiently 'unto what He shall speak unto His saints', and what is His Holy purpose with us. But unless we maintain Jewish life and Jewish thought intact, we shall certainly not hear His voice. In this Jewish life I include Sabbath, circumcision, and other observances aiming at the perpetuation of the Congre-
gation of Israel. I do not think you are quite right when you treat the Sabbath as a thing of minor importance. It is absolutely vital for Israel's existence. The keeping of the Sabbath, even if a man stays at home and does not attend a service because he happens to have no Synagogue in his place, does more for Judaism and for the cause of religion in general than the musical programmes, gilded temples, and unctuous addresses will ever accomplish on a Sunday" (ibid, 295f.).

At an installation of the first graduate of the seminary in 1904 he stated:

"We live in a commonwealth in which by the blessing of God and the wisdom of the Fathers of the Constitution, each man abiding by its laws, has the inalienable right of living in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience. In this great, glorious and free country we Jews need not sacrifice a single iota of our Torah; and, in the enjoyment of absolute equality with our fellow citizens we can live to carry out those ideals for which our ancestors so often had to die" (Addresses, 85f.).

Dynamics of the Law. As he struggled with the facts of laxity in observance and the need for change in the law with the times, he yet did not attempt to propound a practical method for such orderly change and fell back upon the questionable doctrine, voiced by Frankel, of relying upon the good sense and devotion to the essentials of Judaism by the masses. He fought the idea of formal revision of laws by a Synod of rabbis.
He did offer a method of change but did not elaborate upon its basis in Jewish law.

"Another consequence of this conception of Tradition is that it is neither Scripture nor primitive Judaism, but general custom which forms the real rule of practice. Holy Writ as well as history, Zunz tells us, teaches that the law of Moses was never fully and absolutely put in practice. Liberty was always given to the great teachers of every generation to make modifications and innovations in harmony with the spirit of existing institutions. Hence a return to Mosaism would be illegal, pernicious, and indeed impossible. The norm as well as the sanction of Judaism is the practice actually in vogue. Its consecration is the consecration of general use, — in other words, of Catholic Israel" (Studies, I, pp. xixf.).

Concerning Synods he wrote in 1898:

"On the whole, I think Synods, unless confined to purely administrative affairs, are useless and even harmful. Religion is one of the "things confided to the heart" which are vulgarized by public discussion. Besides, I think no man is capable of representing other men in matters spiritual. Synods have also a tendency to create among us a certain sacerdotalism which is quite foreign to the Jewish spirit. Personally I hate all priests, whether they breakfast on oysters or 'matzo Shmura'" (Bentwich, pp. 297f.).

Moreover, a Synod, he feared, would cause a permanent schism in American Jewry, if it introduced changes in law. That to him would be the greatest of tragedies. "The spirit with which the creation of a Synod is approached does not
augur well for unity and preservation" (Ibid, p. 299).

**Scholarship.** The discoverer of the Genizah and the great collector of gems from Jewish lore sought to implant his passion for study and research in his students and generally urged promotion of the High Synagogue, by which he meant piety coupled with modern learning. He quoted Zunz to the future rabbis: "Real knowledge creates action" (Addresses, p. 21). One can be a man of affairs and a scholar.

"The crown and climax of all learning is research. The object of this searching is truth — that truth which gives unity to history and harmony to the phenomena of nature, and brings order into a universe in which the naked eye perceives only strife and chance. But while in search of this truth, of which man is hardly permitted more than a faint glimpse, the student not only re-examines the old sources, but is on the lookout for fresh material and new fields of exploration" (Ibid, pp. 16f.).

**Zionism.** To Schechter Judaism was synonymous with religion. Hence Zionism had to be religious. Some rabbis and writers have mistaken Catholic Judaism to mean the element of peoplehood or nationalism. This is a misunderstanding. To Schecter there was no Jewish nation without religion. Whenever he used the term national, he always coupled it with religion.

Schechter inherited his longing for Zion from the Hasidic environment of his childhood. Yet for many years he kept aloof from the official movement because of the secular tendencies of its Russian Jewish adherents. He had wanted it to produce Isaiahs not Zangwills. The unorthodox behavior of
some Zionists was abhorrent to him.

He had a deep conviction that "you cannot sever Jewish nationality from Jewish religion". He dissociated himself from Herzlism or political Zionism. With Ahad Haam, whom he knew personally and whom he had sought to bring to Dropsie College, he favored the spiritual aspects of the movement.

In December 1905, however, he finally overcame his scruples and joined the Zionist Federation. He then issued a statement of his views (Addresses, pp. 91-104). He wrote that Zionism recommends itself to him as a great bulwark against assimilation. It counteracts the tragedies of the Galuth which consist in a destruction of our institutions, our customs. It prevents the elimination of Hebrew from the religious service and the consumption by Jews of the products of Higher Criticism.

"The rebirth of Israel's national consciousness, and the revival of Israel's religion, or, to use a shorter term, the revival of Judaism are inseparable." It isn't what Zionism has accomplished in Zion, but what has thus far been achieved for Zion and Jerusalem. It recreated Jewish consciousness before creating the Jewish state. In all communities there is a press and a platform preaching the new cause. The Hebrew language has been revived. A whole literature has been created, new melodies are sung everywhere. Interest in Jewish history has been rekindled. There is a new interest in the synagogue. "It is the Declaration of Jewish Independence from all kinds of slavery, whether material or spiritual" (Addresses, p. 104).
Summary. Schechter undertook the pioneering task of pouring the contents of the vast rabbinic lore from its Hebrew depositories into superb literary English style, employing the theological concepts current in his age. As he termed it, he attempted to interpret to the gentile and Jewish worlds the simple notion of the Low Synagogue, of the ghettoized Shtetl, and to present to them his conception of the High Synagogue, the modernized and therefore even more valid version of a Judaism that would be bewitchingly attractive to the modern generation.

We must keep in mind that he faced problems which to us are only a historic memory and are largely resolved, while in his day they threatened to engulf and destroy the Judaism he so ardently loved. His battle was on two fronts. On the one hand, he had to strike out against Christian theology and Biblical science which took delight in ridiculing our Pharisaic legalism and in advancing the antisemitic views of some of its Bible scholars. On the other hand, he was duty bound to combat the universalistic ideas of Jewish Reform.

It would be unrealistic to expect of him the insights later supplied by Dubnow, Kaplan and others. The shape of the American Jewish community, diaspora nationalism and the political aspects of Jewish homelessness he was not destined to perceive. An amalgam of his own views with these more recent insights produced a philosophy of Jewish life which was more in keeping with our age and contributed
even more to the perpetuation of the most modern type of Judaism.

**Louis Ginzberg**

Schechter's colleague at the seminary labored directly in the vineyard of Jewish law to develop and preserve it. Louis Ginzberg (1873-1953) was professor of Talmud and rabbinics at the seminary for fifty years since 1902. Almost every Conservative rabbi came under his influence. His *Commentary on the Talmud of Jerusalem*, *Legends of the Jews* and many encyclopedic studies established him as one of the foremost rabbinic interpreters of his time; since historical and legal scholarship played a major role in evolving the Conservative ideology, Ginzberg profoundly influenced Conservative thought. Although he specialized in the long Jewish past, he guided the movement of his conversations with rabbis and in his lectures. In the early years he helped organize the United Synagogue, and helped guide the destinies of the seminary for half a century.13

**Views on Jewish Law.** Both in matters of faith and law Ginzberg remained squarely in the traditionalist camp. He became the implacable opponent of Kaplan's novel ideas. They debated at many conferences of the Rabbinical Assembly. Throughout his lifetime Ginzberg dominated the Conservative movement in opposing any changes dictated by American needs. He exercised his influence through the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly. At first it looked as if he would go

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along with lenient interpretation of the law. In 1917 he re-
ported for the Law Committee to the United Synagogue advoca-
ting interpretation by an authoritative body based on the
principles of "the immutability of the Torah", on the one
hand, and on the untenability of "absolute fixities" without
regard for "the human agency" which must interpret that law,
on the other. In 1922 he wrote one of the rare responsa
that came from his pen on a current issue. During prohibi-
tion there was trade in fermented wine on the calum that
Kiddush may be recited only on wine. After a minute analy-
sis of rabbinic thought on the subject he sought to prove
that it was permissible to say Kiddush over grape juice —
that is unfermented wine — too. Since it was claimed that
in this responsum Ginzberg utilized extra-halakhic considera-
tions we shall quote here a pertinent statement.

Even as one cannot properly understand the words of
the Torah unless he is blest with wisdom, so can he
not fathom the meaning of a custom unless he be poss-
essed of sufficient wisdom and understanding in or-
der to distinguish properly between one [law] and
the other [custom]. Would one say that because in
former days they burnt tallow or wax candles in the
synagogue therefore we must not change the custom
and not use gas light and electricity?15

It is crystal clear that Ginzberg had no mind for changing
the law; he was only showing that in matters of custom one was
free to use one's judgment. Otherwise, as he put it in this
responsum, he weighed his decision solely "on the scale of

14 CJ, VII (January 1951), 41.
15 A responsum concerning Wines that are eligible and those
that are ineligible for ritual uses (1922) mimeographed,
pp. 36f.
the Torah," i.e. in strict adherence to Jewish Law. He was convinced that the Law was the highest expression and meaning of Israel's existence.

Law...became the specifically Jewish expression of religiousness. The dietary laws are not incumbent upon us because they conduce to moderation nor the family laws because they further chastity and purity of morals. The law as a whole is not a means to an end but the end in itself; the Law is active religiousness...In the precepts...Judaism found a material expression of its religious idea.16

The Halakah, as its meaning "conduct" indicates, comprises life in all its manifestations, - religion, worship, law, economics, politics, ethics and so forth. It gives us a picture of life in its totality and not of some of its fragments. 17

Thus both Schechter and Ginzberg, while engaging respectively in a historical study of Jewish theology and law, identified themselves whole-heartedly with the traditional view. It is remarkable that these men became the founders and teachers of a new movement in American Judaism, since they themselves disclaimed any interest in such a development and stood four-square in the traditional camp. Not so with our next writer, who though also traditional in his religious views, came under totally new influences.

Israel Friedlaender

Israel Friedlaender (1876-1920), professor of biblical literature and exegesis at the Seminary, was influenced by the nationalist ideas of Dubnow and Ahad Haam. He was a rationalist who operated largely with secular rather than religious

16 Students Scholars and Saints (1928), pp. 205f.
concepts (cf. his Fast and Present).

The Problem: Emancipation. As he saw it, the Jewish problem arose with emancipation when freedom and prosperity for the Jew resulted in a decay of Judaism. The solution: break the narrow frame of a creed; recognize that Judaism is a culture allowing for a variety of modes of creative self-expression. Outward freedom has had a disintegrating effect on Judaism, checked only by antisemitism in some countries, by emigration in others. In America the situation is no less disconsolate. It may be likened to a bag full of holes. It seems to swell only because the replenishment by immigration exceeds the losses by de-Judaization. Should immigration cease, the second and third generation may fall away. The future of Judaism in America must therefore be viewed with grave apprehension (ibid, pp. 256f., 259f.).

The Solution: Acculturation. Although all the signs pointed to tragedy and gloom, Friedlaender did not abandon hope for a glorious future for American Jewry. He could not possibly foresee the cataclysmic world events and the particular social developments that shaped the loyalties of the native generations. Besides, he operated with theories that did not apply to American conditions. Dubnow's autonomism and Ahad Haam's cultural Zionism were European products. Friedlaender found consolation in an analogy of the American situation with the golden Jewish-Arabic period in Spain. He concluded from the latter that Judaism and freedom were compatible, that emancipation need not necessarily lead to assimilation. On the contrary, it could be productive of great
spiritual creativity (pp. 266f.).

Friedlaender never employed the term acculturation, but there is no doubt that he had a vague notion of the possibility of "blending the best they [the Jews] possess with the best they encounter." He envisioned a glorious future for American Israel.

We perceive a community great in numbers, mighty in power, enjoying life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness: true life, not mere breathing space; full liberty, not mere elbow room; real happiness, not that of pasture beasts; actively participating in the civic, social and economic progress of the country fully sharing and increasing its spiritual possessions and acquisitions, doubling its joys, halving its sorrows; yet deeply rooted in the soil of Judaism, clinging to its past, working for its future, true to its traditions, faithful to its aspirations, one in sentiment with their brethren wherever they are, attached to the land of their fathers as the cradle and resting place of the Jewish spirit (pp. 267f.).

Sentiments of hope and faith such as this have enabled Friedlaender and his colleagues to lay the foundation for a vigorous movement. Their determination to look into a bright future and to contribute toward building that future made them stop looking back with nostalgia upon the glories of the past. Conservatism was to become America-centered.

Cultural Nationalism. Throughout our history, Friedlaender taught, we Jews constituted a nation whose content was spiritual. In Bible days the unifying influences were the land (p. 45), the state, which gave a good account of itself by its efficient form of government (p. 43), and the spiritual universalistic nature of the national ideal (p. 37). In Poland the Council of Four Lands and the local Kahal afforded the unity of an autonomous existence (p. 232).
Emancipation dissolved Jewish corporate existence by granting equality to the individual Jew, but denying nationhood (p. 246). In post-revolutionary Russia, however, it was different. Friedlaender hoped that here the principle of national self-determination by each of the groups in the state would assure a new type of human liberty (p. 247).

As to the place of America in the Jewish scheme of things Friedlaender believed in Diaspora plus Palestine. As he saw it, the Jews were faced with two issues: Diaspora or Palestine, and Religion or Nationalism. For each of these some Jewish group advocated one element to the exclusion of the other, or as he called it, the thesis and antithesis. The Reform group, for example, were advocates of a mission in the Diaspora and opposed Palestine. For another example, the East European Jews in America viewed their group as racial and national only, and had Yom Kippur balls to parade their irreligion. He himself preferred the synthesis: Diaspora and Palestine, Religion and Nationalism (pp. 332ff.). He believed "That America is destined to become in the near future the leading Jewish center of the Diaspora, and that it is the duty of American Jewry to live up to the great obligation placed upon it by history" (p/ xi).

As to Ahad Haam's ideas (pp. 399-430), Friedlaender sought to minimize the secular leanings of many Zionists in the hope that ultimately their work will redound to the benefit of the Jewish religion.

Although Schechter stressed the idea of Catholic Israel, that ideal was to be sought after by each individual Jew—by
observance of Mitzvot and faith. In contrast, Friedlaender centered his thoughts not on the Jewish individual but on the Jewish group. That is what made him so different and outstanding among Conservative thinkers.

He was an avid synthesist and conciliator. He was for nationalism and religion. Yet in all his thinking the former element predominated. No wonder that in the Conservative movement he is one of the lesser luminaries. After all, it is predominantly a religious movement. His idea that the synagogue was only a part of the community, not the community, are to this day combated by certain Conservative leaders.

The hopes he held out for national self-determination of Russian Jewry were shattered by Soviet policy and the mass cultural assimilation of Jews who had lost their religious faith. Cultural nationalism alone, without either religion or statehood, seems to have no viability. Moreover, when the diaspora nationalists from Eastern Europe, in their zeal for minority rights, advocated separate schools for American Jewry financed by the government, they soon discovered that "America is different," that the bulk of Jews here do not mind a degree of cultural assimilation, provided they remain separate in religious and associational life.

Cyrus Adler

On April 18, 1940 The Philadelphia Record in its obituary headline spoke of Cyrus Adler as a philosopher. Adler was a member of the American Philosophical Society, an orientalist and scholar. He was a man of affairs and an administrator. 18

18 Cf. his biography by A. Neuman, AJYE, 1940, 23-144
Cyrus Adler (1863-1940) headed the seminary from 1915 to his death and before that as administrative assistant to Schechter helped reorganize the institution, erect its present buildings and set it on a firm financial footing. In addition he was the leading spirit in many Jewish organizations and higher schools of learning, including Dropsie College. He insisted that Conservatism was a tendency not a movement, and that it was "adjectiveless Judaism." 19

Like Ginzberg he advocated some sort of a law-making rabbinical authority in 1916 20 but thereafter he too resisted all innovations.

The sum total of the activities of the four leaders — Schechter, Ginzberg, Friedlaender, Adler — was to keep the Conservative group within traditional lines. But the institutions they created and the ideas they promulgated eventually resulted in a new religious persuasion on the American Jewish scene.

19 I Have Considered the Days, an autobiography. His Lectures, Selected Papers, Addresses, Philadelphia: privately printed, 1933, 445 pp. contains a bibliography of 583 items, but hardly any one of them dealt with the theoretical Jewish issues of the day.

20 CJ, VII (January 1951), 40.
In Quest of a Philosophy

Until the advent of Reconstructionism no heterodox views were voiced in the Conservative camp. The only official statement of the movement was contained in the preamble to the Constitution of the United Synagogue, adopted in 1913. It read:

The purpose of this organization is as follows:
The advancement of the cause of Judaism in America and the maintenance of Jewish tradition in its historical continuity,
To assert and establish loyalty to the Torah and its historical exposition,
To further the observance of the Sabbath and the dietary laws,
To preserve in the service the reference to Israel's past and the hopes for Israel's restoration,
To maintain the traditional character of the liturgy with Hebrew as the language of prayer,
To foster Jewish religious life in the home, as expressed in traditional observances,
To encourage the establishment of Jewish religious schools, in the curricula of which the study of the Hebrew language and literature shall be given a prominent place, both as the key to the true understanding of Judaism, and as a bond holding together the scattered communities of Israel throughout the world.
It shall be the aim of the United Synagogue of America, while not endorsing the innovations introduced by any of its constituent bodies, to embrace all elements essentially loyal to traditional Judaism and in sympathy with the purposes outlined above (Waxman, Tradition and Change, p. 173).

This declaration affirmed two principles, one positive—loyalty to tradition and to national aspirations ("hopes for Israel's restoration"); the second negative—local autonomy. It was this second principle that indirectly provided for the major novum of Conservatism — the element of change. "Innovations" by the local congregations were permitted. But the principle of change itself was not explicitly stated. Nor was it made clear as to who would be authorized to change
articles of faith or modes of practice for the movement as a whole. The distinctive characteristic of official Conservatism, it must be pointed out, was that unlike classical Reform which started out by renouncing many traditional observances, it began with a positive approach to tradition.

The result of this approach of tradition and change was that in the course of time the Conservative movement became receptive to the various philosophies that prevailed in America. Theists and "secularists," existentialists and naturalists, mystics and rationalists all could find a haven in the movement.21 This, as it turned out, was its strength. In a pluralistic society where differences are respected and accommodated, Conservatism itself became pluralistic.

All attempts to evolve a unified ideology have failed until now. As early as 1927 Louis Finkelstein attempted to formulate the seven common elements that unite the Conservatives: God, Torah, change, Israel (peoplehood), Palestine, Hebrew and the Seminary. But the discussants Eugene Kohn and Max Kadushin pointed out that on the first three elements there was no agreement, and that the following three were common to all loyal Jews; hence the only thing that remained was the Seminary (PRA, 1927, 42-66). Equally unsatisfactory was his statement "Tradition in the Making - the Seminary's Interpretation of Judaism".22

22Jewish Theological Seminary — Semicentennial Volume, 1939, pp. 22-34.
M. Kaplan also attempted in 1949 to formulate "Guiding Principles for the Conservative Movement" (CJ, VI, May 1950, Supplement); these, too, did not advance acceptable common elements.

At the United Synagogue convention in 1946 Solomon Goldman's appeal for a study of the Conservative philosophy and program was approved. Albert Gordon, executive director of the lay group, proceeded to implement the resolution by setting up a joint committee of rabbis and laymen. Several years later Finkelstein appealed to the Rabbinical Assembly not to rebuff the Seminary faculty in setting up a commission "to study for a year or more the basic principles of our movement" (PRA, XIII, 1949, 117-23). Nothing tangible resulted because the rabbis felt that the laymen of the commission had no sufficient preparation or knowledge for the task.

Ten years later, under the impact of Sklare's book, the Rabbinical Assembly considered the matter again. Agus stated that Sklare's contention "that there is no such animal as Conservative ideology" (PRA, XX, 1956, 163) brought a demand for clarification. He suggested a Continuing Conference in the course of a year or two. Throughout the country rabbis and thinkers would address meetings to be sponsored jointly with the United Synagogue and the Women's League.

That same year the United Synagogue organized a committee on Philosophy of the Conservative Movement. In a report

23 Sklare, Conservative Judaism, p. 222.
24 Supra, p. 7.
prepared by the chairman Israel B. Oseas for the 1957 Biennial convention (PUSY, pp. 63-66) it was recommended to have discussions on the congregational and regional levels, to be followed up, if feasible, by a special national convention on the subject which might produce a synthesis. The committee stressed a pluralistic and permissive approach, that the aim was not to produce Conservative Jews but Jews who are Conservative; in other words, the purpose was not "to impose dogmas on our people by the action of majorities" (p. 66), and to produce a body of informed and devoted laymen; "professors and rabbis are not enough" (p. 64). By resolution the committee was instructed to continue its work (p. 78). At the biennial convention of the United Synagogue in November 1959 three addresses on philosophy were delivered (PUSY, 97-114). Several sessions at the Rabbinical Assembly Convention on the theme "Toward a Philosophy of Conservative Judaism" dealt only with the more narrow, though essential, issue of a philosophy of Jewish law (PRA, XII, 1948, 110-92).

More acceptable were the pluralistic approaches of the leadership. At a meeting of the United Synagogue National Board of Directors held on June 22, 1947 M. Kaplan delivered an address on "Unity in Diversity in the Conservative Movement". He stated that:

The areas of agreement amongst us are four in number. They are the following: 1) The indispensability of Eretz Yisrael for Jewish life in the Diaspora, 2) The primacy of religion as the expression of collective Jewish life, 3) The maximum possible plenitude of Jewish content, including the use of Hebrew, and 4) The encouragement of the scientific approach in Jewish higher learning (USY, p. 6).
He then proceeded to outline the attitudes of the three divergent schools of thought: Right, Center and Left. 

This is how matters stand today. In 1958 L. Finkelstein declared:

"It is a very remarkable movement which brings near the distant, and shows how in the field of religion, where fanaticism so often develops, people can be brought together for a common cause. However, there is a further step which must be taken from this place where Professor Lieberman and Professor Kaplan meet. That is the recognition of the whole Christian world, the whole Moslem and Oriental worlds as being rightfully Christian, rightfully Mohammedan, and rightfully religious in their traditions. We object seriously to a Jew joining any of these camps, but we do not condemn a Christian for remaining a Christian, for that is the right thing for him to do, nor a Moslem for remaining a Moslem, for he is doing the right thing. Both are adhering to the religion of their fathers. No other religion is willing to take this position. Thus, for the first time in history, we are creating a group of people who in themselves have the means of bringing into reality the very dream of Rabbi Joshua ben Hananya which seemed such a far vision (PRA, XXII, 171)."

Thus a recognized leader of Conservatism, the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary, views the movement as advocating pluralism not alone among Jews but among all other religions on a global scale.

We shall now proceed to outline the miscellaneous philosophies of the Conservative thinkers of the present generation that range all the way from the Hasidic piety of Heschel to the naturalism of Jack Cohen. Simple unquestioning piety is not represented here. Although there are no doubt such devotees within the movement. The philosophies chosen for presentation in the pages that follow are rather complex in

\[25\] For comments on this paper see CJ, IV (October 1947), 1-11.
that almost all of them seek to reconcile Judaism with modernism, and with the many philosophical schools, both Jewish and non-Jewish, of our day and of ages past.

For purposes of classification we have divided them into three categories: Theists, existentialist, and naturalists or Reconstructionists. The theists believe in revelation and in the supernatural. The existentialist is also a believer in the supernatural but his source of knowledge is not reason but presymbolic, pre-conceptual awareness. The Reconstructionists renounce supernaturalism and embrace humanism. Though the three camps are worlds apart in their outlook, they are all united in their affirmation of the worthwhileness of Judaism as a faith and a way of life.

Since many of the traditionalists often refer to Reconstructionist ideas, we shall first present in considerable detail the views of these religious innovators.

A. RECONSTRUCTIONISTS

M. Kaplan (1881). In 1909 Schechter listened to a paper by the young Rabbi Kaplan in which the latter set forth the thesis that "the focal point in Judaism was not its theology but the Jewish People". Immediately afterwards Schechter offered Kaplan the task of organizing the Teachers Institute. Soon thereafter he was also appointed professor of homiletics and Midrash at the Seminary. As leader of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism (SAJ) he sought to develop an organic approach to institutional life by creating a synagogue

26 The Alumnus Teachers Institute III (March 1959) P. 2.
center. He achieved a firm position of leadership among the Conservatives and a far-reaching influence on Reform through his Reconstructionist ideology. His voice has carried the new message from many a platform. No other person has influenced the thinking and social organization of American Jewry as did Dr. Kaplan.

In his *Judaism as a Civilization* (1934) Kaplan presents his views under the following four headings: Judaism, Israel, God, and Torah. The first of these four categories — Judaism — is the generic term which according to Kaplan consists of a "trinity of peoplehood, religion and culture" (*Questions Jews Ask*, 1956, p. 42). Our discussion will therefore deal with these three concepts; a definition of Judaism merely serves as an introductory and summary statement.

Nature of Judaism: A Civilization. The title of Kaplan's first major work provided the key to his view of Judaism: it is a civilization. Or in expanded form: an evolving religious civilization. The first among twelve principles of Reconstructionism (the program based on this philosophy), formulated in 1955, reads as follows: "Judaism, or that which has united the successive generations of Jews into one People, is not only a religion; it is a dynamic religious civilization" (*Questions*, p. xi). The term civilization "includes that nexus of a history, literature, language, social organization, folk sanctions, standards of conduct, social and spiritual ideals, esthetic values, which in their totality form a civilization" (*Civilization*, p. 178).

Thus Judaism is not solely or mainly a religion, or a
biological inheritance of a racial group (Questions, pp. 12f.). Although in scientific usage culture is synonymous with civilization, in popular parlance culture includes literature, aesthetics and philosophy, but does not include religion, law and customs, subsumed by the wider concept civilization (Questions, p. 15).

1. Peoplehood

The concept of peoplehood Kaplan once again analyzes under four headings: one generic — the question of status, and three specific: the American Jewish community, Israel, and world Jewry. His view is that at present the Jews suffer for lack of a clearly defined status both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the world. That status must be clarified through the creation of organic communities in America, a cultural center in Israel, and the reconstitution of world Jewry as a transnational people by a new world Jewish covenant and recognition as such in international law.

The Abnormal Status of the Jews. Emancipation has catapulted the Jew into an unprecedented and perilous position. Until the end of the eighteenth century the Jews were regarded as a nation apart and were organized as a state within a state. Emancipation made it necessary for the Jewish people to disband, since each individual Jew is an integral part of the state.

Jews are today without a recognized group status. They are almost an international conglomerate of descendants of what was once the Jewish nation. That alone is enough to render them an enigma to themselves and to the rest of the world. On the one hand, in their eagerness to become part of the majority population, they are determined to abandon all that remains of their former status as a nation in exile. On the other hand, under the impact of
traditional loyalty, they seek comfort in some form of collective life, be it congregation, fraternal order of Landsmanschaft.

This lack of group status accounts for the lack of a philosophy and program of Jewish life. Impelled by contradictory drives, Jews are forever frustrating one another's purposes and even their own. Out of these frustrations proceeds a profound sense of impotence and futility, of inferiority and self-hatred. Many Jews see no sense in continuing to belong to a non-descript group, for such a group, far from conferring dignity, stigmatizes those associated with it, as somehow incapable of attaining full human status. *(The Future of the American Jew, 1948, p. 58).*

**What We Are Not.** We are not a religion, a race or a nation.

We are not a religious group because religion is no longer the main binding force. It is a fact that "in the normal experience of Jewish life, belonging takes precedence over believing" *(Questions, p. 5).* The majority of Jews do not identify their Jewishness with any positive religious convictions. Even those who profess adherence to Jewish religion and are affiliated with a synagogue by and large neither subscribe to a Jewish creed, nor practice its precepts. *(Future, pp. 64ff.)*

Nor are we a race, that is "a branch of mankind which has been endogamous for a long period and has developed distinct traits" *(Civilization, p. 231).* This may have been true in the past, but there is no guarantee that Jews will retain certain common traits also in the future.

**We Are a People.** We are not a religion, race, or nation; we are a people. In *Judaism As a Civilization* (pp. 227ff.) Kaplan had still defined Jewry as a nation. But he had to qualify his definition by limiting nationalism to its ethnic and cultural aspects and not to political or geographic aspects of statehood and territory. In his later writings,
probably borrowing the term from Milton Steinberg, he settled on the more circumscribed concept of peoplehood.

**Peoplehood — A New Concept.** Kaplan is fully aware that his concept of peoplehood is new both for the Jews and for mankind at large. For the Jews it amounts to a reinterpretation of the concept "Israel" to mean culture and ethnic consciousness. For mankind it would have to incorporate "the highest ethical standards of human individuality and cooperation" (*Civilization*, p. 232), and an expansion of the ideal of religious freedom to respect also loyalty to a historic culture (*ibid*, p. 234). In keeping with his idea of religion as the human quest for salvation, Kaplan elevates the concept of peoplehood itself to a religious category. It is a moral obligation for every Jew to identify himself with his people. The contention is based on the principle that "everyone has the responsibility to make the most of those conditions into which he has been born" (*Questions*, p. 25). "Nobody can be a soldier without an army, a citizen without a state, or a kinsman without kindred. Similarly one cannot be a Jew apart from the Jewish People" (*ibid*, p. 29). The Jews are a minority, it is true. But the so-called majority is itself constituted of minorities. In America, for example, Quakers, Negroes, Catholics and many other groups constitute such minorities.

**Living in Two Civilizations.** Jewry thus has to learn to live in two civilizations at the same time and to accept it
as normal, since other peoples do likewise. "The Christian Church, to the extent that it is still visible, is a people... In the Western civilization the individual is a member of two peoples at the same time, the people he calls his nation and the people he calls his church" (Future, p. 89). The Catholics are undeniably a people. The Ecumenical movement in modern Protestantism seeks a common unity that would transcend creedal differences. Thus Jews, like Christians, live in two civilizations (Questions, pp. 30f.).

The Organic Community in America. Kaplan's ideas on Jewish social organization in the United States flow from his belief that Judaism is more than a religion.

An organic community is one in which all activities and institutions conducted by Jews for Jews are interactive, and in which the fostering of Jewish peoplehood, religion and culture is given primacy (Questions, p. xii).

The purpose of community is to provide this-worldly salvation for the Jewish individual. "Without an enduring social structure, such as only a well-organized community can provide, being a Jew is like trying to live as a disembodied soul" (Future, p. 111). The organic community must of necessity be voluntaristic. It should be based on democratic principles. The main function of the central organization, to be named community council, would be to coordinate the activities of all existing associations, synagogues included, with provisions for associational autonomy. All communal employees, rabbis included, would be paid from a central treasury.

Eretz Yisrael — Heart of Jewry
From the outset Kaplan saw the need for Palestine as indispensable to Jewish existence.

Judaism is unlikely to survive, either as an ancillary or as a coordinate civilization, unless it thrive as a primary civilization in Palestine (Civilization, p. 273).

Palestine's contribution to Judaism is not a distant hope but a present reality. Palestine has become to the Jews everywhere "a symbol of corporate existence." All Jewish activity throughout the diaspora which bears a constructive character and has in it the promise of permanence derives from the inspiration of Palestine. It already exerts a cohesive influence among the different Jewries of the world and among the different groups in each of those Jewries. The Jew can remain a Jew without being constrained to follow a uniform regimen of practice. He can cultivate his convictions and preference without endangering his status as a Jew, or weakening Jewish unity (ibid, p. 273).

With the establishment of the State of Israel its Jewry must play a central role. As in a living organism one may excise certain organs without danger to life, but as the heart is indispensable to life, so Israel is the heart of Jewry.

Reconstruction of Jewish life must proceed simultaneously in the Diaspora and in Israel. Shilat Hagolah, negation of the Diaspora, or the idea that Judaism can thrive only in Israel, is very far from Kaplan's mind.

Without Eretz Yisrael, there would be no motive for reconstructing Jewish life anywhere. Jewish life would lack the basic content which only Eretz Yisrael can supply - a living history which only the struggle to take root in a land can create, a collective consciousness which only a living language can beget, and common folkways which only the sharing of common practical concerns can evolve. But without a planned program of reconstruction of Jewish life in the Diaspora, Eretz Yisrael will lack the stimulus to re-create the elements of religion, law and education in the Jewish civilization. As the upbuilding of Eretz Yisrael is necessary to the reconstruction of Jewish life in the Diaspora, so is the reconstruction of Jewish
life in the Diaspora necessary to the rehabilitation of Eretz Yisrael (Future, pp. 14ff.).

Finally the upbuilding of the State of Israel is a religious imperative; it will help further the salvation of mankind by perpetuation of a creative culture.

Jewish culture acknowledges the Unity of God, with its corollary, the unity of mankind. The establishment of the State of Israel is, therefore, a legitimate project of Jewish religion (Questions, pp. 413ff.).

Zionism is not merely the solution to Jewish homelessness. It is an act of the Jewish people in the service of the democratic ideal.

Zionism is not merely the revival of traditional Jewish messianism. It is that messianism, recast into the pattern of modern democratic peoplehood. Traditional messianism coincided with democracy's aim to eliminate exploitation and oppression from human life. It held out the hope of the establishment of God's kingdom of Justice and love, and the prospect of Israel as a nation restored to its ancient land. In that land, Israel would demonstrate the potency of the Divine Kingdom through the social order which it would maintain there (Future, p. 360).

The establishment of the State of Israel does not require to disband the Zionist Organization.

A strong organized Zionist movement is necessary both to complete the work of establishing the State of Israel on a firm political, social and economic basis, and to cement those spiritual bonds with Israel which are indispensable to the creative survival of the Jewish People the world over (Questions, p. 417).

World Jewry

To achieve status as a people the Jews should first meet in international conclave and enter into a solemn covenant. They should apply to the United Nations for membership as a new type of world body to be renamed the United Nations and Peoples.
However unrealistic this may sound, Kaplan sees no other way for the Jew to regain status in his own eyes or in the eyes of the world. Since such an organization of world Jewry would not be political in character, it would need no charter or constitution. A covenant would have moral force only. It would constitute a statement of common aims and purposes, and provisions for implementing those aims. On four occasions in Bible days our ancestors entered into similar solemn covenants (Questions, p. 50).

As to involvement of the world community, Kaplan is undaunted by lack of precedent or legal formula. The Charter of the United Nations can be changed. Certainly world Jewry plays as much of a role in world affairs as do many of the small nations which are now members.

The emancipation of Jewry from those conditions that render Jewish life unstable and insecure is a right which we shall never achieve, unless we act in the spirit of self-emancipation. World Jewry should unite as a people, and apply to the United Nations Assembly for recognition of its claim to peoplehood. A bill of individual rights is not enough. What is needed is a bill to legitimize Jewish association and cooperation for all purposes that would secure for the Jew freedom of worship and freedom from fear. . . .

When we have summoned up enough courage and unity to knock at the door of the United Nations for admission as a people, we shall have taken the first step toward our self-emancipation (Future, pp. 80f.).

To complete our discussion of peoplehood it is necessary to say a word on the doctrine of election.

A Chosen People. In Civilization (pp. 253-63) Kaplan

28 The covenant idea was approved in principle by the Rabbinical Assembly, PRA, XIV (1950), 81-85.
interpreted the idea that Israel is the elect of God to mean spiritual nationhood; or as he put it: while other peoples achieved a group consciousness, the Jews achieved a group self-consciousness through a long historical memory. In his later writings, however, and in the Reconstructionist prayer books the idea of the Chosen People was deleted because of its invidious implications.

The assumption by an individual or group that it is the chosen and indispensable vehicle of God's grace to others is arrogance, no matter how euphemistically one phrases the claim to be chosen (Future, p. 219).

In its place he substituted the idea of vocation.

No nation is chosen, or elected, or superior to any other, but every nation should discover its vocation or calling, as a source of religious experience, and as a medium of salvation to those who share its life (ibid, 229).

2. God

The second element in the triad that is Judaism, according to Kaplan, in his idea of God and religion. The subject is discussed extensively in every one of his books and in a special monograph entitled The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion (hereafter: God). In addition, some significant quotations from Kaplan's Ha-emunah Ve-hamusar are given in Harold Schulweis' article "Kaplan's Theory of Soterics" (Evaluation, pp. 263-81). His ideas on the subject have been consistent from the start, except that in his early writings the most modern Jewish theologian avoided the humanist label. In recent years, however, he conceded that his views were consistent with the humanistic tradition.

29See also "The God Idea in Judaism", Reconstructionist Papers, pp. 88-100.
humanist and naturalist. He writes: "If that entire approach is, as some of the opponents of Reconstructionism contend, mere secularism or sociology, then I say of it what Patrick Henry said of his demand for liberty: 'Make the most of it'" (Evaluation, p. 314). He points out that there is a humanism which is not godless (God, p. 325) and a naturalism which allows for the autonomous functioning of mind and spirit (Questions, p. 95).

God the Power that Makes for Salvation

For our summary of Kaplan's God idea we chose chapter ten, "The Belief in God", in Future (pp. 171-87). The exposition here is concise, well-organized and contains his latest sharply focused terminology. This will be supplemented by statements taken from his other books.

Let us begin with several definitions of God, each more elaborate than the preceding one. 1. God is the Power that makes for salvation. 2. God is the Cosmic Process that makes for man's salvation (Questions, p. 30). 3. God is the Power, transcending ourselves, that makes for salvation (Future, p. 183). 4. The Power that endorses what we believe ought to be, and that guarantees that it will be (God, 324). 5. Belief in God is belief in the existence of a Power conducive to salvation which is the fulfillment of human destiny (ibid, p. 172). 6. God should mean to us the sum of animating, organizing forces and relationships which are forever making a cosmos out of chaos (ibid, p. 76). 7. The word "God" has come to be symbolically expressive of the highest ideals for which men strive and, at the same time, points to the objective fact
that the world is so constituted as to make for the realiza-
tion of those ideals (ibid, p. 306). The term salvation is sub-
stituted in some definitions by "life abundant".

Kaplan thus substituted salvation for righteousness in
Matthew Arnold's famous definition of God as "the enduring
Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness".3o

This definition is based on the convictions: 1. that there
is a power or process that is part of cosmic reality, i.e.
part of the ordered universe; 2. this process helps man and
the societies he forms to achieve their highest ideals of
self-fulfillment. Harold C. Weisberg in his thoughtful crit-
ique of "Kaplan's Theory of Religion" identified this aspect
with teleological vitalism (Evaluation, p. 160). Vitalism,
according to Webster, is "the doctrine that processes of life
are not explicable by the laws of physics and chemistry alone
and that life is in some part self-determining instead of
mechanistically determined." Teleology in this connection
refers to the belief that design, purpose or ends are imman-
ent in nature. On the one hand, then, this idea posits this-
worldly or mundane salvation, or life abundant through the
way of life of a civilization; that is, in human society.
On the other hand, this power is transcendental, not a mere
creation of the human imagination, and yet also immanent in
the sense that this power for salvation operates also within
man.

Man's will to live progresses from simple wants or drives to cognition of complex relations and abstractions, such as end and means, self and not-self, etc. As man becomes aware of his soul, or that which is distinctive about his person, he also becomes cognizant of the power that helps him overcome obstacles. This power, or over-soul, or super-ego, he conceives as a God who is independent of visible reality.

The belief in God is the psychic manifestation of the will to live. It is derived from man's strivings for maximum life, for happiness. It is a soterical, or salvational — not logical, — inference (Evaluation, pp. 263-80). It satisfies man's quest for a life that is worthwhile in that it postulates that the universe is so conditioned as to lend meaning and purpose to life. The worth of life can be experienced only in relation to a particular civilization. There is potential good that can be achieved by society as it looks to a superhuman power to fulfill human aims. The highest values of a civilization are a manifestation of God in human life. The thing that distinguishes one religion from another is its organic relation to the values of a particular civilization.

Past ideas of other-worldly or extra-mundane salvation have since the European Renaissance given way among many people to a quest for this-worldly salvation. In addition to a striving for self-fulfillment through social interaction with all of mankind by furthering the ideal of democracy, the Jews can find salvation by experiencing continuity with the Jewish past and working for a creative future for their people.

To the Soterical or intrinsically religious approach a
speculative demonstration of God's nature and attributes is irrelevant. All we can know about God is the effectiveness of a belief in Him in helping man to live the life abundant. The conception of God as process is similar to the realization that fire is not one of the elements, as the ancients thought, but a process of oxidation. What is distinctive about the God process is that it is superfactual, superexperiential and trans-natural. Wieman interprets this to refer to "ideal possibilities not yet actualized in existence", those which "the human mind cannot discern nor appreciate until it has been further developed by creativity" (Evaluation, p. 202). It is not supernatural for that implies suspension of natural law by miracle. Just as the soul or personality is not a distinct entity or identifiable being, apart from the body, so is the super-soul. The purpose of worship is an awareness of the forces that operate in our bodies and in human relationships. Worship also generates strength to overcome despair. Since God is immanent in man, when man consults his conscience he is engaged in a dialogue; that part of him which is actualized addresses itself to that part which is potential. It is a striving for the ideal. One's entire personality then becomes implicated and it includes something of the divine which transcends it (Future, pp. 171-87).

Kaplan's God idea is so vitally related to all the creative facets of Jewish peoplehood that his theology serves as a powerful incentive for continued enrichment of Jewish life. A modern Jew can pray from the Reconstructionist prayer book and feel uplifted by its quest for truth, love, beauty and
other national and generally human ideals. The same applies to every activity of the Jewish group. Community work, observances, Zionist activity, all are permeated with religious content in the context of Kaplan's universe of discourse. In fact, while in theory he departs considerably from tradition, in his program of action traditional ways of Jewish living are given new and creative meaning for the thinking Jew.

While intellectually his conception of God is eagerly grasped by those who search for new moorings in our ancient and revitalized heritage, the present generation which still grew up largely on the old concept of a supernatural Father in Heaven is loath to lose its childlike nearness to God. They bemoan the loss of a simple unquestioning faith in a personal God before whom one can pour one's heart in prayer and in hope (Questions, pp. 77ff.). Whether Kaplan's conception is capable of changing from a philosophy to a faith, the coming generations will decide. A great deal depends upon the initial God ideas implanted in the child in religious school and in the home. These are still under the spell of supernaturalist views of God which are dispelled with great difficulty, if at all, by later philosophic insights.

3. Torah as a Way of Life

Civilization (pp. 409-522) contains the most systematic treatment of the subject of Torah, the third of Kaplan's dimensions of Judaism. This should be supplemented by Toward A Guide to Jewish Ritual Usage and the chapter on

31 Reconstructionist, VII nos. 13-16. For comments on this document see Bokser, Ibid, VII (Jan. 9, 1942), 6-13; Agus, Ibid, VIII (April 7, 1942), 14-18; Greenberg "Evaluating the Mitzvot" RA Bulletin, V (June 1942), 9-18.
"Maintenance of Jewish Ritual Practice" in Questions (pp.215-76).

The term Torah, according to Kaplan, embraces the Jewish way of life as well as the literary and artistic expressions of that way of life. It thus includes our sacred literature, our art, social organization, ethics, education and Jewish law.

The Bible and the rabbinic literature constitute our sacred writings. The Bible can no longer be understood in its literal, supernatural sense. It was sacred because for many generations it was the hypostasis of the civilization of the Jewish people. Those who can no longer follow the supernatural basis of Torah must interpret it in modern terms which bring out the supreme values of Judaism and mankind.

Another major cultural activity are Jewish arts: music, drama, religious pageants, the folk dance, etc.

Art possesses the magic whereby it is able to express the seemingly ineffable and to communicate what is ordinarily regarded as incommunicable (Future, p. 357).

The family, the synagogue and the community represent Jewish social organization.

The Jewish family is the backbone of Jewish civilization.

Christianity evolved the institution of monasticism as a means of exalting the ideal of chastity. Judaism exalted the institution of the family, and made it the end to be served by chastity (Civilization, p. 421).

Jewish marriage should be solemnized by a representative of the Jewish community. The obsolete laws regarding levirate and the Agunah should be abolished. Intermarriage must be frowned upon as a threat to Jewish survival.

The synagogue must not be monopolized by a particular
congregation. It must belong to the entire Jewish community (ibid, p. 425). It must be turned into a neighborhood center to meet the various religious, cultural and leisure needs of the Jew.

Like all else, Kaplan views ethics as part of social relations.

The ethical problem is how to utilize loyalty to the narrower group as training for loyalty to the more comprehensive group. Jewish religion, through its commitment to the ideal of a universal Kingdom of God as the goal of human society, has endeavored to make Jewish life contribute to human welfare generally...

Our objective must be so to compensate for the weakness of the weak, and so to direct the strength of the strong, as to render as many human beings as possible fit to survive (Future, pp. 349f.).

Spiritual selection, faith, hope, humility, inner freedom, patience, thankfulness, justice, and creative doubt are viewed as the ten basic values in the Jewish religion (Future, pp. 244-339).

As to Jewish law Kaplan criticizes severely the principles laid down by Frankel and Schechter (Future, pp. 378f.). Jewish law is in a defunct state.

The notion of Jewish law as inherently valid, regardless of the extent to which it is ignored by Jews, is not only untrue but harmful. It obscures the urgent need of reconstituting Jewish society in order that Jewish law may be reinstated (Future, p. 391).

In the Diaspora Judaism must start with constitutional law providing the framework for a voluntarist, democratic and quasi-contractual community. Then substantive law would have to be defined.

Democratic law cannot be developed by interpretation
alone; it requires legislation also. Wherever possible, resort should be had to interpretation of existing law rather than to legislation of new law. But when a law has become so obsolete that no reasonable interpretation of it can either remedy some evil or advance some good, it should be superseded by new law in accordance with the vital needs of the people (Future, 397f.).

Their observance, however, should be reckoned with, not in the spirit of juridical law, which is coercive, but in the spirit of a voluntary consensus based on a general recognition of their value. We shall, therefore, refer to our approach to Jewish ritual observance as the voluntarist approach (Questions, 265).

Changes in world outlook no longer permit Jews to believe that all the rules of the Jewish code "are, in a literal sense, mitzvot or Divine commandments" (Questions, p. 269). The naturalist view can no longer sustain a consciousness of sin, which implies a penalty for infraction of a law by an anthropomorphic God (ibid, p. 233). We should rather speak of folkways or usages which carry a voluntarist connotation. Viewed thus "folkways are the social practices by which a people externalizes the reality of its collective being" (Civilization, p. 432).

The normal human being is exhilarated by any kind of ritual which gives him a sense of unity with the larger life of some group. In sharing that life, his own is redeemed from its dull and drab routine (ibid, p. 434).

For example,

Kashrut is capable of becoming a means of generating spiritual values, in that it can habituate the Jew in the practice of viewing a commonplace physical need as a source of spiritual value (Questions, p. 252).

As to the Sabbath,

Not what the Jew will refrain from doing will determine the spiritual influence of the Sabbath, but the
affirmative conduct which the observance of the Sabbath will elicit from him (Civilization, p. 445).

The method of legalistic interpretation of the existing Jewish law by halakhic hermeneutic rules, such as was done for the Agunah by a prior provision in the marriage contract as to the contingencies involving divorce, did not go far enough. Interpretation is good in some cases. In this case the law should be changed by granting the woman, under specified conditions, the right to divorce her husband (Questions, p. 275). Such abrogation of the halakha should be resorted to in the case of other obsolete laws. While this constitutes a radical departure in historic Jewish law, Kaplan is not out to diminish the influence of Jewish law. Whenever a practice has to be fully or partly scrapped "some new practice should be instituted that might serve as a substitute for the one that cannot be observed" (ibid, p. 239). In the organic community of the future rabbis along with representative laymen would pass on questions of Jewish law and standards (ibid, p. 362).

Kaplan's place in American Jewish Thought. Although throughout his life Kaplan labored within Conservative institutions and his influence on the movement was great, he yet stands apart from all three wings of Judaism. He launched the Reconstructionist movement which, like Conservatism in its early days, avows a superdenominational philosophy. Whether it will eventually form a fourth denomination remains to be seen.

Kaplan is most critical of the Conservative group. They
are accused of vacillation, vague sentimentalism, a hybrid theology and in "offering apologetics in place of solutions to genuine problems" (Weisberg in Evaluation, p. 171). He is, however, indebted to the historical school for its stress on Klal Yisrael, of peoplehood as central to Jewish religion.

He is no less critical of Reform, although he admires them for their forthright stand. He rejects their reduction of the Jewish religion "to a series of intellectual assents to universal propositions about the nature of God" (ibid, p.169), and their inability to see Jewish religion as a part of the specific social realities of the Jewish people. To him classical Reform is a soul without a body (ibid, pp. 170, 223-42).

Orthodoxy and neo-Orthodoxy he rejects outright as based on a super-natural Sinaitic revelation.

Kaplan's general influence, however, on American Jewish thought has been all-pervasive. His practical program for Jewish reconstruction has been even more influential than his philosophy, as is evident from the application of his ideas to congregational life, education, social and group work. Since the days of Maimonides, some may feel, no more powerful guide for the perplexed has risen to illumine Jewish life.

Milton Steinberg

Milton Steinberg (1905-1950), rabbi of Park Avenue Synagogue in New York, died very young at the height of a brilliant career of preaching and writing. He was one of the elect among Conservatives who could write in a scintillating and popular prose on the most profound subjects agitating the
modern Jew. His philosophical books: The Making of the Modern Jew (1933), A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem (1945), Basic Judaism (1947), and posthumously A Believing Jew (1951) and From the Sermons of... (1945). In these books and in numerous articles he was a staunch advocate of Reconstructionism, although towards the end he departed somewhat from the teachings of his master.

Judaism. Steinberg defines Judaism as religious culturalism.

What is religious culturalism? It is that theory and pattern of Jewish living which takes as its basic premises the following. First, Judaism is larger in scope than religion alone. It is a culture and civilization, with all the diverse but interrelated interests and activities that make any culture. Second, religion is an integral part of Jewish culture, serving at once as the driving motif and as the climactic expression of it. And third, Jewish religion like the whole of Judaism must be traditional in character if it is to be vital and dynamic (Believing Jew, p. 83).

God. God is identified as a Being, not a process

The entire universe, as I see it, is the outward manifestation of Mind-Energy, of Spirit, or to use the older and better word of God. God is then the essential Being of all beings, though all beings in their totality do not exhaust Him. It is His reason which expresses itself in the rationality of nature, in the fact that all things behave in conformity with intelligible forms, in the fact, in brief, that the world is cosmos not chaos. His power moves in the dynamisms of physical reality. His will is the impulse behind the upsurge of life on this planet. Individualized, He is the soul of man whose thought processes are infinitesimal sparks of His infinite

32 Reviewed by Maurice Samuel, Opinion, (June 1934), 23f.
33 Reviewed by Jacob Kohn, RA Bulletin, III (January 1952), 6f.
34 Ira Eisenstein's eulogy PRA, XIV (1950), 325-27.
fire, whose moral aspirations are fragments of His vast purpose, whose yearning to create is but an echo of His cosmic creativity. And He is an ethical being, not so much in the sense that he enters into relations with His own expression, as in the deeper sense that He is the fountainhead, source, and sanction of man's moral life. The human quest after freedom, truth, goodness, and beauty is but the splintered spearhead of the divine drive. So to me, the whole panorama of earth and sky, the tempestuous progress of living things, the tortuous career of humanity are the external shell of a process wherein God realizes His character (ibid, pp. 19f.).

Kaplan's idea of God as process is therefore inadequate.

For me, however, the riddle of the universe is not so readily to be dismissed, and faith is not only a psychological and ethical venture but a cognitive one also, an affirmation concerning the ultimate nature of things. Nor do I believe...that one can have the benefits of faith in God without a venture as to His existence as an entity (ibid, p. 175).

Reconstructionism. Otherwise Steinberg was in accord with the rest of Reconstructionist ideology. He chided them, however, for remaining a school of thought rather than a movement, which reduced them to impotence within the general inaction of the Conservatives.

Conservative Judaism then presents the classic picture of the immovable object and the irresistible force, and so long as that is the case, the possibility of an eventual explosion and consequent organizational realignment cannot be ruled out (ibid, p. 173).

Yet his general evaluation of the new trend was very positive.

"Reconstructionism, for all its limitations, has been and remains a force of intelligence and candor, affirmation and spirituality, idealism and prac
ticality, of catholicity yet commitment, of realism yet unabated hope" (ibid, p. 178).

He also had faith in a great flowering of Jewish culture in this country. "Judaism is now richer for variety" is the con-
cluding sentence of his review of "Current Philosophies of Jewish Life in America."

Jack J. Cohen

Jack J. Cohen was successor to Eisenstein and Kaplan as rabbi of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism. He is a most outspoken protagonist of religious naturalism. Like Kaplan he is distinguished by a vital interest in educational issues.

Naturalism. In his book *The Case for Religious Naturalism* (1958) Cohen expands upon Kaplan's ideas and presents the most radical formulation yet attempted. Supernaturalist theology which posits a divinely revealed law cannot be debated because it is subjective. Similar subjectivism conditions the view that no creativity has been possible nor will it ever thrive in lands outside of Israel. But modern man must base his world outlook upon concrete experience, upon a sociological analysis (ibid., pp. xiii-xviii). The separation between the sacred and the profane, the religious and the secular, is unrealistic, since secular acts are capable of becoming vehicles of religious expression.

Cohen proceeds to define his key concept.

By naturalism I mean the disposition to believe that any phenomenon can be explained by appeal to general laws confirmable either by observation or by inference from observation...
In these pages, nature will be conceived of as the totality of reality — its substance, functioning, and principles of operation — including man and his spiritual qualities. The naturalist thus tends to explore as deeply as possible the pattern of things as they lend themselves to human understanding and to deny the existence of any realm of human knowledge beyond that apprehensible through men's faculties of mind. He would deny that there is a realm of meaning "beyond" the process of life manifest to human investigation (pp. 21f.).

To this he adds another key concept, that of transcendence.

I take the view that all hypothetical thinking is a projection beyond the actually experienced, that all so-called revelations and intuitions are extensions of such imaginative constructions, and that the ultimate test of their validity must lie in experience...

Transcendence is a necessary category of all human thinking; but it in no way requires going beyond nature (p. 23).

God. After devoting the third chapter to an examination of the God-idea in Jewish and general thought, Cohen arrives at his own definition:

God is that quality of the universe, expressed in its order and its openness to purpose, which man is constantly discovering and upon which he relies to give meaning to his life. God, I believe, can be no less. He may conceivably be a lot more — a Creator of the universe, a Law-giver, a Judge. He may possess other qualities ascribed to Him by supernaturalists. I see no need for attributing such qualities to God, because human experience, my own and that of the race, makes available to me enough evidence of a divine immanence. But the immanence of God does not imply the absence of transcendence. There is always the mystery of the unknown present and the unpredictable future, there are the infinite qualities of experience that no human being can ever exhaust, there are the creative surprises, and beyond all there is the process of existence itself, of which any one generation of man is but an insignificant part. Surely in all this, there is enough transcendence to evoke the feeling of awe and sublimity in any man (p.130).

I am not saying that my God-idea is God. All I can hope to do is explain what I mean when I use the word God (p. 132).
Values are man-made by each society; they are by no means absolute imperatives. Ethics are therefore relative (p. 135ff.).

Judaism. The triple strand of Judaism of the past — nationalism, religion and culture — has been broken and should be put together again. The suppression by the Orthodox of the revolutionary impulses of the masses after Emancipation drove them from religion (pp. 167f.). Religion, on the other hand, has been turned by some modern thinkers (Will Herberg for one) into the purpose of Jewish existence, in other words, that the Jewish people exists for its religion, not the other way around (p. 171). Jewish ethnicism and culture were assessed by Warner and Srole in Yankee City as merely capable of delaying but not preventing eventual assimilation. But they failed to discern the unique character of Jewish ethnicism.

The Jewish group is sui generis in that its ethnic characteristics not only are involved in the group religion but are essential features of it...

That which is commonly recognized as Jewish culture by all segments of the Jewish group — the religious folkways and rituals, the Hebrew language as the language of study and of the synagogue, the concern for and participation in the life of Eretz Yisrael — these are sufficiently different from the trans-ethnic characteristics of Christianity to continue to mark the Jews as a group apart — as an ethnic as well as religious entity (p. 239).

But once American Jewry recaptures the sense of relevance of Jewish religion to their everyday life, they will not only unify the Jewish people but will also be able to assist humanity in the achievement of its unification (pp. 269, 279).

Peoplehood. Cohen is engaged in a study of religion in Israel. He finds that even there religious beliefs and practices must remain a private matter due to the temper of the
Israeli community as well as to the presence of non-Jews in the state. These latter must be allowed to disregard state laws on Sabbath observance; nor can non-Jews act as judges who must interpret Jewish law. As to the Jews themselves, by and large they are little concerned with religious issues. Martin Buber, for example, who wields world-wide influence in matters of theology, has little impact on the Israelis (pp. 189-231).

Turning his attention to America, Cohen finds that Oscar Handlin's thesis that past failures of an over-all community organization fore-doom all future attempts, is erroneous. A polity based on voluntarism, democracy and constitutionality is not utopian in view of American cultural pluralism and the folk basis of Jewish religion (p. 258ff.). Gordis' advocacy (p. 263), however, of a synagogue-controlled community would make little difference in the quality even of Jewish religious activity, since "problems of worship, ritual, ethics, and theology are not subject to resolution by votes, even in a council of synagogues" (p. 262); moreover, isolating the "organic" Jews would not unite even the affiliated, let alone the unsynagogued Jews (p. 263).

Torah. As to Jewish law Cohen argues that it is foredoomed to failure in any attempt to unify or coordinate a differentiated Jewry. If the State of Israel must leave matters of religious belief and ritual to the conscience of the individual Jew, certainly no standards — let alone laws —

Prayer is only one aspect of worship, which includes ceremonies, reading from the Torah, etc. To our generation prayer has become a perfunctory exercise. Petitionary prayers for the alleviation of personal burdens and sorrows may serve a cathartic purpose, but the other elements of which the prayer book is made up have little meaning; doxologies, romantic praise of God as King, are even distasteful (p. 151-57). The true meaning of prayer, that of spiritual catharsis, has to be restored.

A modernist in religion conceives a prayer entirely in terms of its effect on the worshiper. He does not expect his words to influence the operations of the universe through any magic effect. Nor does he direct his prayers to any conscious Being outside himself. The object of his prayers (of which meditative readings are one form) is his own inner self, the hidden conscience, the source of his ethical will, which requires constant reassurance and stimulation (p. 216).

It is also advisable to experiment in the course of the service with serious study, "directed to the clarification of ethical and spiritual values as the fulcrum on which modern worship could rest" (p. 274).

Eugene Kohn

Eugene Kohn (1887) was rabbi of congregations in five communities, and for many years editor of the Reconstructionist. His books are mainly a restatement of basic Reconstructionist ideas. The Future of Judaism in America (1934) was a first groping attempt at an adjustment of Judaism on a religious basis. His solution was a synthesis of nationalism and religion and was also based on the three foundations of God,
Israel and Torah.

Religion and Humanity (1953) contains a much more advanced presentation of his humanistic philosophy placed within the framework of both Judaism and democracy. The terminology and most ideas are Kaplan's with here and there a critique of Buber's existentialism. The exposition is lucid, closely reasoned and very readable. In Good To Be a Jew (1960) Kohn explores the values that inhere in Jewish culture, religion and institutions.

Ira Eisenstein

Ira Eisenstein (b. 1906), president of the Reconstructionist Foundation, formerly rabbi of the Society for Advancement of Judaism in New York and Anshe Emet in Chicago, is author of Creative Judaism (1953), a summary of Kaplan's Judaism as a Civilization, What We Mean By Religion (1938), and Judaism Under Freedom (1956), largely a collection of his articles, in some of which he presents his personally experienced spiritual development from a doubting youth to a believing adult. All his writings are by and large a restatement of Kaplan's philosophy.

B. THEISTS

Robert Gordis

Robert Gordis (1908) was the first to write a more or less official popular presentation of the philosophy of the movement in his Conservative Judaism (1945)\(^{37}\) which appeared in a later revised edition (1956) under the imprint of the National

\(^{37}\)Reviewed by Morgenbesser, Commentary, I (1946), 96-98.
Academy for Adult Jewish Studies of the United Synagogue of America. Rabbi of Temple Beth El of Rockaway Park, New York, for over a quarter of a century, teacher of Bible and religion at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Columbia and the Protestant Union Theological Seminary, lecturer on religious and communal problems, he has written extensively for magazines. His essays were published in The Jew Faces a New World (1941) and Judaism for the Modern Man (1955). He also published studies on Ecclesiastes and the song of Songs and other scholarly papers.

We shall use his revised edition of Conservative Judaism as his most considered statement for our outline of his views and will supplement it with the more detailed discussions in his books.

Of Conservatism itself he says: "In its pragmatic approach and its distrust of abstract theory, it is characteristically American in spirit" (Conservative Judaism, 1945, p. 3).

Whereas to Kaplan and Agus the God idea is central and all-pervasive, to Gordis the Jewish religion and the Jewish people, that is the ideological and practical problems of adjustment, are the most crucial. Of the two — religion and peoplehood — the former is decisive because it gives meaning and viability to the latter.

39 See also his "The Task Before Us" CJ, I (1945), 1-8.
41 See below pp. 77-82.
We find only a brief statement on the God concept in his *Conservative Judaism* (pp. 24f.). God reveals himself through his works in nature, in the never-ending process of creation, and in history, in the affairs of men, through the moral order. "He is a reality, a Being".

It remains for Gordis to examine the implications of such faith in God for modern man and to show its relation to theological thought past and present.42

*Judaism*. Gordis claims that the definition of Judaism as the evolving religious culture and civilization of the Jewish people was first used by him in 1939 and only in 1945 was it adopted by the Reconstructionists (*CJ*, II, June 1946, 19). He finds that their original description of Judaism merely as a civilization brands them as secularists. The differences between Conservatism and Reconstructionism, he maintains, are three: 1) reasoned theism that retains emotional drive vs. a God who is too intellectually and philosophically conceived; 2) viable character of Jewish tradition vs. abrogation of the law, which makes it little more than "a rationale for a pro-Zionist brand of Reform Judaism"; 3) affirmation of the election of Israel as an instrument of Revelation with a genius for religion which influenced Christianity, Islam and democracy, vs. rejection of chosenness (*ibid*, pp. 17-28).

*Israel*. Gordis describes the Jewish people as a religious-cultural-ethnic group (*Judaism*, p. 47). But religion always

comes first, for the Jews have a special genius for religion

While God reveals himself both in nature and in history, it requires a seeing eye and a sensitive heart to recognize His Presence. Herein lies the distinctive role of Israel as the instrument of revelation. The Jewish people has never possessed great military power or unique artistic or scientific gifts. Its distinction has lain in its genius for religion. By virtue of this endowment a tiny, impotent people was able to develop a faith of universal scope and a vision of the one living God of humanity. Israel is a small land, but it is roofed over by the vault of heaven that embraces the farthest ends of the earth (Conservative Judaism, p. 27)

As to the Land of Israel, a central role must be reserved for it

The establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was never a mere political goal or even a practical necessity for Conservative Judaism. It was and remains a religious imperative, a sine qua non for a vital Judaism. The Jews who live in a free America and throughout a democratic world can perpetuate Judaism by dint of sacrifice and unremitting zeal. But Judaism can grow and develop most freely and naturally only where it is dominant and not the minority culture, where it creates and in turn is molded by the atmosphere. Hence, Israel, as the center of the Jewish people, must be the living center of Judaism for the stronger and more firmly established Jewish life becomes in Israel, the richer Jewish life everywhere will be. It is therefore clear that Zionist loyalty and action are integral to a vital Jewish program (Ibid, p. 21).

The idea of Kibbutz Galuyot, the Ingathering of Exiles, which to some means Shilat Hagolah, the hopelessness of Jewish life outside Israel, must have a spiritual connotation to American Jews, and must not necessarily involve physical transplantation (Judaism, p. 124). The distinctive characteristic of American Jewry is its vitality. "American Jewry is a new experiment, never tried before in the cosmic laboratory which is the history of Israel, and anything may happen!" (Ibid, p. 15).
As to the future organization of American Jewry, Gordis completely dissociates himself from the Reconstructionist emphasis on community. Not community but the synagogue is and must remain the central and guiding institution. The synagogue center should embrace all other communal activities within its sphere of activity.

Only the synagogue center, vitalized and active, reflects this conception of the integrity of Jewish life in all its phases...

Structurally, the congregation will need to establish, beyond its presently functioning committees, groups of its members who are both interested in and capable of recommending attitudes and action by the congregation in all areas of Jewish life, such as philanthropy, civic defense, higher Jewish education, overseas relief and cultural activity (Ibid, p. 63).

The synagogues should then form local synagogue councils and the present national Synagogue Council should serve as a federation of these local units, and not merely for civic-protective purposes, as at present (Ibid, p. 64). Once the organic community places organic Judaism at its center, it will be in a position to launch a campaign for Teshuvah, for a return to Judaism, by the mass of non-religious Jews (Ibid, p. 67). 43

Torah. Torah along with religion are the essence of Judaism.

Torah includes ordinances and practices, to be sure, but embraces much more. It is the law, the lore, and the learning of Israel, the world view of Judaism, and the Jewish way of life. In its broadest use, Torah includes every attitude, every insight, as well

as every practice, belief, and commandment of religious and ethical import which are Jewish in origin or in acceptance, however, universal in application. In a more specialized sense, Torah is the term for the authoritative Jewish religious and ethical tradition, from the days of Moses more than thirty centuries ago to the present. Its principal repositories are the Bible and the Talmud, but it includes also the medieval Responsa and the codes, the works of the philosophers, poets, and mystics of the Middle Ages, and the writings of their modern successors. The content and scope of Torah continue to grow through the contributions of the scholars, thinkers, philosophers, theologians, and teachers of every age, including our own (Judaism, p. 81).

It embraces contemporary Jewish scholarship whose major function is to seek "to meet the perils which threaten the survival of civilization as a whole and the unity of Israel" (ibid, p. 99).

Schechter's concept of Catholic Israel is unworkable because it assumes that Orthodox tradition must remain virtually unchanged (ibid, pp. 168, 177). The Reconstructionist view of law as usages and folkways eliminates the element of sanctions, which is inadmissible. While we cannot apply human penalties, the divine sanctions are valid, if we admit the authority of Jewish law. While at present we are in a frontier stage of lawlessness regarding ritual observance, a concerted stand by the guardians of Jewish law will eventually bring about the rule of Mitzvot. As to the methods of change, Gordis proposes a combination of the horizontal approach, that is present needs and conditions, and of the vertical — the millenial Jewish traditions (Judaism, pp. 148-81). He proceeds to outline the guiding principles for a new system of rituals. They are: cosmic or religious, ethical or social
esthetic or play function, and group-associational values (Conservative Judaism, pp. 34f.).

While acknowledging indebtedness to Kaplan and in fact adopting his definition of Judaism, Gordis arrived at conclusions which in some aspects are diametrically opposed to those of his former teacher. And since many of the differences are in matters of applied Judaism — such as the authority of the law or the primacy of the synagogue — serious clashes have been inevitable and will probably continue in the years ahead. Gordis’ view of the exclusive centrality and dominance of the synagogue is actually tantamount to a retrogression to the very evils which Kaplan sought to remedy. Such exclusivism in a voluntaristic, fluid and pluralistic community is fraught with sombre consequences for the future of American Jewry. The religionist segments in our midst are divided enough; put a further wedge between them and the large majority in whose life the synagogue plays but a minor role, and the threat to unity is grave indeed.

Jacob Agus

Jacob Agus (1911), rabbi of Beth El in Baltimore since 1950, member of the committees on the Sabbath and the Prayer book of the Rabbinical Assembly, is devoting his life to evolve a philosophy of Judaism that is grounded in the best general and Jewish thought. In his Modern Philosophies of Judaism (1940) he examined the philosophies of Abraham Geiger, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, M.M. Kaplan and several others and arrived at his own "reasoned faith". His
Banner of Jerusalem (1946) was a study of the late chief Rabbi Isaac Kook. In his Guideposts in Modern Judaism (1954) he collected his essays on current trends in Jewish thought. His latest work is on The Evolution of Jewish Thought from Biblical Times to the opening of the Modern Era (1959). In many articles in leading Hebrew and English periodicals and from platforms throughout the country he has been trying to put across his conception of Judaism as a religion. This caused him to engage in polemics with the secularist and nationalist views on the one hand, and with Reconstructionists who take a humanist-naturalistic attitude, on the other.

Kaplan's view of God as process is not attractive to Agus -- there is no one to pray to then. Relegation of religion as one of the elements of a civilization in which peoplehood is central is an incomplete and unfinished conception that is not viable particularly in the Diaspora. To him God is a Person who is concerned with the destiny of the individual. In his Modern Philosophies (pp. 336-51) we find the clearest exposition of his rational faith in the form of theses for a philosophy of religion.

Reason alone cannot prove the existence of God. There are two choices left: skepticism or faith. The former, which usually takes the form of agnosticism is refuted "by the fact that human life and human ideals continue to demand that we orient our lives to some valid goals" (p. 337).

The only way to arrive at faith is by deductive logic based on intuition. Inductive reasoning leads mainly to materialistic, mechanistic views of the universe and leaves us without
purpose. It is the lowest form of thought which views the atom and matter as the basic components of existence. The more advanced manner of thinking is to start with the most complex essences, such as Personality, Self or the Absolute. This view of man as spirit is more akin to reality than man as body. To gain full insight into reality we have to start with a metaphysical principle that illumines both the physical universe and human ideals. But our metaphysical principle cannot be an arbitrary assumption. Our intuition must be one that is shared by the generality of mankind. Rational axiom is always true. Intuitional truth, however, flashes like lightning and appears true only at certain moments. It is reached only when we assume a certain "existential" attitude when "it is what you — the whole you — are that counts" (p.339).

Metaphysics should start with the highest concept available to man, that of Personality...It includes the elements of matter, spirit, will, caprice, emotion, mind and the mysterious unity in which they are all fused together. I believe with Rosenzweig that God is to be conceived as a Living Person containing within His being the contradictions of necessity and freedom, eternity and timeliness, matter and spirit, lawfulness and creativity, "midas hadin" and "midas Horahmim"...there is no reason, then, to decree that God cannot think of or love the individual (pp. 343f.).

This conception is true for me, the Jew whose ancestors first conceived the idea. Its acceptance by Christianity and Islam bears further testimony to its foundation in advanced human thought. God can be worshipped only as Personality; only if we do not conceive Him as mere Process. Any philosophy without a metaphysic, without a conception of the nature of God, is incomplete. Once we view the universe through the...
most complex concept of a personal God, all elements of reality are illumined and gain meaning and purpose.

When applied to Jewish existence this view must hold that "Judaism (the Jewish religion) is the central, all-pervasive and all absorbing element of the civilization of the Jewish people" (p. 350). "I believe that the motive of nationalism is productive of good only when it is kept in the background as subordinate to the universal ideals of ethics and religion" (p. 361).

His critique of Kaplan's approach in Modern Philosophies (pp. 281-322) and in his review of Future (Guideposts, pp. 382-414) sharply brings out Agus' more traditional philosophy. Kaplan is a pragmatist for he asks: Will it work? rather than: Is it true? He does not bother with metaphysics; the result is that he is more anthropologist than religionist:

To define Judaism as a religious civilization, rather than as a civilizational religion, is to set the ethnic and cultural factors in the substantive core of Jewish life, and to relegate the elements of religion to the rank of a phase or a quality of the life of the group (Guideposts, p. 395).

The organic community would result only in a gray and neutral Jewishness "dedicated to the promotion of that soulless and non-committal entity known as Jewish content" (p. 400).

Besides, why reject the concept of "chosen people", if it can serve as a means of channeling Jewish resentment and rancor against the role assigned to us to be the suffering servant of every generation (p. 408). Nevertheless, Agus was

44 See also "The Idea of God" Guideposts, pp. 223-70).
not prepared to reject Kaplan in toto, only certain of his arguments (p. 414).

As to Halakha, it depends upon our conception of revelation (pp. 271-359), which cannot be regarded as a historic event (p. 279) but rather as the very phenomenon of faith.

The body of tradition we must take up as the pattern in which our piety was moulded, but the soul of our ancestors cannot take the place of our own soul. In the revision of Halachah we must be guided by the principles which are valid in our own mind, not by the frozen letters of the law which can only lead to the progressive petrification and self-isolation of Judaism (pp. 305f.).

"The divergencies in religious observances today are too great to warrant any hope for the establishment of any unitary body of interpretation. For us of the Conservative movement, the road ahead is clear — the establishment of a rabbinic and lay body for the interpretation of Jewish law as standards of action for our day and the endeavor to persuade ever greater numbers of our people to make these norms and standards part of their own life. We need not fear disunity within the Jewish community, but rather disunity and contradiction within the soul of the individual Jew" (358f.).

He suggests the creation of a world-wide Synhedrin-Academy to consist of scholars and leaders to "deal with the moral and spiritual problems of the land of Israel, of the Jewish people and of humanity" (p. 376). All resolutions adopted by them would have to be regarded as recommendations rather than as binding law. It will be up to each community and up to each individual to follow as far along as their conscience dictates.

In other essays Agus takes strong issue with all ethnic, cultural and national ideologies. He attacks particularly the "cultural supplementation" theory of the Jewish Welfare
Board in their National Survey (p. 159). For it is his deep conviction that only Judaism as a religion holds forth the promise of a Golden Age for American Jewry (p. 227).

All secularist theories are a residue of an unbelieving generation and are of a passing nature.

An appraisal of Agus' overall view shows it to be integrated and well thought through. He certainly represents the modern synthesis of reason and faith by a majority of conservatives more than does Kaplan.

Simon Greenberg

Simon Greenberg (1901), presently of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles and vice-chancellor of the Seminary, formerly rabbi of Har Zion in Philadelphia, executive director of the United Synagogue is author of several books, including The Conservative Movement in Judaism (1955), Living as a Jew Today (1940) and The Ideals of the Prayer Book (1942). For our purposes we shall outline his paper entitled "Some Guiding Principles for a Conservative Approach to Judaism" (PRA, XXI, 1957, 69-124). After introductory remarks on the place of ideology in the movement he discusses his own views under four headings: God and Man, Divine Revelation and Communication, the Torah, and Israel — A Torah-People. As a semi-official spokesman for Conservatism we must give careful heed to his philosophy.

45 O. Janowsky, Jewish Welfare Board Survey (1948).


1. The Place of Ideology. The Rabbinical Assembly must not promulgate authoritative pronouncements on matters of faith and dogma in order not to breed sectarianism, and to afford freedom of thought for every rabbi. Each rabbi, however, should think through his position in the hope of eventually arriving at a consensus which is essential for unity, cohesiveness and distinguishable identity.

2. God and Man. Greenberg derives his faith in God from his reverence for the martyr and the saint. He starts with two self-evident and universally accepted principles as reasonable validation of human behavior. The first is the preservation of one's physical existence, the other — the avoidance of physical pain. But by what principle can we rationalize actions of glad acceptance of death or pain? Neither disparagement of heroic acts nor subordination of the welfare of the individual to the group will do. The answer to this ethical problem is to be found in the Torah. "It was the Torah that set before me the doctrine that man's highest destiny is to strive to be Godlike, for only as he approximates God, who is Ultimate Being, does he, as man, have Being."

(p. 80). But man, the creature, can only approximate God the creator. There is one thing God cannot do — to make man as perfect as Himself. It is this freedom of man and of every electron of nature that sometimes leads to suffering and evil. "Body and soul are merely aspects of the two divine attributes of extension and thought." This allows for a belief that both man's body and soul have Being after death. "The decay that we witness is not a finality" (p. 84). Resurrection need not
be denied in view of the creative powers of God.

3. Divine Revelation and Communication. Much confusion is caused by the use of the concept of Revelation also for Communication, two experiences of God's love, or uninterrupted concern to bestow blessing upon the beloved.

Divine revelation is wholly ineffable; it cannot be expressed in words. It is not reserved for the few; it is a well-nigh universal human experience which comes with an awareness of the Divine Presence. Divine communication is itself ineffable. Yet its content is communicable. The realms of science and art or Secondary Divine Communication, depend for expansion of knowledge, for new discoveries, upon flashes of inspiration whose source is divine. The realm of values, or Primary Divine Communication, cannot be validated beyond reasonable doubt.

4. The Torah. Religion is Divine Communication that assumed supreme significance for a group over an extended period of time. Judaism is such a religious group. It came into being through the Torah as it was given at Mt. Sinai, when the Jews as a group experienced "an ineffable awareness of the Divine Presence" with which was associated a communicable content, as indicated in the Bible narrative. This experience transformed Israel into a people with a faith and a pattern of life embodied in the Torah, which includes the Bible, the Talmud and the Midrashim. The prophets' message came from God, by intuition, not by reasoning power or on the basis of historic experiences. The Torah is our guide because it formulates the ultimate goals of human life upon this earth, and
indicates the paths leading to the attainment of those goals (p. 97). The Torah must be accepted knowingly, reverently and honestly. The last prerequisite would have us question some literal statements in the Bible which contradict indisputable scientific knowledge, that is the incontrovertible evidences of the senses. Miracles are to be neither rejected nor accepted in toto, nor is faith in them to be made a criterion for one's faith in the Bible. The same applies to moral practices or precepts which must be replaced by our nobler sensibilities.

Israel. In order to emphasize peoplehood and yet give primacy to religion, Jewry is to be conceived as a Torah-people. Kaplan's peoplehood idea is based solely on the need for belonging; in that case, why not belong to another group for one's salvation. Belonging can have meaning only if it means reaching out to principles beyond peoplehood. "I remained a Jew because I found in the Torah the path leading to what I believe are the highest reaches of human life. Hence I prefer to think of Judaism not as a religious civilization, but as a civilizing religion rooted in the Torah" (p. 118). The Jews are an Am Segulah, a chosen and specially favored people. This concept is inextricably interwined with a "sense of guilt, of failure as a people to fulfill its God-given destiny" (p. 123).

Jewish nationalism, the Zionist movement and the community in Israel must become religious with a passion for social justice and personal rectitude and thus contribute to the ad-
vancement of a spiritual nationalism.

Solomon Goldman

Solomon Goldman (1893-1953), rabbi in Cleveland, then at Anshe Emet in Chicago, president of the Zionist Organization, wrote on Maimonides and the Bible. In several essays in A Rabbi Takes Stock (1931) he sought to clarify the Conservative viewpoint.

The book is highly polemical. Zionism, tolerance of secular Jewry and a recognition of the elements of peoplehood in Judaism are defended.

His defense of Jewish nationalism is contained in chapter 5: "Does Judaism Jeopardize Patriotism?" In the following chapter "Gaonculus" he attacks the bigoted Orthodox rabbis and pleads in favor of national Jews who cannot subscribe to religious dogmas.

God must be conceived as a national deity.

He serves as the symbol for Israel's noblest aspirations and loftiest ideals. He is never for too long abstracted from his people — its social instincts, customs, laws, descent, land and language. He goes into exile when the Jews are driven out of Palestine; He creates the world in the Hebrew language. He is the national God; He is the soul of the nation. (p. 40).

In The Jew and the Universe (1936) Goldman analyzes the philosophy of Maimonides and finds that coupled with the pre-

48 "Jewish Nationalism" PRA, V (1933), 32-49. See also "The Multiplication of the Mitzvot" M. M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume, pp. 381-97, on new observances to be derived from Scripture.

49 See the review by H. Hurwitz, Menorah Journal, XX (July-Sept., 1932), 185f.
dominance of reason was a blending with intuition. His conception of the divinity was of a personal God and his main source of knowledge was life itself, hence his emphasis upon a code of behavior.

In his preface to *The Jew and the Universe* Goldman makes a remarkable confession. "I remain perplexed even as any of Maimonides' contemporaries. Alas, the old guides have not dissolved the mists of my confusion, neither have the most recent dispelled my doubts" (p. xi). Few indeed are the rabbis who followed Goldman's courageous example of voicing his doubts in public.

Max Kadushin

There are thinkers who failed to state their own philosophy of Judaism. Instead they sought to understand our heritage through a study of the Jewish mind in the past. It is a way of saying: I am a believer in tradition; this is how I understand that tradition. Schechter is a case in point.

In order to outline his world view we summarized his restatement of rabbinic theology. Likewise, we shall present a brief summary of Kadushin's studies of the rabbinic mind in the belief that although they are studies of past Jewish philosophy and we deal with modern philosophy, they constitute the very essence of the historical approach of Conservatism. Placing the thinking of the ancient sages within the frame of reference of modern psychology and logic is in it-

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50 His Hebrew article on this subject "Hayahadut Vehayekum" *PRA*, V (1938), 464-73 is a translation of the first chapter of the book. See also his *Crisis and Decision* (1938).
self a reinterpretation of Judaism which makes it more understandable and palatable to the modern mind.

Max Kadushin (1895), Professor at the Academy of Liberal Judaism is a rabbi, former director of the Hillel Foundation, University of Wisconsin and of the Marshalian Hebrew High School system in New York. In his three works *The Theology of the Seder Eliahu*, *Organic Thinking* (1938) and *The Rabbinic Mind* (1952) he developed the same thesis. According to this theory rabbinic thought is not logical nor philosophical but organic. The rabbis operated with four fundamental concepts — God's loving kindness, His absolute justice, Torah, and Israel. These four are mutually related so that they create an organic whole. Moreover, all other rabbinic value-concepts — such as repentance, holiness and a host of other abstractions which the rabbis elaborated on the basis of the more concretized terms in the Bible — are also related to one or more of the four fundamental concepts. The rabbis thus operated not with a philosophy but with a value-complex which was consistent in its general aspects and common to all members of the group. Yet at the same time it left room for the expression of the differentiae of human personality and for dynamism or change. This explains the paucity of dogma in Judaism. Even such a dogma as *Mattan Torah* (Kadushin objects to the word revelation) is modifiable by hermeneutic interpretation and other legal means. The dogmas, moreover, are not marshalled into a creed, or into basic principles of Judaism.

Kadushin also illumines our understanding of the mystical in Judaism. Nearness of God was an everyday affair, exper-
enced through symbolic observances or value-concepts. The blessing over food, the recitation of the Shema were mystical experiences of holiness.

To judge by rabbinic religious experience, the modern emphasis on the personal experience of God is only partly sound. From almost every page of the rabbinic texts it is evident that the Rabbis experienced God, and that this experience was profound and unique. But rabbinic religious experience is not the kind that is conditioned by pure "solitariness," nor has it so little of a social character as to be divided into numerous "varieties." The actual experience of God is personal; the ways of modes of experiencing God, however, are common to the group as a whole. Being common to the entire group, the modes of God-experience are expressed in value-concepts, among them such concepts as prayer, repentance, the Study of Torah. The personal experience of God through the modes crystallized by these and other value-concepts can be characterized, we expect to show, as normal mysticism (The Rabbinic Mind, p. 194).

Kadushin applies his theory to the doctrine of chosenness and shows that it does not stand as a discrete dogma on the superiority of Israel but merely to show the organic relationship of God's love, the Torah and Mitzvot to the Jewish people:

Louis Finkelstein

Louis Finkelstein (1895), chancellor of the Seminary, wrote a number of studies in rabbinics, of which the best known is his socio-economic interpretation of Pharisaism. On Judaism and contemporary problems he made many pronouncements from the platform and published popular studies and articles. He seeks to play the role of conciliator between three groups:

51 "Bhirat Yisrael Bdivrei Hazal", PRA, VIII (1941) 20-25.
1) the various Conservative factions, 2) the several religious Jewish groups and 3) Judaism and the other world faiths. He is devoting much energy to the latter cause through the inter-faith organizations he has initiated and fostered.

As a religious statesman he places emphasis on the common elements that unite Jewish groups. He attempted such a statement in his speech on "What is Conservative Judaism" (PUSY 1957, 9-16). His popular The Beliefs and Practices of Judaism (1945) states that "conservative" rabbis "maintain that Jewish law is a living tradition, subject to change, but they insist that such changes must be made in accordance with traditional canons for the interpretation and development of rabbinic law" (p. 14). After a traditional outline of incorporeality, timelessness and omnipresence of a personal God, he speaks of man's immortality as "the endless persistence of human personality" (p. 24). Israel was chosen to be a suffering servant of God. The dogmas of Maimonides, Hasdai Crescas and Joseph Albo are listed with the remark that there is wide latitude of interpretation on this score among Orthodox and Conservative Jews. Concerning the Reform Columbus platform of 1937 he remarks it "does not contain much to which orthodox and conservative groups can take exception" (p. 27). This is followed by an outline of holidays and observances.

In one of his articles on "Judaism" 52 all we find on Conservatism is that it refuses to codify its beliefs (p. 79).

Another article on Judaism in *The Religions of Democracy: Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism in Creed and Life* (1941, pp. 3-87) is little more than a digest of his beliefs. A similar article in a collection that includes additional world faiths \(^5\) seeks to prove that both democracy and science are rooted in prophetic Judaism. "Democracy in its modern sense — as a way of life — stems not from Greek political theory, but from the religious teachings of the Hebrew prophets" (p. 162). Science, too, is influenced by the prophetic persistence in the face of obstacles and its search to discover God's will.

A more searching discussion of Jewish theology we find in his lecture in memory of Milton Steinberg (*PRA XIV*, 1950, 284-95).

Stripped to its bare essentials, the underlying idea of the Mosaic tradition is that the Universe and man have a history. Time is not a succession of change events, but an ordered affair. Life is not an accident, but the product of thought. The universal process which includes all matter and all living things has meaning, purpose, direction. God is not only the beginning of all beginnings, He is also the goal of all goals. The spirit gave birth to matter, the world process is matter striving to become spirit (pp. 284f).

The faith of Moses is unique among those of the world in its emphasis on the place of visible action in human life. It seeks to express its underlying ideas in action symbols rather than in any other type of symbolism. To say, "I believe," does not in the Mosaic tradition confer any benefit on the speaker; the question is whether the belief influences his behavior. Nothing is gained by announcing that all men are made in God's image, un-

less that truth is reflected in the treatment of every man as the child of God, who bears His image (p. 286).

To counteract the pagan tendencies which distract man from daily service of God, or Kiddush Hashem, we must surmount the divisions in Jewish life, as well as join interfaith activities. 54

We can seek, and I believe find, the help and cooperation of our brothers in the Roman and Eastern Catholic Churches, in the Protestant denominations, in the Moslem and Eastern religions. Together with them, we may yet wrest the world and mankind from destruction (p. p. 294f.).

The same theme of combating neo-paganism by rabbinism and a sense of obligation is elaborated in an article in Commentary (II, 1946, 537-46) "that each of us live a life of service subordinating personal desire to the will of God, the perfection of our soul and the improvement of the social order" (p. 545).

The idea that Judaism "sees the Will of God sanctifying men through his commandments, rather than through the verbal confession of faith" (p. 104), is brought out in "The Role of Dogma in Judaism" (The Thomist V, 1943, 103-10). "It is basic agreement in concepts when expressed in action and religious symbolism which gives Judaism unity not only in any one period but across the ages" (p. 110).

Ben Zion Bokser

Ben Zion Bokser (1907) rabbi of Forest Hills Jewish Center

54 See also his "The Jewish Doctrine of Human Immortality" Harvard Divinity School Bulletin, Harvard, 1944-45, 5-34.
since 1935, editor of the Eternal Light radio program, author of several scholarly and popular volumes, also published a collection of his essays in Jewish theology, Judaism and Modern Man (1957).

Bokser characterizes Reconstructionism as secular. "In this doctrine, religion is a folk creation; its theologies are folk myths, and its rituals are folkways. Secularism has here invaded the sanctum sanctorum of religion itself, and remade it in its own image" (p. 19). Such naturalistic views can only lead to disintegration (p. 142).

Modern man, like the man of antiquity, has only two alternatives in his interpretation of life. He can regard the life about him as self-sufficient, which makes him a naturalist, a secularist or a humanist; or he can see the world about him as but the glimmer of transcendent realities in which his life, in all its contexts, natural and human, fulfills itself; this is the root of my philosophy of theism. And a theist will not hesitate to ascribe divine status to any human experience which manifests those qualities that reach their fullest development in the transcendent Divine Order. Every experience of order, goodness, truth, beauty, justice, is a manifestation of God in human life. Religious observance, in so far as it enables us to experience these larger religious values, partakes of the same Divine Order. It is the same God who manifests Himself in our lives by inspiring our quest for justice, cooperation, freedom, creativity, and peace, Who moves us to affirm our quest in symbol, rite and ceremony (pp. 20f.).

Jews have a contribution to make both to Judaism and to America:

Israel's work in the world has not yet been done. There is a purpose, vital and challenging, that summons us. We shall meet that summons by making the Jewish religious idea the central force in Jewish life and by making Jewish life a leaven for growth within American civilization. Till the world has been perfected under the Kingdom of the Almighty and the Lord has been acknowledged as One, and His name One, we thus remain under a
high commitment. By acting on this commitment, American Jewry will find the elixir of abiding life. We shall create and maintain a vibrant and dynamic community and write one more glorious chapter in the mighty saga of Israel's role in the world and its contribution to world civilization (p. 150).

Along with Finkelstein and others Bokser is seeking to join forces with non-Jewish religious groups to foster religious values in the ultimate triumph of which he firmly believes (p. 69).

C. EXISTENTIALIST

Abraham J. Heschel

Abraham Joshua Heschel's (1907) studies in the German language in Jewish philosophy, prophecy and mysticism did not reach the American reading public. But after his transfer from Hebrew Union College to the Jewish Theological Seminary a succession of books from his pen caused fascination in intellectual circles. His The Earth is the Lord's: The Inner Life of the Jew in East Europe (1950) was an idealization of the spiritual life of the Shtetl which then already lay in ruins. Two more books appeared the following year: The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man and Man is not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion. Its companion volume, God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism (1956) appeared after Man's Quest for God: Studies

55 Mention should also be made of Louis M. Levitsky, who wrote A Jew Looks at America (1939), and Max Arzt, congregational rabbi for many years, professor of practical theology and vice-chancellor of the Seminary. In an article "Conservative Judaism as a Unifying Force" (CJ, V, June 1949, 10-20) he pleads for Jewish unity under the banner of tradition.
In Prayer and Symbolism (1954), largely a collection of papers previously published and expanded for this volume. 56

His Views. Heschel has been characterized as an existentialist, a mystic, a neo-Hasid, a pietist. He viewed himself as a religious philosopher who engages in situational thinking on the ineffable and advocates a leap of action.

First as to the meaning of situational thinking in which abstractions are replaced by our reactions to an involvement in realities that affect us personally.

The beginning of situational thinking is not doubt, detachment, but amazement, awe, involvement. The philosopher, accordingly, is a witness, not an accountant of other people's business. Unless we are involved, the problem is not present. Unless we are in love or remember vividly what happened to us when we were in love, we are ignorant of love. Creative thinking is not stimulated by vicarious issues but by personal problems. And so, for example, the problem of religious philosophy is not how does man arrive at an understanding of God, but rather how can we arrive at an understanding of God (God, p. 5f.).

Heschel's key concept is "the ineffable".

The ineffable inhabits the magnificent and the common, the grandiose and the tiny facts of reality alike. Some people sense this quality at distant intervals in extraordinary events; others sense it in the ordinary events, in every fold, in every nook; day after day, hour after hour... Slight and simple as things may be — a piece of paper, a morsel of bread, a word, a sigh — they hide and guard a never-ending secret: A glimpse of God? Kinship with the spirit of being? An

eternal flash of a will?

The tangible phenomena we scrutinize with our reason, the sacred and indemonstrable we overhear with the sense of the ineffable. The force that inspires readiness for self-sacrifice, the thoughts that breed humility within and behind the mind, are not identical with the logician's craftsmanship. The purity of which we never cease to dream, the untold things we insatiably love, the vision of the good for which we either die or perish alive — no reason can bound. It is the ineffable from which we draw the taste of the sacred, the joy of the imperishable (Man, pp. 4f., 9).

There are those among the interpreters of Heschel's philosophy who categorize him as neo-Hasidic and point out that the Hasidim were existentialists long before Soeren Kierkegaard, the Swedish founder of this school of thought. Whereas the latter spoke of "a leap of faith", Heschel speaks of "a leap of action". Martin Buber in Israel and Will Herberg in America are also proponents of a Jewish existentialism, but Heschel and Buber stand closest to Hasidic sources.

Heschel prefers to regard himself as a religious philosopher who employs the method of depth theology. He gives his own definition of terms. Whereas "theology starts with dogmas, philosophy begins with problems... (and) religion stresses the primacy of the person" (God, p. 4), depth theology is a process of analyzing the act of thinking, of thinking about thinking, or radical self-understanding. Conceptual theology

57 Although Will Herberg has exercised considerable influence on Conservative thought, we are omitting him because he is not identified solely with Conservatism.

58 Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations hereafter are from God in Search of Man.
erred in separating the acts of religious existence from the statements about it. Depth theology seeks to penetrate the consciousness of the pious man in order to conceive the reality behind it (p. 8).

Philosophy of religion, according to Heschel, involves elliptic thinking: like an ellipse it revolves around two polar foci, two different ways of thinking or universes of discourse: Greek philosophy and Jewish prophecy. Whereas science, the child of philosophy, views creation as a process of causality in nature, the Bible sees it as an event in the relationship between the creator and the universe that "alludes to what made nature possible, namely, an act of the freedom of God" (p. 16). Religion thus becomes a challenge to philosophy: to identify the holy which is the essence of which the good, philosophy's most exalted idea, is only the expression. "One of the goals of philosophy of religion is to stimulate a critical reassessment of philosophy from the perspective of religion" because religion goes beyond philosophy" (God, p. 18). For it "is an implication of our belief in one God to be certain that ultimately reason and revelation are both derived from the same source" (p. 19). A philosophy of Judaism is a philosophy of both ideas and events.

Heschel's approach therefore is one of viewing Judaism not so much as an object for critique and examination, but a subject, "a reality, a drama within history" (p. 22).

Heschel believes that in the Bible we can find answers to all ultimate questions.
All else is a modern commentary or Midrash. Since his writings are descriptive of what the pious man believes and therefore cannot be reduced to logical demonstration by a series of propositions, we shall not attempt to reconstruct a system of thought; instead we shall present his devout pronouncements and aphorisms.

God. Three trails lead to God: one can sense his presence in nature, in the Bible and in sacred deeds (p. 31).

Three aspects of nature command our attention: its power, its beauty and its grandeur. The sublimity of nature is an act of God. Wonder or radical amazement at the marvels of nature and history bring one closer to Him. The mystery of the vast unknown horizons of human knowledge add to our appreciation of Him.

The whole earth is full of His glory, or Shekhinah. Certainty of the realness of God comes about in moments of insight through raising from the depths of the mind an ontological presupposition "which makes the response of the whole person to the mystery and transcendence of living intellectually understandable" (p. 114). "The living encounter with reality takes place on a level that precedes conceptualization, on a level that is responsive, immediate, preconceptual, and presymbolic. Theory, speculation, generalization, and hypothesis, are efforts to clarify and to validate the insights which preconceptual experience provides" (God,p.115).

"God is a Being beyond which no other exists or is possible. It means further One, unique, eternal" (p. 125). God is alive and has a deep concern for man. There are times, rare moments,
when God is propitious and He reveals Himself to man. In fact, "religion consists of God's question and man's answer" (p. 136).

"Sensitivity to God is given to a broken heart, to a mind that rises above its own wisdom" (p. 159). "The power of religious truth is a moment of insight and its content is oneness or love. Source and content may be conveyed in one word: transcendence" (p. 162).

Torah. When the Jews stood at Sinai and heard God's voice, it was like no other event in the history of man. For it was a moment in which God succeeded in reaching man: an event to God and an event to man (God, p. 199).

Judaism is a religion of history, a religion of time. The God of Israel was not found primarily in the facts of nature. He spoke through events in history. While the deities of other peoples were associated with places or things, the God of the prophets was the God of events: The redeemer from Slavery, the Revealer of the Torah, manifesting Himself in events of history rather than in things or places (p. 200).

It was the glory of Greece to have discovered the idea of cosmos, the world of space; it was the achievement of Israel to have experienced history, the world of time. Judaism claims that time is exceedingly relevant. Elusive as it may be, it is pregnant with the seeds of eternity. Significant to God and decisive for the destiny of man are the things that happen in time, in history. Biblical history is the triumph of time over space. Israel did not grow into being through a series of accidents. Nature itself did not evolve out of a process, by necessity; it was called into being by an event, an act of God. History is the supreme witness for God (p. 206).

Sacred Deeds. Judaism, according to Heschel, teaches us how to live, how to act; it is a "science of deeds."

A Jew is asked to take a leap of action rather than a leap of thought. He is asked to surpass
his needs, to do more than he understands in order to understand more than he does. In carrying out the word of the Torah he is ushered into the presence of spiritual meaning. Through the ecstasy of deeds he learns to be certain of the hereness of God. Right living is a way to right thinking.

The sense of the ineffable, the participation in Torah and Israel, the leap of action — they all lead to the same goal. Callousness to the mystery of existence, detachment from Torah and Israel, cruelty and profanity of living, alienate the Jew from God. Response to the wonder, participation in Torah and Israel, discipline in daily life, bring us close to Him (pp. 282f.).

Heschel abhors religious behaviorism, or the formalism of ceremonies that are devoid of Kavanah.

A religious act is something in which the soul must be able to participate; out of which inner devotion, Kavanah, must evolve. But what kavanah should I entertain if entering the sukkah is a mere ceremony?

Let us be frank. Too often a ceremony is the homage which disbelief pays to faith. Do we want such homage? (Man's Quest, p. 114).

Israel. It is clear that peoplehood plays a secondary role in Heschel's philosophy. For Judaism to him is mainly spirit.

Israel's experience of God has not evolved from search. Israel did not discover God. Israel was discovered by God. Judaism is God's quest for man. The Bible is a record of God's approach to His people. More statements are found in the Bible about God's love for Israel than about Israel's love for God.

We have not chosen God; He has chosen us. There is no concept of a chosen God but there is the idea of a chosen people. The idea of a chosen people does not suggest the preference for a people based upon a discrimination among a number of peoples. We do not say that we are a superior people. The "chosen people" means a people approached and chosen by God. The significance of this term is genuine in relation to God rather than in relation to other peoples. It signifies
not a quality inherent in the people but a relationship between the people and God (God, pp. 425f.).

PHILOSOPHY OF JEWISH LAW

Thus far we treated Conservative thought as it was expressed by leading rabbis. Jewish law was mentioned on many occasions as part of each system of thought. No other issue exercised the minds of leading Conservatives as did the problem of a philosophy of Jewish law. We shall therefore supplement our previous discussions with a special topical treatment of this important matter. We shall take as our text the extensive discussion of the subject by the Rabbinical Assembly "Toward a Philosophy of Conservative Judaism" (PRA XII, 1948, 110-92) and will supplement it with other relevant information.

As things stand now the Conservative movement seems to have reached an impasse. On the one hand there are those who insist on the authority of Halakha and would institute change only in accordance with the rules for interpretation provided in that very law. To the other extreme are those who are prepared for a complete abrogation of Halakha by shifting authority from hermeneutics to modern conceptions of law involving a consideration of existing conditions and letting a body of rabbinic and lay leaders promulgate new laws.


These opposing views reflect a polarity of authority based on the Book versus authority lodged in people. In between these two polar views there are intermediate shadings of opinion.

The traditional view has so far predominated in the decisions that have emanated from the Committee on Law of the Rabbinical Assembly. Although within the organization liberal tendencies are very strong, and the majority of centrists would be happy if a modification of traditional attitudes were possible, the official stand has so far been dominated by the traditionalists. Clearly the center party in this triple coalition is not yet willing to tip the scale appreciably; they are satisfied to shift the blame for inaction upon men like Louis Epstein and Boaz Cohen who guided the destinies of the Law Committee after Louis Ginzberg.

The latter was unwilling to trust rabbis who by training are not fully competent in Jewish law, let alone an "ignorant laity, whose ignorance is compounded by indifference." Seminary graduates are ordained to teach and preach, but they have no Smikha, or authority to pass on questions of Jewish law. Although called upon to add a year or two of study leading to Smikha, thus far the Seminary has resisted the idea of Smikha. The result is that even where the community turns to the Conservative rabbi for legal action, many Conservative rabbis turn over such matters as divorce to Orthodox rabbis.

In his essay "Toward a Philosophy of Jewish Law" Boaz

Cohen sets down the following seven principles.

1. The divine origin of the law. Revelation is "the internal experience of the prophet permeated by the divine spirit, rather than a perceptible event in the external world". This belief must be based on an act of faith.

2. The immutability of the law — it is not subject to abrogation.

3. Historical development — the law changed in the past and will do so in the future.

4. The concept of Kneset Yisrael — that the Jewish people must be regarded as one community with respect to the essential principles of Jewish law and observance.

5. Primacy of the Talmud over the Poskim, or later Halakhists.

6. The concept of authority — only a body of experts is qualified to pass on matters of law.

7. The method of interpretation that seeks to preserve the spirit as well as the letter of the law.

Similar traditionalist views are held by Louis M. Epstein in his books The Jewish Marriage Contract (1927) and Lish'elat Haagunah (1940). It was Epstein's formula for a change in the marriage contract that recently prevailed in the first major act of interpretation of the law by the Conservative movement.

We shall now return to the full-scale discussion of the subject in 1948 by the Rabbinical Assembly. Theodor Friedman (PRA, XII, 1948, 112-20) steered a middle course. The choice, as he saw it, was between a creeping paralysis or regulated
growth. B. Cohen's metaphysical presupposition of law as the revealed divine will is unhistorical because Judaism eschews dogma. Actually, first came the development of norms of conduct and only long after that came the ascription of divine origin to Mitzvot. Yet without a religious discipline and regimen Judaism ceases to exist. Therefore, on the one hand, all laws relating to the inequality of women, like all other laws which run counter to our highest social and ethical values, must be superseded. On the other hand, new practices have become sanctified despite the fact that traditional law did not sanction them, such as the wearing of a head covering or the Hebrew language. Friedman proposed that a guide on Jewish law be prepared, presenting both the strict and lenient interpretations of the law.

Isaac Klein (ibid, pp. 129-34) took a traditionalist stand. The principles upon which we must build are three: 1. the primacy of Jewish law and religion. We are not dealing with folkways but with religious obligations; 2. a scientific study of our sacred literature; 3. an attitude of piety and respect for law; first there must be a core of law, then a certain freedom in exercising it may be permitted.

William Greenfield (pp. 121-28) defended the Reconstructionist position. We are willing to change the law, he stated, for the preservation of Judaism. The young are leaving us. Not five in one hundred observe the Sabbath or the dietary laws. Not one in one hundred cares about our decisions. We insist that we represent adjectiveless Judaism and refuse to act. The Orthodox did likewise and emptied their synagogues
into Conservative or Reform congregations or — what is worst — into the streets. Let us not repeat their mistake. Epstein is willing to make changes but he waits for a Sanhedrin in Palestine. Agus wants Takkanot, ordinances, but he is waiting for Tshuva, respect for law, to come first. Gordis insists on minimum standards. But it is too late for all that. It is each man to himself. If the law is supernaturally divine, let us join the Orthodox camp. The solution therefore is to set up a code of principles, not of minima. Let us have unity in attitude if not uniformity of practice. Israel can survive differences; it cannot survive indifference.

In the discussion that followed, Ralph Simon suggested the need for a Gemara, of majority and minority opinions, not of a Shulhan Arukh.

Agus hoped for a synthesis between the demands of law and the demands of life. An academy consisting of scholars plus representative laymen would pass ordinances and would invite the consent of the people. In every congregation we could form a core of observant members. Above all, let us not yield to the demands for negative decisions — to permit riding on the Sabbath or the use of an organ. Our legal decisions must be of a positive nature, telling the people how to act as loyal Jews.

Albert Gordon urged Conservative rabbis to tell the community "how we ought to live". His studies of Minneapolis Jewry showed that only 15% buy Kosher meat and even the families that send their children to the Talmud Torah there have a

62See his "Laws as Standards", C.J. VI (March1950), 8-26; "Absolences in Jewish Ritual Law", ibid. VII (June1951), 4-12.
minimum of home observance.

Louis M. Epstein pleaded with his colleagues not to blame the Committee on Law. All you want us to say is Yes, not No. If this is the spirit, get a pail and whitewash the vacillation of the rabbis. We must abide by three principles: unity in the movement, a statement of guiding principles, and recognition of the authority of Jewish law.

A resolution was finally passed to augment the membership of the Committee on Law to make it more representative and to circulate both the majority and minority opinions of that committee among the rabbis.

Two years later, in a report of a Special Committee on Scope of the Law Committee, the following recommendation was made. "Only unanimous decisions of the Committee on Law and Standards are binding on all concerned. Whenever a majority and a minority opinion are handed down the Conservative Jew has the option to follow either...In actual practice unanimous decisions on controversial issues are inconceivable because of the composition of the Committee" (RA Bulletin, April 1950, 10).

While this represents definite progress, it is only on the procedural level. Substantive law now awaits action by the Conservatives.

RABBIS AND LAYMEN

A study of rabbinic attitudes showed that Conservative rabbis, as a middle class group, hold liberal views on general

63 J. Zeitlin, Disciples of the Wise (1945).
civic issues, recognize the linkage of religion with human society and have a bi-focality of approach to tradition — they support both authority and change. Another more recent study\(^{64}\) found that whereas in the past a majority of Conservative rabbis came from Orthodox homes and the Rabbinical Assembly is even now comprised of rabbis who in the main have Orthodox leanings, in 1955 almost half of the students of the rabbinical school of the Jewish Theological Seminary were already from Conservative homes and some had been members of the LTF (Leadership Training Fellowship) of the Seminary. A new kind of Conservative rabbi is therefore emerging, one who is largely a product of the denomination itself.

It may be in place here to observe a fundamental difference between Reform and Conservatism. Whereas the former rejected rabbinism and advocated a return to the Bible, the Conservative leadership, especially the traditionalists among them, recognize rabbinic Judaism as the guide for our present day. From Schechter to Finkelstein rabbinism represented the essence of Judaism. Conservative thought is thus rabbinic lore upheld by rabbis.

All the thinkers mentioned thus far are rabbis. Laymen seem to solve their problems on an empirical level. Thoughtful Europeans observe that it is generally the greatness of the American idea to reject all ideologies which have wrought so much havoc and caused incessant wars in Europe.\(^{65}\) In vain


do we search the publications of the United Synagogue — the lay organization — for a laymen's philosophy. The present generation is empirical, avoiding abstract theories. Only among the early lay leaders were there men who addressed themselves to the pure science of Judaism. Elias L. Solomon was in accord with Schechter’s views (The Master’s Bequest, 1944). Cyrus L. Sulzberger in an article "For our Children’s Children — A Layman’s Faith" (Menorah Journal, XII, 1926, 170-174) maintains that "neither mores nor the God within has any relationship to the eternal verities". What we have to turn to is the God of Maimonides. Prayer must not turn into excessive introspection; rather it must lead us to consider our shortcomings.

However, men like Joseph Blumenthal (1834-1901), public servant, philanthropist, founder and first president of the Seminary, Jacob H. Schiff (1847-1920), leading banker and philanthropist, Louis Marshall (1856-1929), attorney, communal and civic leader, and Felix M. Warburg (1871-1937), banker and philanthropist, trustee of the Seminary, exercised a powerful influence on Jewish life but left no statements of their views on Judaism. The three latter were identified mainly with the Reform group, yet gave unstinting support to the Seminary.

A recent pronouncement by a layman is worthy of note. Ben J. Lax, vice-president of the United Synagogue, presented a paper on "My Father’s House" at the 1959 biennial convention, as part of a symposium on a philosophy of the Conservative

66C. Adler, J. Schiff (1921)
In his imaginative presentation he left the foundation of God, Torah and Israel and the roof of faith intact, but engaged in extensive remodeling and expansion. He added many windows looking out upon the non-Jewish world, acquired added acreage for summer camping, installed shelves to accommodate books on the religions and cultures of the family of nations, and added a pew next to his in the synagogue for his wife.

Another participant in the above symposium, Selig Adler, professor of American history at the University of Buffalo, supported Gordis' view "to enlarge the concept of Catholic Israel to include all who are concerned with the perpetuation of the law".

Such as the meager declarations of faith by laymen. But the rabbis have already produced a substantial literature that reflects the spiritual searchings of a generation that is racked by a myriad conflicting ideas.

Conclusion. In this chapter we have reviewed the major efforts by the top leadership of the Conservative movement to formulate an outlook upon the world and Judaism. What does it all add up to?

We have shown that all attempts at a formulation of the common elements of Conservatism have thus far failed to be generally accepted. This must not deter us from making our own attempt, based on our study contained in this chapter.

68 Ibid (Spring 1960), 5.
Our major effort will be in the direction of discovering the common elements upon which there is consensus among Conservative thinkers. Such an undertaking is essential as a guide for a program for the Conservative school.

**The Consensus**

Most Conservative thinkers seem to be agreed on the following points, although they may not explicitly have stated them.

1. **Peoplehood.** Perhaps the greatest contribution of Conservatism to Jewish religious thought has been the emphasis on the folk elements of Jewish tradition. Schechter's Catholic Israel, Kaplan's conception of Judaism as a civilization and many other notions held by Conservative thinkers all point to the insight that Judaism is not a theology but the way of life of the Jewish people.

2. **Religion.** Conservatism is one of the three religious trends in American Jewry. It posits a belief in God and a commitment to practice Jewish religious traditions.

3. **Continuity and Change.** This principle touches the core of the Conservative outlook. It relates to the body of traditions, beliefs and laws transmitted to us by previous generations. While taking a positive stance on that historic body of traditions, Conservatism insists that tradition has not been static in the past, that it underwent constant development in an evolutionary manner, and that it will continue to be dynamic and changeable.

4. **The Bible and Rabbinism.** The Bible is only the beginning of our sacred literature. It cannot serve as the sole source of tradition. The entire body of rabbinic literature,
the Halakha and the Agadah, the Talmud as well as its later codifiers and commentators, must all be recognized as the depositories of the millenial striving of our people to evolve a Jewish way of life. The chain of Jewish tradition must not be broken; it must be further continued and evolved.

5. Modernism. The term "modernism" applies to the method of interpreting our tradition. It implies a scientific study of sources based on the latest methods of historical, juridical and sociological research. Our study of the past and our plans for the future must be faced with the open mind of a modern person who is fully aware of the intellectual climate of our day.

6. Pluralism. Of the three denominations the Conservative is the most receptive to the greatest variety of viewpoints. It is not monistic, allowing only one particular conception of Judaism. It is pluralistic, making it possible for almost every positive and creative approach to Judaism to find a place within its fold. Conservatism is of the nature of a continuum extending all the way from Orthodoxy to Reform and to viewpoints that are on the brink of secularism. This latitude explains the conscious resistance of the movement to the adoption of restrictive platforms. This is perhaps the meaning of the phrase "adjectiveless Judaism" used by Adler and others. Every Jew, with the few exceptions to be noted below, can find a rightful place within this middle-of-the-road movement.

7. Tolerance. The imperative need for tolerance and respect for differences in views on Judaism is a corollary of
the first proposition. In order to make possible the coexistence of a variety of viewpoints, it is necessary that each Conservative Jew learn to recognize the legitimacy of opposing philosophies. This is another way of saying that Conservatism is a liberal movement that allows freedom of inquiry.

8. Outer Limits. Its broad liberalism and tolerance notwithstanding, Conservatism represents an affirmative approach to the national and religious manifestations of Judaism. It would seem, therefore, that certain negativistic approaches are out of bounds for the Conservatives. Such, for example, would be the attitude of the American Council for Judaism in combating all nationalist activities of the Jewish people. Similarly, it would seem that fundamentalist Orthodoxy could not find a place within the Conservative fold, since they claim sole possession of truth and negate any deviations from it. Finally, the demand for tolerance and liberalism would exclude any one not willing to grant the right of every Jew to determine for himself his particular interpretation of Judaism.
Chapter III
TRENDS IN THE CONSERVATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

We have shown in the last chapter that the Conservative movement has yielded a rich harvest of ideas on the meaning of Judaism for the modern Jew. Has the movement done equally well for its children? Has it given much thought to education? The story of contributions toward a Conservative philosophy of education will be traced in the following manner.

First comes a description of the Conservative school system, with especial emphasis on the national policy-making machinery. This will afford us a picture of the social milieu within which a philosophy is developing.

We then present a brief review of four major philosophies of education in America. This is followed by a fairly detailed review of the several schools of educational thought among Conservatives. Attention is also directed to the evolution of notions regarding the best way to organize the school system.

The last section sets forth the official objectives adopted by the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education. A comparative study of other objectives is then made.

Evolution of the Conservative School System

Its Beginnings. In 1914, a year after the formation of the United Synagogue of America, a most dismal picture of the educational scene was revealed. Of twenty-four affiliated congregations, five had Sunday schools only. The remaining

1USY Report, 1913-1919, pp. 32-44.
nineteen congregations operated both Sunday and weekday schools, with only 20 to 30 percent of the enrollment in the weekday Hebrew departments. Only seven had held graduation ceremonies, twelve had confirmation. The combined enrollment was 4,481 pupils — 2,385 boys, 2,096 girls.

This report was presented at a meeting of the United Synagogue by Mordecai M. Kaplan for the education committee. He stated that the rabbis found difficulty in organizing weekday classes; money for teachers' salaries was not available; there was only apathy and indifference on the part of the parents. Solomon Schechter and Louis Ginzberg took part in the discussion. A decision was made to foster Bar Mitzvah and discourage confirmation. Plans were laid for the rabbis of the larger congregations to meet and to prepare curricula.

Present Situation. Four decades later the Conservative school system in the United States was larger than the Reform or Orthodox school systems. It consisted of some 650 schools with an enrollment of 213,719, or 38.6% of the total Jewish school population of 553,600. Of the total weekday enrollment of 261,456, fully 126,793 or 48.5% were in Conservative schools. An additional 85,544 attended one-day and 1,382 were in 13 day schools. Such has been the extraordinary numerical advance. Moreover, whereas in 1914 the lack of textbooks on religion was lamented, in ten months of 1956 the sale of textbooks by the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish

2Dushkin A.M. and Engelman, U.Z., Jewish Education in the United States, 1959, p. 58
education brought in $185,000. 3

The following report on the annual ongoing survey was rendered in February 1959. 4 Questionnaires were mailed to 645 congregations, of whom 360, or 55.8% replied. Of these, 351 were in the United States and nine in Canada. These schools advanced considerably in standards of admission and hours per week. Eighty-six percent required weekday Hebrew school attendance by a certain basic age. These requirements ranged from 6 to 11 years old. One and a half percent required attendance from 6 years of age, 6% from 7 years, 53% – 8 years, and 39.5% – 9 years. Class hours per week, exclusive of Sabbath services, varied from 1½ to 10 hours. Less than 3 hours per week were required in 8.5% of the schools, 3 to 4½ hours in 28.5%, 5-6 hours in 56.5% and 6½ to 10 hours in 6.2%. The rule in a majority of cases thus was to admit to weekday school at age eight and to require five to six hours instruction per week. In most schools attendance requirements applied alike to boys as to girls. The Sunday school has been eliminated to a great extent. In 74% of the schools pupils were not permitted to attend only once a week after a certain age. 5

Commission on Jewish Education. It took many years before a vigorous national organization for the promotion of Conser-

3USCJE Minutes, May 10, 1956.
enerative education was formed. The constitution of the United Synagogue provided for a standing committee on education.6 At the second annual meeting of that national body M. M. Kaplan reported for the committee on education, as outlined above. Soon thereafter Julius H. Greenstone7 was elected chairman. He served in this capacity till 1928 when he was replaced by Alter F. Landesman. Almost every year the chairman reported to the convention on the activities of the committee and some discussion ensued. The activities consisted of the publication of several textbooks, work on curricula and standards, the creation of regional districts and a teachers’ registry. But throughout a long period there was a note of frustration and despondency in the reports, due to the lack of cooperation on the part of most rabbis, the lack of funds and the generally low standards.8

In 1920 a resolution was adopted that "the Executive Council establish the office of superintendent of education whose duty it will be to advise the various schools connected with the United Synagogue concerning their management on all matters that will help raise their standards. He is also to visit the various institutions as it may be necessary." But not until 1926 do we read of an educational department with Jacob

6 In 1928 Max Arzt recommended that the Rabbinical Assembly should also have a standing committee on education. "Some problems of the Congregational School", PRA, II (1928), 143-48.

7 He was chairman in 1917; who headed the committee in 1915 and 1916 it is not stated.


9 USY Report, VIII (1920), 82.
B. Grossman as educational director.  

Grossman has been an active member of the education committee for many years and in 1919 the curriculum he had prepared for the Educational Alliance in New York, where he worked, was circulated among the rabbis. He visited more than one hundred communities and organized six regions. The Long Island region had expanded to the point where a paid director was contemplated. Instead, a lack of funds caused the resignation, in September, 1927, of Grossman as National education director. Samuel M. Cohen, executive director of the United Synagogue, was asked to carry on the educational work along with his other duties.

In 1929 Cohen made the following statement as part of his general report: "We must bend the greater part of our energies to the creation of the literary material, textbooks, methods, and curricula organized for the specific needs of our congregational schools. We must recognize that the congregational school has a different aim from the community school. In addition to everything that the community Hebrew school may strive for, the congregational school also has this important objective — to fit the child for the synagogue and Jewish communal life." 

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10 We do not know in what year he was appointed. The convention reports for 1920-25 are not available.

11 USY Report, XIV (1926), 23
12 Ibid, XV (1927), 19.
In about 1938 the Rabbinical Assembly joined the United Synagogue to form a joint commission on Jewish education with Landesman and Morris Goodblatt as co-chairmen. An association of United Synagogue schools in greater New York was formed on November 26, 1940. Thirty-five congregations joined at the first meeting on April 20, 1941. Seven committees were appointed. Arthur Neulander was chairman of the committee on curriculum which began work on a tentative five-year curriculum.

In September of 1945 Abraham E. Millgram was appointed educational director and an intensive program of publication and curriculum work began.

At first the national organization operated as the Joint Commission on Jewish Education of the United Synagogue of America and the Rabbinical Assembly. For several years there was a struggle for independence from domination by the executive director of the United Synagogue and for funds to operate. In 1948 the Commission gained independence, and soon income from publications spelled financial prosperity. In 1946 the name was changed to United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education (USCJE). In the same year a Board of Education of the Metropolitan Council of the United Synagogue was organized to cooperate with the Jewish Education Committee.

15 *PUSY*, 1940, p. 3.

16 Cohen, Samuel M. "The United Synagogue Schools of Greater New York" *SYC*, II (June 1941), 11ff.

17 The above and the balance of the history of the Commission is taken from the typescript Minutes.
which provided a consultant. In 1957 regional boards existed in Philadelphia with a paid director, as well as in Long Island, Chicago, South New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Southwest Pacific and New England.

At first the Commission was comprised of eight representatives each from the two constituent organizations. In 1947 the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary was invited to send three representatives. In 1950 the Women's league was asked to appoint one representative through the United Synagogue. In 1954 the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue were allowed ten instead of eight delegates each, the Teachers Institute continued with three, four more were ex officio (professional heads of United Synagogue, Rabbinical Assembly, Teachers Institute, and USCJE) and two were added to represent the Educators Assembly (EA).

Alter F. Landesman served as chairman of the Commission for nineteen years until he was replaced on October 21, 1947 by Azriel Eisenberg. Ario S. Hyams took over two years later, to be followed by Elias Charry in 1951, Henry R. Goldberg in 1957 and Jack Cohen in 1960.

Committees. The Committee on Objectives, Standards and Curriculum acted as the instrument for policy making on educational philosophy and curriculum. The other committees were: Textbook Publication, Hebrew Textbooks, Music, Synagogue School Editorial, Foundation School, placement and Finance. Special Committees were also appointed on occasion, such as Prayer Book, Audio-Visual Aids, etc. In addition, for each book submitted for publication there were at least three
In 1954 a Committee on Evaluation was selected to assess the first decade of the Commission's activities. Some of the outcomes of the work of this committee were internal reorganization, an on-going survey, an accreditation program for schools and expansion of regional activities by educational conferences and a board of consultants.

Special mention should be made of the Commission publication Synagogue School. It was first published in February, 1943, as the Jewish School and Democracy and changed its name in January, 1946. It had paid subscriptions ranging from 500 in 1947 to 4,000 in 1953 and 2,500 in 1958.

The Educators Assembly. On November 18, 1948, Moshe Davis suggested to the Commission the organization of an assembly for Conservative Teachers and Principals. It was found difficult to organize the teachers. In December, 1951 a group of principals met at the convention of the Rabbinical Assembly and constituted themselves into a provisional organization. In March of 1953 the first annual convention of the Educators Assembly (EA) took place at Atlantic City. Such conventions have taken place every year thereafter.

Philosophies of Education in America

For the purposes of our discussion we have adopted the up-to-date and refined classification of American philosophies of education established by Theodore Brameld. Brameld re-
cognizes four major trends in American educational philosophy: perennialism, essentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism. He arrives at this four-fold division by applying to each of them the test of cultural relevance. In such cultural perspective he identifies perennialism with regressivism, essentialism with conservatism, progressivism with liberalism and reconstructionism with radicalism.

Actually these philosophies are much more complex. They are each composed of a number of historical strains, and they overlap in some respects. For purposes of systematic presentation Brameld analyzes each school of thought on the basis of two general topics, each of which is divided into four specific ones, thus: philosophies - history, ontology, epistemology, axiology; educational beliefs - background, theory of learning, curriculum, social control. Our summary follows this outline.

Perennialism. Perennialism finds its source in the idealism of Plato, the hylomorphism (matter and form) of Aristotle and the synthesis of reason and revelation by Thomas Aquinas. The perennialist ontology of changeless and universal forms leads to an epistemology of search after the truths contained in these timeless self-evident certainties and to an axiology of eternal values. There are ecclesiastic perennialists who believe in the supernatural, and lay perennialists who do not venture outside the laws of nature. At present the church leaders of this philosophy are men like J. McGucken or F. A. Ryan of the Catholic persuasion. The secular neo-Thomists or neo-scholastics are Robert M. Hutchins, Mortimer J. Adler and
These educators believe in mental discipline. In their view a liberal education consists in liberation from the brute self to the heights of pure rationality. Education is preparation for adult life. Rote memory and character training are stressed. The Great Books are the best means for training the mind in ideas that have universal application. Control of the school and of society should be lodged in a leader who knows Truth, Goodness and Beauty — in short, in a philosopher-king.

God, eternal verities and the wisdom of the ages are the foundations of perennialism.

Essentialism. Essentialism brings together two ostensibly implacable foes, realism and idealism. The objective realist who maintains that reality is a material substance, and the objective idealist who contrariwise identifies reality with a spiritual substance nevertheless join in the correspondence theory of knowledge, namely that our individual judgments must correspond to objective fact. Values, too, are derived from an objective source, whether from the categorical imperative of the idealist Emanuel Kant or the ethical determinism — that past experience determines conduct — of social scientists like Machiavelli or W. G. Sumner ("whatever is is right").

From Erasmus and John Locke to W. T. Harris, W. C. Bagley, N. Demiashkevich, Isaac Kandel, or Henry C. Morrison all these educators insist on imparting to the learner the essentials of the Social heritage. They favor the traditional structured
curriculum of social and physical studies whereby the student absorbs the given subject matter and then represents it according to his capacity. Social control is based on an individualistic democracy; in the school, authority is exercised through line and staff.

The tried and tested heritage of skills, facts and values that have come down to us through modern civilization are the pillars of essentialism.

**Progressivism.** Whereas the first two philosophies have been in practical operation for many centuries, progressivism is a recent American invention by John Dewey. True, the sources of progressivism go back all the way to Heraclitus' principle of change and Protagoras' notion of relativity. The major characteristic, however, of this new philosophy is its disregard of cosmology and metaphysics and its concentration on man and society. Viewed thus, experience — human life in action, in struggle, in change — is the most crucial reality. Experience is dynamic, rhythmic, temporal and spatial. The task of epistemology becomes one of scientific inquiry, of analyzing, criticizing, choosing among alternatives, axiologically a thing is good if it works, if it turns out to be true as the fruit of intelligent activity. The highest good is democracy.

Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbart and Froebel, Francis Parker, John Dewey, W. Kilpatrick, B. Bode, G.S. Counts H. Rugg, C. Washburne and many other names fill the roster of progressivist educators. The school, according to them, should be a laboratory in which all human experience is in-
telligently tested. The curriculum dissolves subject matter into critical experiences based on projects or units of work; it is not structured or fixed but always fluid and emergent. The focus of attention is the whole child with his varied needs and interests. The school is run on principles of democracy, of freedom plus order. Society is not planned, but always planning through shared experience.

Progressivism centers on man as an intelligent being.

Reconstructionism. Reconstructionism is an extension of progressivism from the present into the future and from the child into the community. It savors the radicalism of action-thinkers and the utopianism of future-oriented philosophies. It too had its forerunners in ancients like Plato in his Republic, St. Augustine in his City of God, and the more recent beliefs of Marx, Engels, Harold Laski, D. Riesman and L. Mumford; and educators like John L. Childs, H. Rugg, K. D. Benne, O. Smith and O. Stanley. Theodore Brameld systematized this philosophy quite recently.

Reconstructionism also emphasizes the society of man as the most relevant reality. It espouses theories of cultural behaviorism and evolutionism. In human culture group conflict, group allegiances, group conditioners are the most potent realities. History, its social struggles, its contraction and expansion of freedom is such a reality. In this context the future, too, is a reality to be reckoned with. The most outstanding fact is that we live in a crisis culture. Epistemology's task is organismic: to seek goals, to apprehend by intuition, to fathom the irrational and subconscious. The
highest value is social self-realization, want-satisfactions rooted in the proclivities of individuals and groups to seek and achieve goals.

The school must stand as a social vanguard. It must strive for renascence of modern culture through sober realism and visionary idealism. In a revolutionary age and a crisis culture it must seek commitment to the welfare of the common man, with freedom and equality, abundance and opportunity for all. The curriculum should be built in successive years around a core of economic-political studies, science, or human relations. The student should be allowed to start with his own problems in the particular area of study; the group should then proceed to arrive at normative solutions through research and discussion. The aim of social control should be emancipation from ideology, from accepted ways of thinking and doing, leading toward reconstruction of life. The group, not a single leader, should enforce discipline.

Reconstructionism is the youngest among modern philosophies of education. It seeks to build a better society partly through the instrumentality of the school.

**Conservative Philosophy of Education**

Philosophers and Technicians. Just as a large number of ideologists of American Jewish life sprang from conservative circles, so also most of the schools of thought on Jewish education clustered around this movement. It was perhaps the liberal permissive and experimentalist spirit of a movement.

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that embraced thinkers from extreme theism to naturalism that encouraged a free flow of ideas. Neither the Orthodox nor the Reform groups produced as many educational theorists as did the Conservatives. During the many years that M. Kaplan headed the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary it was a center of attraction for all free spirits.

Yet one must correct this perspective by hastily adding that with all the philosophizing American Jewry generally did on Jewish education, we have not yet reached the stage of operating on a philosophical level. Jewish education is still more of a craft than a profession. Most teachers and administrators tend to pick up "tricks of the trade" in the course of their work, instead of stopping to ascertain the why and wherefores, the basic assumptions on which their practice is grounded. More is done on the level of technique than on principle. Although much progress has been made since Benderly's days, his observation of a quarter of a century ago still largely holds. He wrote: "What we really have today is a sort of headless educational system, ganglionic in its functioning, with a minimum of cerebration; nature's experiment along those lines with the elephant is not very encouraging". This situation is reflected in the professional journal of Conservative educators, Synagogue School, where the number of philosophical treatments in seventeen years of publication is negligible. Philosophers have not

21 B. Edidin, PRAJE (1947), 7-9.
22 On the distinction between a craft and a profession see P. Phenix, Philosophy of Education, pp. 158f.
23 JE, VI (March 1935), 7.
had an easy time in Jewish education. Witness the exodus from the field of men like I. Berkson who ended up by giving their best to general education. While the first doctoral dissertations by Jewish educators, such as those of Berkson, Gamoran and Dinin, dealt with philosophy, and some of them could boast of originality of thought, the more recent crop since the forties, with the exception of Katzoff, dealt with more technical matters. The faculties of the Jewish teachers colleges and other higher institutions of Jewish learning have as yet produced no philosophic works on education.

As our story of Conservative educational theorists unfolds, we shall find many who were unquestionably identified with the movement. We shall find others, mostly heads of local central educational agencies — men like Alexander Dushkin, Uriah Z. Engelman, Leo Honor, Jacob Golub, Edward Nudelman, Judah Pilch, Israel Rappaport — who though not directly identified with the Conservatives, worked most closely with their schools. In fact, six of the seven men just mentioned, excepting Engelman, worked with the Chicago Board of Jewish Education which served mostly Conservative congregations. With few exceptions, neither the Orthodox nor the Reform cooperated with the Bureaus. The professional heads of Bureaus, who were mostly nationally oriented, found a responsive group in the nationalist-religious Hebrew schools; it was in that direction that their efforts and thinking tended. Spiritual exiles from Orthodoxy and unattracted by Reform they found a haven in the humanistic religious thought that evolved within Conservatism. Only Horace Kallen and Berkson with their se-
cularist theories remained outside, yet their influence was considerable.

It is regrettable that most of the men whose Conservative philosophies were reviewed in the previous chapter gave so little thought to education. As rabbis, perhaps, they had neither training nor interest in educational theory. Besides, they had other problems that were primary to them. The outstanding exception are the Reconstructionists who gave education considerable attention. As to educators, whose business it is to think on education, the Conservative school is still too young to have developed an upper echelon of philosophers. Teachers and principals cling too closely to their daily routine, are too preoccupied with learning how to do things, how to pick up successful techniques, to give much thought to the whys. Besides, philosophy requires detachment from administrative detail. In general Jewish education most of the thinkers come from Bureau personnel. On that level of educational administration where planning, policy making and curriculum construction become the main job, and where a certain detachment is possible, thinking becomes an absolute necessity. Till a few years ago, the Conservatives did not even have an organization of principals. The conventions of Educators Assembly in recent years have thus far produced little of a philosophic nature; meager beginnings have been made within the past few years. In the course of time, with the emergence of supervisory and coordinating personnel on the regional and national levels, a Conservative philosophy of education will probably burgeon forth. Even the members of the USCJE are
mostly educator-technicians or rabbis; the only ones among them who essayed a philosophic approach are S. Greenberg and Jack Cohen.

Theories of Adjustment. Our forthcoming survey of Conservative educational thought will be placed within the frame of reference of general American educational philosophies, such as perennialism, essentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism. In doing so, however, we shall have to keep in mind that the Jewish aspects of education are highly specialized and are considered, if at all, only tangentially by American thinkers in the field.

Jewish education seeks to perpetuate the Jewish group. To do so it must make clear a) the nature of Jews and Judaism and b) their relation to the American environment. The Conservative idea of a religious-national entity building its future within American Democracy emerged after considerable groping by American Jewry. Since that is germane to our story only as background information we shall merely present a broad outline of the several survival theories.

First there are notions of dissolution as a group. Such are the assimilationist theories of Americanization a) into an Anglo-Saxon majority, or b) of dissolution into a melting pot of a new culture to be created by an amalgamation of the many strands, or c) of the kind advocated by Arthur Koestler after the establishment of the State of Israel which claims no function for Diaspora Jewry now that Zionism has been fulfilled. The overwhelming trend of thought, however, has been

24Promise and Fulfillment (1949), 332-35.
in the other direction — of survival rather than extinction.

Of historical significance only are two other theories which mustered little or no support, such as a) the transnationalism of Randolph Bourne which puts a stamp of approval on a dual citizenship of America and one's country of origin, or b) the Whole Theory of Waldo Frank according to which religion is the all embracing concept.25

There remain the secular and religious theories. The secular views also had but limited currency. These fall into three major categories: a) those who view Diaspora as the center, b) those who see Israel as the center, and c) those who take an elliptical view of two centers in the Diaspora and in Israel. Several varieties of Diaspora nationalism advocated ethnic autonomy and Yiddish culture.26 Horace Kallen has waged a crusade for cultural pluralism whereby ethnic groups would not merely live side by side but would orchestrate their contributions by modulating their differences for the sake of a general social consensus under the influence of the American Idea.27 Berkson advances a community theory of adjustment.28 Both Kallen and Berkson are cultural Zionists and therefore recognize the need for both Israel and the Diaspora. The political Zionist doctrine denies the possibility of crea-

27 Judaism at Bay (1932), Of Them Which Say They Are Jews (1954) and many other books and articles.
28 See below p....
tive survival in the Galut or Exile. Other Zionists claim sufficient cultural tasks for Diaspora Jewry to provide a sense of "belongingness" that would be vital and enduring. The great majority of Zionists, however, see vital functions for both the spiritual center and for its periphery in the Tfutzot or dispersion.

The secular theories are far overshadowed by the religionists. Will Herberg has urged the thesis that the only differences among ethnic groups that have viability are religious because America consists of the triple melting pot of Protestant-Catholic-Jew. The religious revival among Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reform Jews after the Second World War seems to bear testimony to that doctrine.

As a middle-of-the-road ideology, Conservatism is effecting a synthesis of the above positive survival views. According to this view Judaism is a religion plus nationalism, plus culture and peoplehood. The stress, however, is on religion, both group and personal. Of late there has been considerable emphasis on personal religion, what it could mean in the life of the individual Jew. This combination of ingredients is not mere eclecticism; it is rather the realization that Judaism is


a complex organic entity.

What is Conservative Philosophy? One final clarifying note as to the contents of Conservative educational philosophy. We would be looking in vain for the classical themes, such as ontology, epistemology, the nature of man, of learning or of experience. At first glance, therefore, it might appear as if a Conservative philosophy of education is non-existent. But once we recognize that philosophy deals with basic assumptions, a very wide field opens up. Instead of looking in Conservatism for something that is not there, all we have to do is ask the question: what have the men in the field thought about, what problems of reflective synoptic thinking did they encounter, and how did they solve them? For these must have been the cardinal issues that had to be resolved. In other words, the themes are to be sought in the writings of a generation of thinkers. Yet we cannot merely summarize these themes without relating them to the theories current in general education. We shall therefore first examine the influences of American thought on Jewish educators.

American Influences. In a perceptive article Duskin analyzed this question. We are concerned with the period when the Conservative school system developed, which coincided with

32 Zalmen Slesinger states: "Current thinking and practice seems to be predicated on the premise that Jewish education is 'suis generis', and that it need not reckon with current theories in general education". D. Kuselewitz, ed. Jewish Education in Response to the Challenge of Our Times (1957), p.3.

the hey day of progressivism. The first reaction among Jewish educators was that only in progressive day schools would it be possible fully to institute the newer approaches of the progressivists. In the supplementary schools the project method, Keren Ami, artcraft, extracurricular activities and summer camps reflected the progressive ideas. Henry C. Morrison of Chicago, where many leading Jewish educators concentrated, spurred the unit approach, George Washburne of Winnetka, Illinois the individual goals, and Helen Parkhurst the Dalton method. The science of education that probed theories of learning and measurements of achievement, initiated by E. L. Thorndike, A. Gates and others influenced the production of basic Hebrew word lists and beginnings of new-type objective tests for both prognostic and diagnostic purposes. Much thought was also given to the place of democracy in Jewish education. 34

Classification of Conservative Philosophies of Education

We shall now proceed to examine the several schools of thought among Conservative writers on educational philosophy. They will be classified as perennialists, essentialists, progressives and reconstructionists, along the lines outlined earlier in this chapter. This classification must be qualified by several observations. In the first place it will be extremely difficult to fit most of the thinkers into a particular mold. The classifications must therefore be considered

34 For a historical review by L. Honor, see Shevilei Hachinuch, XV (March 1955), 75-83.
arbitrary and approximate to a large extent. Jewish Reconstructionism, for example, has different connotations than those assigned to the same school by Brameld in general education. Secondly, some of the men have undergone a process of development in the course of the years; a progressivist of the thirties may have turned into a reconstructionist or an essentialist in the fifties. We shall therefore place them on the basis of their latest utterances rather than their less mature expressions. We shall begin with the perennialists.

Perennialists

Of the educational perennialists among the Conservative thinkers we shall mention Heschel, Agus, Greenberg and several others.

Heschel. Joshua Heschel has been the most prolific recent exponent of perennialism. Because of the poetic-pietistic nature of his writings, he cannot be summarized, he must be quoted.

The awareness of grandeur and the sublime is all but gone from the modern mind. Our systems of education stress the importance of enabling the student to exploit the power aspect of reality. To some degree, they try to develop his ability to appreciate beauty. But there is no education for the sublime. We teach the children how to measure, how to weigh. We fail to teach them how to revere, how to sense wonder and awe. The sense for the sublime, the sign of the inward greatness of the human soul and something which is potentially given to all men, is now a rare gift. Yet without it, the world becomes flat and the soul a vacuum. Here is where the Biblical view of real-

35 God in Search of Man, pp. 36f.
ity may serve us as a guide. Significantly, the theme of Biblical poetry is not the charm or beauty of nature; it is the grandeur, it is the sublime aspect of nature which Biblical poetry is trying to celebrate.

Perhaps this is one of the goals of Jewish education: to learn how to sense the ineffable delight of good deeds. It has been said that the joy with which a deed is done is more precious than the deed itself. The good without the joy is a good half done; and the love and delight with which we do the good and the holy are the test of our spirit. "Thy Torah is my delight...Oh, how I love thy Torah" (Psalms 119: 77, 97).

Jewish religious education consists in converting ends into personal needs rather than in converting needs into ends, so that, for example, the end to have regard for other people's lives becomes my concern. Yet, if those ends are not assimilated as needs but remain mere duties, uncongenial to the heart, incumbent but not enjoyed, then there is a state of tension between the self and the task. The perfectly moral act bears a seed within its flower: The sense of objective requiredness within the subjective concern. Thus, justice is good not because we feel the need of it; rather we ought to feel the need of justice because it is good.

In several more popular articles he pointed to three unwelcome tendencies in modern Jewish teaching. 1. Autocracy, or rather sociologism, the idea that man's purpose is to serve mankind, society. But society has meaning only through its individual members. Instrumentalism which judges man by his usefulness to society misses the mark. What unites us Jews is not peoplehood or folkways but the spirit of Judaism. 2. Apologetics, we seek the answers in miscellaneous modern

37 Man is Not Alone, pp. 249f.
38 "The Art of Surpassing Civilization" USY Review, XII (Summer 1959), 4f; Bedarkei Hahinukh Hayehudi", Hadoar, XXXVI (1956), 151ff., 166-68.
"isms" when our own Bible has the answers to all absolute questions. 3. Religious behaviorism, we emphasize customs and ceremonies and forget the religion of the heart:

Judaism is not merely a matter of external forms—it is also a matter of inner living. The Sabbath is not essentially a matter of external performance, or prohibitions, restrictions, customs and ceremonies. It is an answer to one of the deepest problems of human existence, to the problem of civilization. What is happening today? Is Judaism still aware of inner living? We have a synagogue, certainly, but we have very little prayer. We have important institutions, but how much spirit do we have? We have observances, but what about principles? We have a great deal of information, but how much appreciation? We have plenty of organization, but how much fellowship? Perhaps our greatest curse is the trend toward vulgarization which is taking hold of our lives and of our activities. This trend is in part, at least, a product of "religion behaviorism"—the belief that Judaism glorifies the deed, that it consists exclusively of external conformity, that to be religious is a matter of outward action.39

One educator questioned Heschel how he proposes to teach our young children the sublime truths and mysteries of our religion or the abstruse concepts of philosophy.40 This question, as far as we know, still awaits an answer by Heschel.

Jacob Agus, one of the most brilliant Conservative thinkers, has thus far said little on education. We have only brief comments by him in the Dropsie Symposium,41 and one of his lectures.

39 "The spirit of Jewish Education" JE, XXIV (Fall 1953), 15f. See also the last page of his article "Ideological evaluation of Israel and the Diaspora" PRA, XXII (1958), 118-36.
40 H. M. Rotblatt "From the Ivory Tower" Hadoar, XXXVI (March 16, 1956), 380f.
At the 1960 conference of the Educators Assembly Agus delivered an address on "A Conservative Philosophy of Jewish Education". He began by pointing out that the good life consists of wants, aspirations and high purpose, in ascending order. In former years, Jewish life was a question of mere existence, of wants. Now the existence of Israel, the American experience, and liberal Judaism make possible the two higher dimensions. The overriding goal now should be that of purpose.

In the domain of personal ideals and patterns of living we must recognize that the Halacha is obsolete. We must therefore concentrate on Musar, on the relationship between Man and God, and the feasibility of both goodness and happiness. As to Mitzvot - they must be viewed as aids to piety, as reminders of the Divine Will. "I maintain the validity of inspiration, not of literal revelation. All the miracles...took place in one spot - in the hearts of the people". There is no such thing as sin which carries divine retribution.

"We differ from the Orthodox in our interpretation of revelation, of the law, of Mitzvot and Averot. What they observe as laws, we observe selectively and with discrimination as standards. We differ from the Reform in our appreciation of the worth of symbol and ritual, but we are at one with them in the distinction between the kernel and the shell of our heritage".

42
We used his typescript text.
In teaching about Israel and the Jewish community we must stress that we are both an ethnic group and a religious community. The contest in past ages was not between Jewish monotheism and gentile paganism, but with paganism within Judaism, between "the genuine spirit of prophetic idealism and the collective egotism of arrogant ethnicism". In educating our children we must therefore point out both the good and the bad in the notion of a chosen people. "I have yet to see a textbook which clearly condemns Ezra". We must also point to the rich variety in Judaism — to the contributions of the Orthodox and the Reform.

In our relation to other nations we must reject the dogma of Jewish uniqueness. Unlike the Orthodox who ignore the other nations altogether, we must get to know and understand them.

His concluding paragraph reads as follows:

What then is the purpose of Jewish life? It is threefold. It is the good life of the individual, the growth of the Jewish people spiritually and culturally, the advancement of humanity. In each case, the Jewish aspect of life grows as an ideal out of a given fact. The individual is Jewish in fact — our task is to interpret the ideal implications to him. The Jewish community exists as a fact — an ethnic political reality in Israel, a cultural-religious group in America and in the democratic West. Our task is to reveal the tensions in Judaism on both the religious and the national planes dramatizing the ideals of monotheistic piety and the prophetic interpretation of national destiny. Within the Judeo-Christian world, the Jewish tradition again is a fact, existing in both life and literature. Our task is to demonstrate the meaning of "loyalty to your own for the sake of America; of Western civilization and of mankind as a whole". And it is the deeper meaning of loyalty, consisting of objective truth and subjective love, that the prophets at their best articulated in word and in deed. We can do no better than follow their example.
Simon Greenberg belongs among the perennialists chiefly on the basis of his theistic philosophy of Judaism as it was outlined in the previous chapter (pp. 82-86). Greenberg has been active in education all his life as writer of Hebrew textbooks, expositions of the religious ideas in the prayer book and for many years chairman of the Committee on Objectives of the USCJE. He was for a time also associate professor of education at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Since his influence on official Conservative educational thought has been decisive, we shall study his views in considerable detail and in the chronological order of their appearance.

In a survey of past educational developments in 1942, moderate and conciliatory in tone, he pointed the decline of the Talmud Torah and the upswing of the congregational school. He credited Benderly and "his boys" with helping to foster an afternoon school that was modern, American, Hebraic, Zionist and religious, some stressing one, and others another of these primary components of the curriculum. This curriculum had been expanded to include arts and crafts, songs, drama, assembly programs, junior services, new and improved methods. These developments were welcomed.43

His recurrent stress on particularistic Jewish values as part of universal values was enunciated later the same year.44 Jewish education is an antidote to Jewish self-hatred by

43 "Trends in Jewish Education" Contemporary Jewish Record, V (April 1942), 162-70.
44 "Some Universal Aspects of Jewish Education in America" JE, XIV (June 1942), 5-10.
providing the Jew "with that degree of Jewish knowledge which is a minimum requirement for his spiritual and mental well-being" (JE, XIV, 5). A second justification for Jewish schooling is the "will to live...The Jewish group has impressively significant common historic memories, spiritual treasures, and hopes for the future. This momentum from the past, plus present pressures and circumstances, have endowed the group with a strong and abiding will to live...Israel always confidently sang, 'I shall not die, but live'. However, the only life toward which it could look and for which it could fervently pray, was a life in which it could 'proclaim the glories of God'" (p. 6).

A third value is democracy which accepts and encourages differences.

A Jew, or the member of any other minority group in America who conceives of Americanism as demanding of him a denial of his ancestry, and a severance of all bonds uniting him to the historic, cultural and religious group from which he derives, is actively abetting the Nazi and Fascistic philosophy of society...Every Jew who helps build a Hebrew School or a Synagogue in America is thereby giving renewed evidence of his faith in the inherent, surpassing worth of the American Ideal and in the continuing power and stability of American democratic society (p. 7).

What was his message for the Jewish school during the war years with a world in flames and Jewry decimated? He saw in Nazism "the evil of an uneducated human heart". Nor should we condone opposition to indoctrination, for we cannot wait till the child discovers for himself the accumulated wisdom

45 Educational Content in Terms of Contemporary Needs" PRA, VIII (1943), 183-90.
of the centuries. Nor must we be overzealous in our stress on democracy vis-a-vis Judaism. "Judaism has a much longer history, and is immediately richer in ethical and moral content. Democracy has much need of the ethical insight and spiritual depth of Judaism. Democracy, as generally understood today is, if you will, only a segment of Judaism, in that it is thus far limited primarily to the relation between man and his fellow man. It has little or nothing to say about the relationship between man and God, and man and his own soul" (p. 189).

And again on the same theme: 46

The first danger which we must studiously avoid is the identification of the trend toward the education of the heart with the trend away from an intensive study of the Hebrew Language. For the Jewish people, as a group, the education of the heart in the fullest and profoundest sense of the word is inextricably bound up with the maximum possible knowledge of the Hebrew language and its literature (E, XV, 71).

In the teaching of history Palestine's role should be stressed, but America is where we shall live physically, and its history must therefore be taught as intensively as possible.

The Bible should aid ethical and religious growth. It should be treated primarily neither as fact nor as fiction, but as a source for answering such questions as: "What is the importance of believing in one God...How do we love God...What is the relationship between the Sabbath and the ideal of human equality" (p. 73).

46 "Curriculum in Terms of Contemporary Needs" E, XV (January 1944), 70-74.
Thus Judaism to Greenberg represented eternal truths that transcended time and place.

In a learned and impassioned address delivered in Hebrew Greenberg elaborated on the teaching of the God idea. That idea should be the central core of our teaching. "When the teacher speaks to his children on faith in God, what he should constantly reiterate are not the rational proofs for the existence of God, but the fundamental religious truth that to the extent that we live God's attributes, namely the concepts of human ethics, in our daily life, to that extent we get to know God, to sense his existence and to strengthen our belief in him" (PRA, VIII, 373).

At the first rabbinical conference on Jewish education Greenberg reviewed the objectives that were adopted by the Commission and stated:

We affirm our deep conviction that it is both possible and desirable to raise a generation of Jews in America which will have both the knowledge and the will to live in accordance with the teachings of traditional Judaism. We are second to no one in our allegiance to the ideal of Shivat Zion. We, nevertheless, must clearly reaffirm our conviction that our Zionist hopes are in no way based upon a negation of the high possibilities of traditional Jewish life in America (p. 40).

In a Hebrew address at the first annual convention of the Educators Assembly Greenberg presented a clear statement of aims:

47 "Haelokim Bahinukh Haaivri", PRA, VIII (1944), 361-75. See also his "The Religious Emphasis in Jewish Education" JE, XIII (January 1941), 187-93.

Our first aim is to help the child perceive himself as a member of the Jewish people. The national heritage is his lot whether he knows it or not, whether he wills it or not... But this heritage is so vast and rich that it is impossible for us to hope that a majority of the people will succeed in acquiring it in full or even in part. Therefore, we must select for him those gems from the great treasure that are most needed by him. We say that a Jew cannot know his people without acquiring a minimum of knowledge in three areas: 1) Jewish history, 2) the Hebrew language, 3) the Jewish religion. These are the essence, all else is secondary...

Our second goal should be to aid the student to know himself as a member of his generation. Without knowing and understanding what is going on in his time he cannot participate intelligently in positive action, to make his own modest contribution to needed progress, and to benefit spiritually from the attainments of his generation. As educators we are bound to guide him to select from among the hundreds of activities that claim the energy, time and material assistance of the Jew, in order not to raise a generation that knows not the difference between the calf and the tabernacle.

There are three mighty tasks for our generation: 1) to build Israel, 2) to build institutions of learning in this country, 3) support of the charitable institutions of our communities...

The third aim of Jewish education in America is to help the student know himself as a member of his state. A Jew must understand his special relationship to the United States, its spirit, institutions and aspirations. We believe that there is a direct and important relationship between the democratic idea as it evolved in America and between the teachings of our Torah. Our students should know the sublime values of the American democratic idea and understand their relationship to us, as well as our special obligations toward them. We cannot rely on what they will learn in public schools on these matters. Among the subjects of the public school these themes occupy a rather limited place. This at least is the situation today. But for us these are matters of vital importance. Our life as free persons in this country depends upon them and we must know them by heart. This subject, too, we have neglected almost completely till today.49

49 "Aspirations, Aims and Methods in Jewish Education in America" PRA, I (1953), 39f.
Finally, at a conference convened by the Jewish Agency, Greenberg stated: "Our primary obligation as Jewish teachers is to equip our children with the intellectual and spiritual nourishment they will need in order to relate themselves meaningfully to God". 50

A perennialist of a different sort is Uriah Z. Engelman who advocates a liberal education in Jewish values. His stress on intellectual education comes closest to the neo-scholasticism of Hutchins and Adler. He does not clarify the reasons for his neglect of the social element. He is also a staunch advocate of the common school as opposed to the denominationalism now prevailing. 51

Whereas Engelman does not stress the religious element, Judah Goldin, formerly dean of the Teachers Institute, also stresses the classical texts, but he is fully traditional in his approach. The prayer book, Humash with Rashi, as well as some history and practices, are the subjects he would teach. 52

Essentialists

Nowhere in the extensive Jewish literature we consulted is there mention of essentialism in connection with Jewish education. Whatever attempts were made at placing Jewish education...


51 See his pamphlet Hebrew Education in America (1947), "The Congregation and Hebrew Education" JE, XXIV (Fall 1953), 39-46.

52 "The Content of Jewish Education", PRA, XVII (1953), 243-49.
tion within the universe of discourse of general educational thought, it was all with reference to pragmatism. In fact, some of the thinkers to be listed below started out as ardent progressives only to discard progressivism when it conflicted with the heritage to be imparted. To cite but two examples. Leon S. Lang, a Philadelphia rabbi who experimented with curricula which he published for wide use, pinned great hopes on the new education in the early thirties. He compared the Talmud Torah and the Heder with the progressive Jewish school and proceeded to extol the virtues of the latter. 1) The older type school, he pointed out, aimed at producing a Talmid Hakham and Yodea Sefer, a scholar and a cultured person, whereas the newer school aimed at developing attitudes and ideas. Literature was to serve merely as an instrument, not an end in itself. 2) The one sought to foster Jewish culture, the other to preserve the Jew, to promote child adjustment. 3) The former taught Siddur, Humash and Gemara, the latter used the text merely as an aid in reinterpretation of the past in terms of the present. 4) Finally, the old-type school employed the method of memorization, whereas the progressive school was after the moral and mental growth of the child. He concluded that the congregational school was an excellent laboratory for experimentation with progressive methods. Here was the place where Jewish learning could be

54 "Congregational School and Progressive Education" FRA, IV (1931), 140-47.
made a truly purposive and appreciative process, and not a mere mechanical and compulsory accumulation of facts and knowledge that would not be put to vital use. A year later he advocated the correlation of Jewish social studies with current problems.

Sixteen years later in a review of Kaplan's *The Future of the American Jew* he was constrained to state that if sophistication runs counter to the Jewish religion so much the worse for sophistication. The curricula he prepared were entirely within the essentialist spirit.

Another example of a retreat to older ways is Zvi Scharfstein, professor of education at the Teachers Institute, pioneer in Hebrew textbook writing. He also started out as an ardent progressive. In one of his earlier articles he wrote that the function of Jewish education is: "1) to create proper conditions and an environment that would be conducive to the unfolding of a child's natural aptitudes, and once unfolded - to develop them and to give them Jewish direction; 2) to create within the school walls a social life whereby every one will become aware of the most important problems of our people's life, and this social education would be based largely on self-activity". The child should learn not only to read the Hebrew book, but to love it. But that is not enough.

55"Social Ideals in the Curriculum of the Jewish School" PRA, IV (1932), 365-67. For his eulogy see PRA, XX (1956), 67.

56"Jewish Education for the American Jew" CJ, IV (June 1948), 17-25.

57 See below, pp. 292-99.
It must be supplemented with "songs that would stir the soul strings, graphic and plastic art". Zionism must be part of the social activities. This will develop an attachment to the Hebrew school, and children will not leave us after two years. 58

Soon a generation of younger educators arose who advocated content areas at the expense of Hebrew. Scharfstein made vitriolic attacks against them and compared them to the Communist Yevsektsia. 59 In an age of rampant nationalism, Hebrew had become sacrosanct. Scharfstein represented those nationalist Jews to whom Hebrew was a primary sanctum.

Scharfstein's preference for the heritage over progressivism increased with the years. Dewey and psychology, he wrote, are liable to lead to a merely functional study of Hebrew, to activity in place of study, to pleasurable experiences rather than hard work. 60 Can we base our education on that? "We want to live — can we abandon life itself for the sake of other views? Can there be room among us to views that lead to death?" (Kaplan Jubilee Volume p. 256). He concluded with an impassioned plea for a courageous new philosophy that would liberate us from the prevailing general philosophy "which does not fit our aims" (p. 259).

60 "Al parashat tkufot" M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume (1953), Hebrew section, pp. 249-59.
Many another Jewish educator was at first carried away by the "modern" ideas, especially in the thirties when the depression bred miscellaneous messianic movements. But the realities of Jewish life and the Jewish school gradually had a sobering effect. The formula finally arrived at called for the old content to be taught by the newer methods. They thus became essentialists.

Two other men who stood in fairly close contact with Conservative schools should be mentioned here, although they were not directly identified with the movement. Alexander M. Dushkin in his book on New York and in numerous articles wrote the most penetrating analyses of the several philosophies, though he himself made systematic presentation of his own views only on the community aspect. The closest thing we found by him on our subject is a paper read at the World Conference on Jewish Education in Jerusalem in 1947. Jewish education must educate for complete living. There are four life relationships for the student: to family and home, to fellow-Jews, to non-Jewish neighbors, and to himself. Although complete (day school) education should be encouraged for some, the majority should obtain supplementary education. No differentiation can be made between nationalism and religion; both are inextricably intertwined. The primary purpose should be to teach the Jewish way of life. The Hebrew language and Eretz Israel should be taught not merely as nation-

61 "Aims of Jewish Education in the Diaspora" JE, XIX (Fall 1947), 6-13.
alist studies but should receive religious emphasis. Aliyah should mean visitation for most and settlement for some. Participation in the Jewish community should be one of our aims. One aspect must be defense against antisemitism both for therapeutic purposes and for mutual understanding. Certain areas of teaching should be common to all Jews. Aims should be both social and individual. There is a future for Jewish life in the Diaspora.

As far back as 1936 Pilch called for education in the sense of identification with the Jewish people. He advocated intensive Hebraic courses for the gifted. At the Jewish Agency Conference on Education he advocated "a concept of education which would bid us to regard ourselves as a community which is an integral part of the Jewish people the world over, as partners in the building of the new state, and as heirs to Israel's Torah whose God idea is the core of the good life of man". In a recent analysis of educational conditions he called for a strengthening of the community idea.

A more extensive statement of his views we find in his remarks at the Dropsie Symposium. He first points out that

See also "Next Decade in Jewish Education". JE, XII (September 1940), 65-78 where personal ethical values are emphasized.

"At a Time Like This" Bitaon, Chicago, II (Elul 1936),16f.

"Torah Cells" Shevilei Hachinuch, XII (March 1952),73-77.

Kuselewitz, op. cit, 96.

"Changing Patterns in Jewish Education" Jewish Social Studies, XXI (April 1959) 91-117.

"The Goals of Jewish Education", 5 pages, at the end. See also his "Jewish Educational Philosophy" Jewish Cultural Affairs, VIII (July 1957), 7-11.
there seems to be a consensus among the discussants on the following points: 1) Jewish education is indispensable to Jewish group survival; 2) Jews will constitute a distinct group in America; 3) development of loyalties to the Jewish group, to America and to mankind; 4) education must be challenging and relevant; 5) it is a life-long process and 6) it should train for an ethical and purposeful life.

He adds the following observations:

1. All education should provide a means for the development of a critical point of view. Jewish education is no exception. A scientific approach to the totality of the culture of the American Jew is of primary importance...Somewhere and sometime during the educational career (high school or college) of the learner he should be made to see his people's culture in relation to the world around him, and, what is equally important, be exposed to the different schools of thought which prevail within the Jewish community (p. 2).

2. Intensification of all types of Jewish education, formal and informal, is necessary in order to direct our people towards growth and progress.

3. There is need for added emphasis on the concept of Jews as a people rather than as a religious community. This calls for the centrality of Israel in Jewish group life.

4. Identification with the synagogue is not necessarily a guarantee of Jewish group survival. A broader base of experiences, which take place in one's home and one's inner circle of friends, as well as in the synagogue, is more apt to assure creative Jewish life. Hence our insistence on personal involvement in concrete Jewish activities on all age-levels.

5. Jewish education must be charged with the task of keeping alive the story of our people's trials and tribulations...Wrongs can be forgiven but need not be forgotten (p. 5)

Progressives

Progressivism in Jewish education is presently non-existent. It is more a historical relic than a present reality.
Although hardly any one of this generation of educators had escaped its lure in the twenties and thirties, all of them turned their backs on it. They either became essentialists or extended its basic notions and turned Reconstructionists. Of the five persons who will be listed under progressivism — S. M. Cohen, J. Golub, E. Nudelman, I. B. Rappaport and I. Berkson — the first two died before they wrote a renunciation of the philosophy. Berkson is sui generis, and the remaining two have not written in recent years on philosophy.

There is no question, however, that pragmatism has had a lasting effect on Jewish education, particularly within the Conservative movement, which is wide open to outside influences. The Conservative school has benefited from the experimentalist emphasis on the child, the social heritage and the science of education.

Samuel M. Cohen. A valiant attempt at devising a program for the Jewish school in keeping with the modern science of education was made by S. M. Cohen, executive director of the United Synagogue, at the request of the Education Committee of that body. Following is one quotation that pinpoints the main idea of the book.

Religious education is concerned principally with the development of the highest, the integrating sentiments. Its objective is to bring nearer the Kingdom of God on earth. The realization of this ideal will come when love of humanity will dominate conduct and be a norm by which all activities, no matter how organized, will be judged...Religious education like secular education will start

with the child where he is, and will utilize the present instincts, capacities, sentiments and tendencies to give content and enrichment of meaning to higher sentiments as they develop (p. 11).

Cohen's program is built around the celebration of holidays, junior congregation and student government. Subject matter is subordinated to activities of a religious nature.

In a scathing review Dinin called the book retrogressive rather than progressive, in view of the fact that the sole ideal for character was God, whereas Palestine, Hebrew and the national element were almost completely neglected. This was a good indication, Dinin concluded, as to what might be expected of the congregational schools.

Jacob S. Golub was a staunch pragmatist. In 1928 he proposed "A Program for American Jewish Education". It is based on the seven objectives of the NEA which he reduced to three: adaptation, elaboration, and self-reinterpretation. Like Dinin he pinned hopes on the private progressive Jewish school. He joined Honor in 1932 in suggesting principles for a new curriculum. They found the Talmud Torah established by "forceful exponents of the Hebraic renaissance" in Europe, seeking "to bolster up an inadequate program through a more effective technique. We have, in many instances, taught teachers to do better what they should not have been doing at all". It was a

69 JE, V (March 1933), 6lf.
70 SAJ Review, VII (1928), May 24, pp. 4-12, June 1, pp. 15-22.
71 "Transition in Jewish Education" JE, III (June 1931), 67-76.
"preservative, formal institution" not doing the work of "creative adaptation" that is needed. They advocated two primary considerations: "the child's nature and the problems and pressures of society". This required integrating the child into the Jewish community and through it into American life, Palestine, Hebrew and the religious life. The latter they defined as the quest for an ideal life. God must be idealized.

We need Mitzvot which have functional usefulness. "Our worship requires new selection and rearrangements, as well as new forms". Children's services must not be merely an abbreviation of the adult service but "must truly express the emotional strivings of children...The school cannot accept the present synagogue, with its serious limitations, as the satisfactory agency for developing a creative Jewish life". The school must submit the synagogue to a thorough-going critique and re-evaluation. "The school must offer the child a complete plan of affiliation which will integrate the local into national units working for an all-embracing program of advancement of world Jewry".

Golub also sought to develop a science of Jewish education.

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Israel B. Rappaport and Edward A. Nudelman both advocated a child-centered education within a school center. They favored an experiential type of education as against the prevailing emphasis on linguistics. A study of Hebrew, they believed, should be reserved only for students who evince special aptitude for such study.

Isaac Berkson first dealt with the problem of adjustment. He propounded the community theory where culture rather than race is pivotal. It, "would make the history of the ethnic group its aesthetic, cultural and religious inheritance, its national self-consciousness the basic factor."

The school center would be the major institution for preserving this identity.

Berkson also examined the implications of Dewey's ideas for Jewish education. He pointed out that Dewey's contribution was not so much his emphasis on the child, and education as growth; these ideas existed before him. It was his conception of an evolving society and the role of the individual in building a democratic society that constituted his main con-

74 Rappaport "The Elementary Jewish School of Tomorrow" JE, V (June, 1933), 88-95; Nudelman "Improving the Work of Our Schools" JE, X (June 1938), 91-96; Rappaport and Nudelman, "An American Jewish School - A Proposal" JE, XI (September, 1939), 105-20.

75 Theories of Americanization (1920), p. 98. See his description of the Central Jewish Institute where he worked and which he set up as a model (Ibid, pp. 177-223). Reviewed by Horace J. Bridges Menorah Journal, (December 1921), 270-81. Cf. also articles by Berkson Ibid, VI (December 1920), 311-21, VII (February 1921), 41-51.

tribution. When applied to Jewish education Deweyism teaches that the exclusively literary type of education imparted by Jewish schools ignores the fact that "the Jewish people is not a book, nor a language or a literature, but a community possessing a complex social structure, with specialized institutions, movements and life...The school should be not a House of the Book, but a center of life...It is sinful to deny the creative possibilities of Jewish life in America and to nurture a sense of alienhood (Kera Shebalev)". 77

On the basis of this analysis he suggested a two-track type of structure: an extensive popular program for a majority of the children for participation in Jewish community life through its institutions — the home, the synagogue and the center — and the holiday and other observances; an intensive program for the minority, consisting of a literary education leading to Hebrew scholarship. Such a system would not result in a lowering of standards but rather in a much more intensive education for the gifted student. As to Reform education he urged that it "must stand for a variant view of Judaism not for ignorance of Judaism" which is the only result to be expected from the Sunday school. 78 This interpretation of Dewey is

77 Ibid, 205f.

of course Berkson's own. He is also a strong advocate of the common inter-denominational school. He wrote "If there is anything that contravenes the democratic ideal, it is basing education on doctrinal and ideological platforms".

As Berkson continued his studies he gradually became disenchanted with some aspects of Deweyism, although he retained many of the teachings of his master and felt closest to the progressives. In his book *Education Faces the Future* (1942) he pleads for imparting ideals on social reconstruction. His most mature statement is contained in his latest book *The Ideal and the Community* (1958). Here he presents a secularist and humanist philosophy. He discounts the recent return to religion as "a movement in literary circles rather than a trend in society at large" (p. 197). He reviews neo-Orthodoxy and existentialism and finds them to be "a retreat along two lines—

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79 Francis H. Horn, in his review of Berkson's book *The Ideal and the Community* (1958), in the *New York Times Book Review Section* (February 2, 1958), 6-20, points out that while Berkson claims to merely have revised Dewey's ideas, he actually "demolishes the whole structure of experimentalism". M. Ben-Horin, however, feels that Berkson's conception of Judaism as a community "remained well within the frame of reference of pragmatic philosophy of education...impressive summation of his 'Community Conception of Jewish Life and Education' challenging the vogue of mysticism and existentialism and cautioning against both superficial progressivism and conservative conventionalism, stands as an authoritative and memorable pronouncement of naturalistic humanism in contemporary Jewish thought." Kuselewitz, ed., *Jewish Education in Response to the Challenge of Our Times*, p. 70.

a turning away from reason and science as a means of lightening man's burden of toil and trouble and a withdrawal from societal interest in favor of a preoccupation with the inner self" (p. 199). He denounces the obscurantism of the theologians who offer "an opiate, rather than a remedy for human ills" (p. 203). He upholds the secularists who view their position as a positive philosophy that "is associated with the experimentalist conception of the morality of primary experience, continuous inquiry and free communication" (p. 272).

Of the two terms which express Berkson's philosophy — ideal and community — the former puts him in accord with perennialism, the latter with experimentalism. But he departs from each of these philosophies in significant ways. He is in accord with perennialism in its emphasis on universal principles and ends; he rejects, however, "the assumption that the ground of universal ethical principles lies in a cosmic sphere outside the realm of human experience" (p. 281). He affirms with Dewey that education is a social process with democracy as its basis. But he differs with him on three counts: 1) Dewey's metaphysics of continuous change is countermanded by institutional stability; 2) the individualistic bias is justified as a methodological principle; it must not, however, replace communally validated experience; 3) man is a creature of culture not of nature. Berkson thus arrives at a philosophy of cultural humanism. Education must be grounded in history and in a particular community.

It is to be regretted that a great Jewish educational philosopher was not granted the opportunity to toil in his own
vineyard, for his particular community. Let us hope that Dr. Berkson will spend the remaining years of his life applying the same acumen to Jewish educational philosophy as he did to general. There is no doubt, however, that his great contribution in the general field has been due to his origins and experiences within the Jewish community.

Reconstructionists

The Reconstructionist approach to the problem of Jewish life in America has produced a rich harvest of ideas on Jewish education, much richer than that of any other school of thought. The influence of Reconstructionism resided not merely in the realm of ideas; some of the most progressive practical innovations in Jewish education in America stemmed from the fertile minds of the leaders of the movement.81

The very designation of Reconstructionist as the name of the movement is taken from the terminology of John Dewey's pragmatic or instrumentalist philosophy of education and places it in that camp. M. Alper summarizes it under four objectives.

The Four Objectives. The four main tasks of Jewish education are community, culture, ethics and religion.

1. Community — to educate for Jewish group life, to promote fellowship among Jews, to foster democracy, to give a sense of the unity of the Jewish people. Some of the specific objectives are: a student council, Keren Ami for the collec-

81Our summary of the Reconstructionist approach to Jewish education is based on Michael Alper, Reconstructing Jewish Education (1957); reviewed by Gamoran, JE, XXVII (Spring 1958), 84f. The book is an abridgment (156 pp.) by Eugene Kohn of the author's voluminous doctoral dissertation (438 pp.) at Teachers College, Columbia University.
tion of funds and instruction in Jewish civics, inter-school, inter-synagogue and inter-group activities. Students should be taught to work toward the organic Jewish community.

2. Culture — to promote a knowledge of our language, literature, social studies and the arts. Specifically we must teach the Hebrew language, the Bible, literature in several languages, Jewish history, folkways, music, folk dancing, the graphic and plastic arts; in short, an understanding of the Jewish civilization. All such study must be directed into creative channels; it must lead to a better understanding of the present and to a drive for building a better future.

3. Ethics — to promote ethical conduct, raise standards, improve human relations, develop a socialized personality. The specific goals: daily study of the Torah, relating Jewish ethical teachings to the social, economic, political and cultural problems of our society, and an affirmation of the basic equality of all human beings regardless of sex, race, religion, national origin or social station. All this should be fostered in the classroom in a spirit of freedom of inquiry, of honest doubt, of critical evaluation and experimentation. It should guide toward a striving for the fulfillment of the prophetic ideals of universal justice, freedom and peace.

4. Religion — to inculcate a belief in God, in the worthwhileness of life, and that reality is so constituted as to enable man to achieve salvation or self-fulfillment. Specifically, the evolution of Jewish religious thought should be studied with a view to eventual formulation of a personal religious philosophy. Both the supernaturalist and the natural-
ist interpretations of the Bible should be offered. The impor-
tance of Jewish sancta, such as the Sabbath, dietary laws, prayer, holidays and other religious folkways, should be stu-
died with a view to their observance and revitalization. The main thing is to encourage free discussion of theological and philosophical questions leading to freedom of inquiry in ques-
tions of religion in our age of science. 82

Among the individual thinkers we shall take note of Eugene Kohn, M. M. Kaplan, S. Dinin, J. Cohen and M. Ben-Horin.

In the early thirties Eugene Kohn produced a comprehen-
sive statement of educational objectives which is still large-
ly valid today. 83

First and foremost is M. M. Kaplan, founder of the move-
ment, active leader in educational matters in the Rabbinical Assembly, and founder with Samson Benderly of the Bureau of Jewish Education in New York.

In his first major work, Judaism As a Civilization, Kaplan already saw the need for a new philosophy of Jewish education in view of the changed conditions of Jewish life. Whereas formerly salvation was other-worldly, nowadays it has to help one function creatively in life about us in this modern world. To provide for such self-fulfillment Kaplan rejects the neo-Orthodox stress on textbook knowledge and the Reformist separation of Jewish religious philosophy from any specific civilization. He sets the following

82 Ibid, pp. 51-62.
83 PRA, V (1933), 13-29.
objectives:

1. Participation in Jewish life, the capacity to find self-expression and to move freely and effectively within the network of organizations that constitute the concrete reality of the Jewish people.

2. Understanding and appreciation of the Hebrew language and literature in order to overcome the sense of remoteness and irrelevancy in living in a non-Jewish environment and to give the Jew a sense of "at-homeness" in the past and present of a united Jewish people.

3. Habituation in ethical and religious standards of conduct in all of life's situations and relationships — economic, sexual, civic, human and cosmic.

4. Appreciation and adoption of Jewish sanctions and aspirations based on a reinterpretation of our heritage along rational and experiential lines, rather than the supernatural and dogmatic approach of generations past.

5. Stimulation of artistic creativity in the expression of Jewish values in such fields as song, music, dance, painting, sculpture and architecture. "When Judaism has acquired the potency of multiple appeal, not even extreme diversity of belief will threaten its integrity".

Kaplan restates these objectives from the standpoint of the individual child under six headings.

84 Judaism As a Civilization (1957), 482f.

85 Judaism, 486f. Adapted by Kaplan from S. Dinin, Judaism in a changing Civilization, 202ff.
a. To give insight into the meaning of spiritual values and their application to different types of experience, religious, moral, social and political; Jewish life as a developing civilization; the spiritual character of that civilization; the relationships of Jewish to other civilizations in the past; the course that Jewish life must henceforth take in the different countries of the world, and especially in America.

b. To foster an attitude of respect toward human personality as such; tolerance toward other groups, races, faiths; intellectual honesty, open-mindedness and responsibility; social and inter-national-mindedness; loyalty to and participation in Jewish life in this and other countries.

c. To train appreciation of individual and group creativity in the values of civilization; Jewish creativity in religion, ethics, language and literature, mores, laws and folkways, and the arts.

d. To inculcate ideals of justice and kindness in our social and economic relationships; peace and tolerance; a just, thriving creative Jewish homeland in Palestine, a creative Jewish life in America.

e. To condition habits of reflective thinking; purposive experiencing; using leisure to develop personality; affiliation with the synagogue or bet am; celebrating Jewish Sabbaths, festivals, etc.; observing Jewish customs and ceremonies; reading Hebrew books and periodicals, Anglo-Jewish books, Anglo-Jewish press, Yiddish press, Bible, Talmud, etc.; contributing to the upbuilding of Palestine; helping to support social-service and educational institutions; attending Hebrew and Anglo-Jewish theaters, concerts, etc.; patronizing Jewish artistic endeavors; buying Jewish books, works of art, etc.

f. To impart knowledge of the Hebrew language; Jewish history; the outstanding selections from the Bible, the Talmud, and subsequent Jewish writings; history and meaning of Jewish customs and ceremonials, religious beliefs, ethical ideals; current Jewish problems, institutions, endeavors; Jewish arts and crafts, home-furnishing, cooking, etc.

Kaplan realizes that within the limited time allotted to the supplementary Jewish school it is impossible to achieve all these goals. He therefore urges the provision of informal programs of activity in clubs, participation in the life of
the synagogue, as well as divisions for youth education in all national and local adult organizations.

In his later book, *The Future of the American Jew*, Kaplan sees the aim of Jewish education as "the task of utilizing the very process of education for the purpose of developing an acceptable version of the Jewish tradition, and of preparing the ground for Jewish communal life" (p. 442).

As we shall see in the next chapter, it took almost a decade for curriculum planners to begin reconstructing the program of the Jewish school based partly on Kaplan's ideas.

Samuel Dinin came under the influence of M. Kaplan and has been active in Reconstructionist circles. His doctoral dissertation at Columbia was entitled *Judaism in a Changing Civilization* (1933). In it he examined the religionist (Orthodox, Conservative and Reform), nationalist (spiritual Zionism, anti-Diaspora and Diaspora), economic (labor-Zionist, socialist and communist) and Reconstructionist theories of Jewish survival. This was followed by a discussion of democracy in relation to minority groups, religion, nationalism, social reconstruction, and Judaism. Progressive education was in its heyday at the time of the writing of Dinin's dissertation. John Dewey and William H. Kilpatrick, John L. Childs, George S. Counts and Harold Rugg, whom Dinin quotes extensively, were the prophets of a new era not only in education but in social reconstruction as well. The depression era

was especially receptive to ideas on economic reconstruction.

In his early thinking, Dinin was the most extreme among those who were attached to the highest Conservative institutions of Jewish learning. He embraced the scientific-naturalist views on religion and the doctrines of progressive education, and became a rationalist and secularist. Both the existing public and Jewish schools were thoroughly disparaged. Only the private progressive day school, of which there was perhaps only one good sample in all of America, could meet his rigid requirements.

Although he remained in the Reconstructionist circles, he went farthest in secularizing the Jewish religion. Following is his own summary of his views on religion, ethics and observances.

A. Cosmic Aspect. We shall have to adopt in our religious views the universe revealed to us by science, and make man the be-all and the end-all of all religion instead of God. We shall have to adjust ourselves to a Godless though not planless or lawless or orderless universe.

B. Social Aspect. We shall have to secularize our observances and institutions in the sense that they can have no thaumaturgic or supernatural sanction. Whatever sanctions they will have, will be of a socio-national character. Whatever sacredness attaches to them will be the sacredness lent by all social life and tradition, by life itself. As the beautiful, the good, and the true in the arts, in literature, in life are sacred, so will the folkways and mores and laws and customs and institutions be sacred, if they are to prove to be beautiful and good and true. We shall thus have to discard outmoded and functionless folkways and laws and observances, and develop progressively new laws, new observances, new institutions.

C. The Ethical Aspect. We shall have to abandon "support of transcendental and idealistic philosophy, which attempts to establish truths and values independent of time and space, as well as of human
factors and situations". We shall have to build instead an ethical science empirically tested, scientifically rational in the sense discussed previously.

D. The Aesthetic Aspect. We must make worship as poetic, as dramatic, as aesthetic as possible. But if it becomes the be-all and end-all of religion, if it obscures the ethical and socio-economic aspects, if it becomes a gospel of beauty expressing itself in high and magnificent outlays for meaningless things — then it is dangerous. For a modern aesthetic worship must express practically the new concepts of religion and not the old, and must continually expand in ever new forms and directions.

In short, the Jewish religion, if it is to have any meaning and appeal for the modern Jew, must be liberalized and humanized and secularized. If it is liberalized in the direction herein indicated, its provinces and concerns will become almost coterminous with those of Jewish nationalism at its broadest and best, and with those of Jewish civilization at its highest and richest (Judaism, pp. 109f.).

All three Jewish groups — the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform — maintain, according to Dinin, that the truths of Judaism are eternal, immutable, uniform and sacred. But such concepts are out of tune with our scientific age which stands for the very opposite — for change, diversity, relativism and secularism. "Age, tradition, social sanction, these are not enough to make something 'sacred' — revered, believed in. It has to be tested and proved" (ibid, p. 174).

The view that the methods of science and of religion are not comparable is untenable. "To those who have grown up in the modern world such a point of view is only a form of specious evasion" (ibid, p. 175).

The last chapter deals with "Jewish Education in a Changing Civilization". Dinin posits four principles that are in
consonance with democracy and experimentalism. 1. Each individual is a person and unique; 2. to grow into a self, a personality, one needs to share relationships; 3. such growth can take place only in the free interaction with other individuals and with the other elements of the environment; and 4. this sharing is an experienceing which is "experimental" in character.

These criteria doom the Jewish school as ineffectual. The congregational school has the advantages of integration within the nearest group, of a life-long contact, and of uniting the entire family. It also has many inherent weaknesses. It emphasizes the social and religious aspects and neglects education. It is often snobbish and exclusionist. It acts as an autonomous uncooperating unit. It builds loyalty to the congregation only, not to the community at large. And lastly, supervision is relegated to the rabbi who has little training or time for it. Moreover, the claim of religious institutions to a monopoly on character education is challenged by the modern progressive school (pp. 186ff.).

The answers to the query "Jewish education for what?" are: 1. to facilitate the child's growth. We must start with the child at his own level. His ideas, attitudes, skills and knowledges must be afforded an opportunity for enrichment, growth and reconstruction through worthwhile experiences. 2. to reconstruct society as a better world for the child to grow into both as a person and as a Jew. This includes a reconstruction of the social and economic order, as well as a vision of a well-ordered Jewish community locally, nationally,
in Palestine and the world over (pp. 198ff.).

The outcomes of a Jewish education must therefore be: outlooks and insights, attitudes, appreciations, ideals, habits, knowledges and skills (pp. 202ff.).

A generation has passed since these ideas were expressed. Hindsight wisdom — which is always unfair — might dictate the observation that Dinin's ideas have not withstood the test of historical consequences, which is the highest experimentalist criterion. Secular Judaism, carried so loftily on the banner of scientific advance, has not only not spread, but the very opposite has happened: there has been a return to the synagogue even by many of the former radical labor element. The school that was most lamented — the congregation school — now reigns supreme. Not the private experimentalist school has thrived but its most maligned adversary, the parochial school of the extreme religionists is being imitated by both Conservative and nationalist Jews. Not insights, attitudes and appreciations are common desiderata of parents and teachers, but skills and knowledges.

Was the theory wrong, or was life wrong?

In time Dinin gradually began to reckon with practical realities; religion and the supplementary school were accepted by him. At first he followed Kallen in his emphasis on the cultural and social elements. In an editorial he declared:


88 "Nationalism and Religion in Jewish Education" JE, VI (October 1934), 143-50. He defended teachers' strikes on the basis that they were idealists who serve the Reconstructionist God who seeks to satisfy human needs in this world. "Materialism and Idealism in Jewish Education" Ibid, VIII (April 1936), 67-72.
"Religion certainly constituted one of the chief elements, if not the main element" in Judaism and we must learn how to teach it. He directed the readers to a book and articles on God. During the war years he urged the nurturing of a sense of belonging, and of working toward a better world. He assessed the findings of a survey of Conservative schools and urged intensification of weekday instruction. He further urged creation of common inter-congregational schools to merge small units, and curriculum research based on an inventory of Jewish values and child experiences. At a meeting of social workers he advanced a Reconstructionist program for personality development. He pointed to the Jewish defense of the public school against incursions of religion and quoted the dissatisfaction of modern religionists with the relativistic values of religion. In a major address he called

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91 A. Saretsky and S. M. Cohen "Are Our Congregational Schools Congregational" *SYC*, III (January 1943), 9f., 12f.
92 "A Program for Conservative Jewish Education" *SYC*, V (Summer 1944), 30.
upon the Jews to "recapture the autonomy of the inner-directed person, an inner-direction which will draw upon our great religious tradition".

In a statement for the Dropsie Symposium on "The Goals of Jewish Education" Dinin presented the following thirteen articles of his educational faith.

I I believe, first of all, in the centrality of the role of education in the creative survival of the Jewish people in America. This is posited on a belief in the worthwhileness of Jewish life and in the possibilities of creative Jewish survival in the United States. Jews are born Jews, but can only become Jewish by a process of education. The quality of Jewish life and culture and the character of Jews as a group and as individuals, depend in the long run upon the quality of the Jewish education and training given to our children in home and school community.

II I believe that Jewish education is indispensable not only to the Jewish group, but to America as well. The Jewish group and the Jewish school perform important functions in the American community. The Jewish school helps to socialize the child into a Jewish community which still bears the burden of and responsibility for what are essentially public tasks — recreation, social service, health, etc. The Jewish school supplements the work of the public school by imparting to the child religious values and traditions which are not within the province of the public school. It introduces the child to another culture, thus enriching both the child and America. It helps the child find identity and satisfyingness in his minority group affiliation and thus acts as a therapeutic agent in adjusting the child in his majority — minority group relations.

III I believe that there is inherent compatibility and harmony between Judaism and democracy. Democracy derives basically from the Hebraic tradition as embodied in the Bible. We are committed to democracy as a way of life. I believe that the Jewish

96 "An Analysis and Critique of Jewish Education in America" Ibid, XXVI (Fall 1955), 6-16; "Issues Facing the Jewish School" Ibid, XXVI (Spring 1956), 18-21.
school and the Jewish school curriculum should directly and indirectly inculcate the principles of democracy as a way of life and action and as a method of thinking and inquiry.

IV Believing as I do in democracy, I believe that it cannot be taught in the Jewish school unless it is lived in the Jewish community. I am thus for democracy in Jewish communal organizations and institutions, in the conduct of Jewish public affairs, in the formulations of programs of action, in the control of our congregations and schools, in the planning of curricula, and in principal-teacher and teacher-pupil relationships. I am for equality of women. I am for tolerance in Jewish life, even in religious matters. I recognize the need for unity and the desirability of unity, but it must be a unity which recognizes and tolerates diversities and differences.

V I believe that education should not be a process of indoctrination in a formal creed, but a process of integration into the life of a people. Jewish education must be polar, both "child-centered" and "community-centered". It must seek the "growth" and self-realization of every individual child. A child, however, does not exist in isolation; he exists in relation to other beings and to the environment; he is a social being. The child lives in a definite community, and his education must be directed to and derived from the life and institutions of the community of which he is a member. The Jewish community must not be conceived parochially but in the widest possible sense — the Jewish people all over the world, the Jews of the past as well as of the present. Neither must the Jewish community be conceived statically as fixed and immutable, but dynamically, as a changing community in the process of being capable of growth and reconstruction.

VI I believe that "Torah" in its widest sense must constitute the core of the Jewish school curriculum. I conceive "Torah" not as static revelation, but as the sum total of all that is best in Jewish tradition and literature. I believe that "Torah" is a product of development, change and growth and that it is capable of further growth and development in the future. "Torah" must be made the instrument for the fullest self-realization of every Jewish child and for the creative survival of the Jewish group.

VII I believe that the Jewish school must transmit not only a knowledge of the Jewish past but also an understanding of the special problems that the Jew
has to face in the changing world today. Jewish life is part of a general social order and cannot be understood or lived apart from it. Since Jews as individuals and/or groups must live both as Jews and as members of the general community, Jewish education must help Jews interpret their tradition in terms relevant to contemporary life. Events and tendencies in the world at large must be interpreted so as to make the Jew a more responsible and intelligent member of society.

VIII I believe that the Jews are a people whose culture is religio-national. As a people dispersed and scattered among the nations, it can have no future in our day — either physical or spiritual — without a center, without a concentration of part of the Jewish people in a homeland of its own. I view Israel as the sine qua non of any Jewish future, of any culture or way of life which is to evolve in the future. Jewish education must prepare Jews to participate intelligently in the upbuilding of Israel and to live the way of life implied in a religio-national culture.

IX I believe that Hebrew is an indispensable element in any kind of Jewish education. It is the language of our sacred writings; it is the language of modern-day Israel; it is the language of our national renaissance; it is the only common avenue of communication for a people scattered over the entire world. Jewish education must enable Jews to make use of the Hebrew language and literature. I realize that Yiddish is the mother-tongue of millions of Jews, that it has created and is still creating a rich literature and a rich culture. I believe that Jews should be taught to use and enjoy the Yiddish language and literature wherever and whenever they can acquire both languages. If, however, it comes to a choice, I believe in the priority of Hebrew and Hebrew literature.

X Culture expresses itself in art-forms. The artistic creations of a people are not only a clue to its character, but a manifestation of the degree of its aliveness and creativity. Jewish education in the past has stressed literature, and to a lesser extent music. It should emphasize as well the graphic and plastic arts and the drama and the dance. Jewish life and Jewish education should be made more beautiful and interesting through systematic endeavor to realize the possibilities inherent in Judaism for esthetic satisfaction.

XI I believe that Judaism is a religio-national culture. I view Jewish culture as a synthesis of
religion and nationhood. I view Judaism as an evolving religious culture. Religion has in the past and should in the future permeate every phase of Jewish life. It should awaken in the Jew that courage and hope which come with the awareness of God in nature and history. It should awaken in the Jew a yearning to serve God by living in accordance with His laws of justice and mercy. I believe that Judaism evolved in the past, adjusting itself to various conditions, and must continue to evolve and develop in the future. It must, however, maintain that continuity with the past which shall enable it to derive the maximum value from the past in terms of guidance and inspiration.

XII As a religio-national culture, Judaism has its distinctive cultural and religious folkways. These embody in concrete folkways the values and ideals that Judaism has developed through the ages. Jewish education must transmit these ways of behaving. These folkways and/or mitzvot should be taught with reference to their value to the growth of the child and the survival of Jewish group. There is thus need for flexibility with regard to old folkways and/or mitzvot and for the creation of new ones.

XIII I believe that Jewish education must teach a Judaism which is in harmony with our modern view of the world, that reckons with the best thought and practice in the field of psychology and general education; in short, that Jewish education must be of this world and in this world.

There must be an organic relationship between principles of Jewish education, educational psychology, method, curriculum, learning and subject matter.

This statement by Dinin contains a most comprehensive, mature and advanced expression of a Reconstructionist philosophy of education. The secularism of his early writings is gone. Judaism is properly recognized as an evolving religious civilization. Demands for revolutionary changes in Jewish life and education have given way to moderate expectations of reconstruction flowing from the dynamic nature of the Jewish community. Compared to the reconstructionist philosophy in general education, Dinin is still too oriented to the
present rather than the future. Article VII, for example, speaks of contemporary Jewish life; there is no parallel statement on the shape of things to come. Dinin is somewhat more forceful on the question of child versus community. Group life and the national elements are continually emphasized; the school should be polar, both "child-centered" and "community-centered" (Article V).

It appears that Jewish education still has much to learn from the reconstructionist trend in general education on the two issues of future-orientation and community. On the other hand, reconstructionism in general education has much to learn from its Jewish counterpart.

Another leading Reconstructionist thinker, Jack Cohen, presented his educational philosophy in a paper entitled "New Emphases in Jewish Education" at a conference of the National Council for Jewish Education in May, 1954. After reviewing the cardinal elements of his philosophy of Jewish life he asserts that the goal of all education should be the cultivation of better human beings. From this it follows that Jewish educators must exhibit much greater interest than heretofore in the personality and character growth of their students. In the study of the Siddur, for example, we are sacrificing the cultivation of religious sensitivity for rote treatment of prayer. In history we still labor under a conception of the

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97 The paper was distributed in mimeographed form and later appeared in JE, XXVI (Summer 1955), 14-21 and in Reconstructionist, XXI (January 13, 1956), 23-30.
Jews as a supernatural people divinely decreed, whereas life about us suggests that we are a segment of the natural history of mankind. We all grant that Hebrew is the life-blood of Judaism and must be taught, but we are deficient in methods for teaching that language in the upper grades. In teaching religion we must have a more critical approach which might raise the level of Jewish observance. In presenting Israel we should raise the option of settling in Israel as a definite opportunity for personal fulfillment and for contributing to the enhancement of Jewish life. The process of curriculum development must involve teachers, parents and students.

In his book Jack Cohen makes a plea for a common Jewish school where the children of non-religious parents and of the several denominations would attend. At present the existing system breeds sectarianism. What we need is to confront the children with the pluralism which pervades Jewish life. We must put a premium on free inquiry and criticism. By facing squarely our modern conditions of life and making explicit the values of religious observance we may initiate a renewal of Jewish living in the home through our schools.

One major point remains to be made. All pragmatists have struggled with the problems of transmitting a religious heritage, since it involves indoctrination. Kaplan favored imparting views on religion and compared it to learning one's mother tongue. Just as we do not delay teaching language to a child until he invents a language of his own or chooses one

from among existing languages, so we must teach him our religious traditions when he is a child. As he learns that tradition he must also be trained to evaluate the moral and spiritual teachings in an atmosphere that is conducive to free and unfettered inquiry. For only that education is worthwhile which leads to a reconstruction of experience and of life.

Meir Ben-Horin summarized Kaplan's views in the following statement:

The supreme purpose of education, therefore, is not so much the transmission of knowledge, tradition, or even their reconstruction but rather the fashioning of character for its own fulfillment—largely through the instrumentality of the religious communities in which the God-concept stands for all that makes human life worthwhile, namely beauty, meanings, holiness.

In another article Ben-Horin applies the five basic criteria of John L. Childs' book *Education and Morals* to Jewish Education. They are: 1. reconstruction of Jewish experience by employing the existing texts, concepts, value-judgments and value-commitments as instrumentalities for reawakening Jewish creativity; 2. inculcation of a spirit of trans-cultural empathy; 3. cooperative planning in communal affairs; 4. fearless inquiry in the realms of both science and religion; 5. the school must be more than an annex to the synagogue.


100 "Major Writings in American Jewish Education" *JE*, XXX (Spring 1960), 15.
There must be participation in Zionist activities, the arts and research. Authority has to be shifted from revelation to community.

In "Teaching About the Holocaust" (Reconstructionist, XXVII, May 5, 1961, pp. 5-9) Ben-Horin states:

The thesis here set forth is that the school is established for the purpose of liberating human intelligence and human love. By 'liberating' is meant that process by which these native human capacities are exercised, strengthened, tested, made effective and unified in the ordinary and extraordinary affairs of the human career on earth...Jewish education, in short, is concerned with the fullest, most securely documented, truths about the Jewish People's career...It is not an attempt at preserving intellectual and emotional innocence concerning the agonies of Israel, the crisis-conditions of its existence (pp. 5f).

He suggests twelve avenues to the facts of exterminism or radical anti-Judaism. These avenues are in keeping with a methodology that is educationally sound in teaching any other subject. He urges upon curriculum planners that "the facts of the European Jewish catastrophe constitute a new kind of subject matter without which the Jewish school — any school — falls short of its goal of graduating educated persons" (p.8).

In his most recent article "The Teaching of Ethical Concepts and Conduct in Jewish Schools" (Religious Education, LVI, October 1961, pp. 334-42) Ben-Horin makes the point that "education is committed to the uncommitted study of human commitments" (p. 341). More specifically:

We are committed to God, but God is not committed. He is the Uncommitted.

We are committed to Judaism, but Judaism is committed to no lesser cause than the fulfillment of human destiny. Judaism is committed to the eternally ideal, to the Uncommitted.

Judaism is committed to Torah, but Torah is the holding, discarding, proposing, and validating of propositions — both ordinary and extraordinary, both conventional and shaking-of-the-foundations. Torah, too, is committed to the Uncommitted. (p. 341).

He submits the proposition that the abstractness of concepts makes them "precious tools for education as preparatory to irrevocable act" (p. 335). As an example, he illustrates the proper steps in teaching such a concept as compassion. He opposes an ethics that is fixed and ready-to-be-followed. He insists that "as far as the school is concerned ethical
propositions are experimental propositions relating to conduct" (p. 337).

**Notions On The Structure of The School System.**

Problems of structure are very much a matter of philosophy. For how else is one to decide on the relative merits of Sunday school, afternoon school or day school, except on the basis of very general assumptions concerning the cardinal issues of Jewish life and the needs of the coming generation?

Structure pertains to time, to quantity. The quantitative decision — how much time — is made in relation to quality, that is the type of education that is wanted for the child.

Jewish parents and leaders were from the very beginning of their settlement in America faced with the problem of finding time for the Jewish education of their children. At first there was a great deal of trial and error; private tutoring, boarding schools and day schools for the wealthy, vocational, afternoon and Sunday schools for the poor. 102 When the Conservative movement appeared on the American scene, it found the following institutions: the private Heder and the afternoon Talmud Torah of the Orthodox East-European Jew and the Sunday school of the Reform temple of the German Jew. Which educational structure was Conservatism to adopt?

Four stages may be discerned in the Conservative uphill climb to structural standards:

1. Elimination of the Sunday school,
2. Acceptance of the three-day afternoon school,
3. Promotion and then abandonment of foundation school,
4. Interest in day school.

These four stages followed each other in rapid succession within the past fifteen years. There probably were very few periods in the past that were as packed with groping, soul searching and experimentation in Jewish education. The end is not yet in sight. If a mere decade and a half produced such revolutionary transformations, who would be fool-hardy enough to predict what the next decade, let alone half century, might bring?

1. **Sunday School.** We must keep in mind that the Conservative Sunday school flourished during the depression and war years, and that it was fostered by second-generation parents who began moving to the Protestant suburbs. As "modern" parents they were reluctant to deny their children their leisure time in the afternoon hours; moreover, lessons in social dancing, elocution, music and other social graces became for them more important than "Hebrew". Besides, the weekday Hebrew school was considerably more costly. But above all, the importance of a more intensive Jewish education, especially for girls, was lost on these parents. The result was that for many years Conservative congregations maintained a double system of schooling — both Hebrew and Sunday schools — for those who wanted respectively more or less Judaism.103

Whereas most of the Orthodox congregations had only High

103 Sklare, *Conservative Judaism*, p. 146.
Holy Day seat holders, not year-round members, the Conserva-
tives promoted the practice of an annual membership fee. Fam-
ilies that joined for the sake of an education for their boy
or for another reason were also approached concerning Jewish
schooling for their girls.\textsuperscript{104} It had not been customary for
girls to attend a Jewish school at all; both the family and
the congregation were in a dilemma. Both were prepared to
settle on fewer days a week for girls, but what would that do
to the school as a whole? Wouldn't the weekday students wish
to join their less burdened friends of the Sunday classes?
Moreover, the Conservative congregations that were mushroom-
ing all over the country, were very eager for new membership,
even at the bargain price of a Sunday school education.

The most powerful salvo against the Sunday school was
fired at the First Rabbinical Assembly Conference on Jewish
Education in December, 1946, by its president Israel M.
Goldman. It took place soon after the decimation of European
Jewry; the speaker therefore appealed to American Jewry to as-
sume its share of responsibility for the future of our people.

The Sunday School is a snare and a delusion.
It is a fraud and a deception. It misleads both
Jewish children and Jewish parents into believ-
ing that a Jewish education is being imparted
when as a matter of fact, because of its own in-
herent limitations, it does nothing of the kind.
The Sunday School is one of the thorns in the
none too fertile field of Jewish education in
America. I should like to propose that within

\textsuperscript{104} I. Levitats, "Girls in Our Weekday Schools" \textit{SyS}, XVII
(September 1958), 10-13.
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{PRAJE}, 1946, p. 9.
the next five years we liquidate the Sunday School and at the end of that period abolish it altogether. In this, our movement will be making a significant contribution to the future of Jewish education in America.\textsuperscript{105}

In an address before the 1948 Biennial Convention of the United Synagogue A. Milgram sought to refute certain arguments in favor of the Sunday School.

Despite our constant pleas for the intensification of Jewish education, it is a sad fact that more than half of our school children are enrolled in one-day-a-week schools. In many of our congregational schools 80\% of the enrollment consists of Sunday School pupils. By permitting this condition to prevail, our school boards demonstrate their failure to realize that in education halfway measures do not get half results. To expect Sunday School children to master the techniques of Jewish life and to develop lasting attachments to Jewish values is as realistic a hope as to dial a telephone number only halfway, and expect to make a connection. The effort is completely wasted.\textsuperscript{106}

2. Three-Day Afternoon School. As in the case of the Sunday school, so also the fate of the Hebrew school hinged more on historical circumstances than on a preconceived ideology. The three-day school was a compromise between the Orthodox nationalist-religious five-day Talmud Torah and the Reform one-day school. In historical sequence it was an improvement over the Sunday school and in this respect represented an elevation of standards. In some congregations, however, the change was from five to three days, which meant a lowering of standards, and apologies were due. The effects

\textsuperscript{106} Seminars and Special Sessions, Stenotype report, pp.2f. Speech has separate pagination, follows p. 82. For a recent survey on the Conservative Sunday School see Dushkin and Engleman, \textit{Jewish Education in the United States}, pp. 99f.
of such a shift at the Brooklyn Jewish Center was described by its principal. 107

A semi-official statement on the place of the three-day school in the Conservative movement by Simon Greenberg, then chairman of the Committee on Objectives, Standards and Curriculum follows:

The committee assumed that the afternoon congregational school will continue for a long time to be the predominant factor in Jewish elementary and secondary education. It assumed further that we have thus far failed to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by a well organized and well conducted afternoon congregational school. The tragic inadequacies in the realm of Jewish elementary and secondary education is due only in part to stumbling blocks inherent in the situation. It may indeed be true that the afternoon supplementary school cannot by its very nature produce the highest type of Jewish Talmid Chocham. It may be true that six hours per week devoted three times weekly to Jewish studies cannot make one sufficiently proficient in the world of Hebrew letters, Biblical, Rabbinic, or Modern. But it is our contention that far more can be accomplished within those six hours than we have thus far accomplished if only we understand how to utilize them better. 109

There is a noticeably apologetic ring to this statement. But that evidently was all that the traffic could bear at the time.

3. Foundation School. Our discussion of pre-school goals will be brief since there is available a definitive discussion of the subject in Hyman Chanover's Planning for Threes

108 For a discussion of the small, large and metropolitan units, see PRAJE (1947), 100-161.
109 PRAJE (1946), 40.
to Eights in the Hebrew School (USCJE, 1954). We shall merely add some observations contained in the minutes of the USCJE.

First a hint on nomenclature. Primary department refers to one-day-a-week classes for ages below eight, usually a kindergarten for age 5, and the first two grades for ages 6 and 7. Gan means a daily nursery school and kindergarten for ages 3 to 6. Foundation School (Bet Hayeled, or Bet Hayesod) includes a Gan plus two or three additional classes for ages 6 to 8 or 9.

In its quest for desirable forms the USCJE progressed as follows: In the 1946 edition of its Objectives and Standards for the Congregational School (hereafter: Objectives) only a primary department was mentioned. Two years later the foundation school was added, but it referred to ages 3 to 6 only. The 1952 edition already had both the Gan and the Foundation School with the proper designation of ages. It is also noteworthy that in 1948 the Bet Hayeled was to lead the all-day school. Four years later continuation in public school and Hebrew School was suggested, with a separate section on the all-day school. In his address to the Rabbinical Assembly in 1946 Israel S. Chipkin, the founder of the Bet Hayeled in New York in 1939 and its main advocate, stated very hopefully:

"The Jewish Foundation School is now definitely out of the experimental stage and can be considered now a definite and permanent part of the American-Jewish educational scene".110

Upon the urging of Moshe Davis, a Foundation School Committee

110 PRA, X (1946), 169.
was appointed early in 1951 with H. Chanover as chairman and Leah Gelb as consultant.

But the foundation school seems to have died aborning. Even while texts and materials were being prepared to promote the idea, the day school preempted its place. On May 10, 1956, a member of the Commission pointed out that "the evidence thus far received indicates that the Foundation School has not caught on in our Movement while the Day School has".

All this historical background interests us only to the extent that it sheds light on philosophy. What was it in the minds of the Conservative planners that made them embrace the foundation school and then hesitate in endorsing the day school?

The crucial point is their attitude to the public school. The public school must be supported by the Jewish community at all costs as a bulwark of democracy. If we must compete with it let us stop after the second grade. The day school is parochial and must be shunned.

This compromise arrangement, too, was shattered by the onrush of the Orthodox day school.

4. Day School. Before the advent of the public school in the second half of the nineteenth century, Jews, like other denominations, maintained parochial schools for a short period. Then for almost a century they practically disappeared from the educational scene. In the early 1940's they appeared

111 Ms USCJE Minutes February 13, May 9, November 5, 1951; Ms. Committee on Objectives Minutes, March 12, 1951.
112 PRAJE (1947), 31-42.
again and within less than two decades have experienced a pheno-
nomenal growth. Whereas in 1946 S. Dinin regarded as utopian
the possibility of a ten per cent enrollment in "parochial"
schools — and he was not alone in this outlook — the lat-
est figures are 21.4% for New York and 8.1% for the country
as a whole; and enrollments are still rising with many ma-
jor organizations getting on the bandwagon.

Why has the community resisted this form of schooling for
so long and why has it turned so sharply?

The ideological reasons advanced against the day school
may be summarized as follows:

1. Sectarianism. "The separation between Church and
State is a basic concept in American national organization.
To entrust the education of American children to the church
alone, may mean the ultimate division of American life along
lines of historic creed...the parochial school, whether reli-
gious or national, if conducted on a large scale, seems to be
dangerous both to the American polity and to the common wel-
fare of the groups within it". 115

2. Undermining the Public School. "The public school is
not beyond danger of destruction. The position we Jews take
may prove decisive. The public school is under attack from
many quarters...Rejection of the public school by increasing
numbers would be tantamount to its surrender to those who make

113 PRAJE (1946), 34.
114 Dushkin and Engelman, Jewish Education in the United
States pp. 60-64.
115 A. Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, p. 382.
it a Protestant parochial school", in view of the withdrawal of Catholic children in large numbers.

3. Segregation. The American ideal is to create a people who learn to understand and respect the manifold differences in creed, national origin or color. The public school is the best social invention to achieve such a purpose. Segregation for sectarian teaching is bad enough.

Far more important in the fashioning of human character are the informal associations which the school makes possible. There is no spontaneous generation of broad human sympathies and broad human ideals. These are the consequences of human associations. Humanity is transformed from a mere word into a vital ideal only by common work, common study and common play of people who differ in race, religion, wealth, culture, and social status. Segregation of children of a particular denomination for study purposes means also segregation for play purposes and segregation for all forms of human association. The result can be only the kind of mentality which identifies mankind and America with a particular sect and relegates all the others to a status of aliens and of inferior kinds of human beings.117

The Conservative Jew, representing the more Americanized and modern viewpoint, therefore, had strong misgivings about the day school. For many years the only day schools sponsored by Conservative congregations were progressive academies. The rationale for such a school at the Brooklyn Jewish Center was stated by its principal as "a vision of the synthesis of

116 M. Grossman "Parochial Schools for Jewish Children, An Adverse View" JE, XVI (May 1945), 22; part of a symposium on the day school.

117 Ibid, 23. For a refutation of these arguments, see Dushkin "The Role of the Day School" JE, XX (Fall, 1946), 5-15. See also Dushkin and Engelman, op. cit., pp. 28-30. See also JE, XV (January 1944), 61f.; XVI (September 1944), 12-26; XVI (May 1945), 6-29; XX (Fall 1948), 16-63.
Americanism and Judaism via the activity program — the vision of an integrated child". 118 A serious attempt at integration of the secular and the cultural aspects of the curriculum was therefore made. "With attitude building as our springboard the content of our Jewish program has been designed to give the child command of the Hebrew language as the key to the traditions and literature of the past and the definite link with the Jewish renaissance centering in the new Palestine and an introduction to the history and broad cultural heritage of the Jewish people". What of religion? No indoctrination with the formal creed, religious or secular, is undertaken. Religion should be the outgrowth of personal experience and of the inner emotional life. Only parents may inculcate a creed, if they wish. "We have striven throughout to preserve the spontaneity, the joyousness of religious growth". As to the prayer book, it is a problem in such a school, but "no passage is read that is not understood, and no prayer recited that is not appreciated". 119 Such was one valiant attempt to maintain Judaism in the spirit of Dewey.

It was not till 1946 that the Conservatives were called upon to join the day school movement and not till a decade later that formal action was taken.

In 1946 Isaac Klein issued the first call. 120 First he

120 PRA, X (1946), 159-66.
sought to refute the arguments of those who look "with a feeling of horror" upon the all-day school. The fear of ghetto-ization "might be justified in some schools" but "in the majority of schools this argument does not obtain at all". First, the all-day school inculcates good habits of study and concentration and thus offers a specialized service to gifted students. Secondly, "even at best the all-day school would reach a very small segment of the Jewish child population. At present it reaches only 1% of the children in the United States. It is hardly likely, unless something very radical happens, that it would ever reach more than 10% of the Jewish child population". Thirdly, the Jewish children who attend public and Hebrew schools are denied the opportunity of playing with their non-Jewish friends in the afternoons and are thus segregated.

He then quoted Joseph H. Lookstein, founder of the Ramaz Academy in New York:

The all-day school is not intended to insulate the Jewish child against the environment. The world without is not represented to him as an alien world. Nor is the school world within an exclusively Jewish one. America is as much a part of the child's life at school as Judaism is part of his life as an American.121

Another authority, Noah Nordi, is quoted in support of the idea that the Jewish day school cannot be called parochial because it is not controlled either by a centralized authority, or by a church parish both of which oppose State control of education. It is a private school which merely adds Jewish

\[121\text{JE, XVI (May 1945), 13.}\]
content.

The following year Klein repeated his plea:

I strongly urge that our men identify themselves with the venture of day schools. Since it is our purpose to create a maximum of Jewish life, a maximum of Jewish education and of religious practice, we must follow in the footsteps of our Orthodox brethren in the establishment of such schools. The future of the American Jewish community depends upon the existence of a laity that will have a rich Jewish background and deeper loyalties. The best way to develop these is through an intensive Jewish education as provided by the all-day school (PRAJE, 1947, 49).

Four years later a very learned historical and ideological exposition of the problem was awarded space in the official journal of the Rabbinical Assembly. The writer expressed ardent support for the day school. "The religious day school is American not only because historically it was the original American educational agency, but much more because it is the most effective instrumentality through which we can participate in American living. While our country does not seek to impose one belief upon its citizenry, it does want a God-fearing people. A good American is one who worships his God. To the extent that the Yeshivah Ketanah fosters Judaism, it serves America" (CJ, VII, 13).

The writer ascribes two motives to the day school parents: 1) The heralded intermingling through public school is chimerical, since this school is a neighborhood one and serves families of similar social, ethnic and religious background.

Many public schools have a large majority of Jewish students anyway. 2) The public school does not necessarily promote the adjustment of Jewish children to gentiles. Often the cold impersonality or unsympathetic attitude of that school's teacher is a traumatic experience for the Jewish child which often causes "feelings of insecurity and inferiority that many American born Jews betray in the presence of non-Jews". (pp. 11f.) 123

In 1956 the USCJE took up the cudgel. 124 On may 10th the Commission was urged by several members to take a stand in support of the day school. Leo L. Honor "pointed out that it was very important to have a clear pronouncement on this problem. He raised the point that in this pronouncement we must take into consideration the problem of the public school system. Is the Day School something we want for all of our children, or is it something that is to be, at best, for a select few? He emphasized that we must be very careful not to undermine the concept of the public school".

On June 7th a special meeting was held on the day school. "The general feeling of the Commission members was that the Day School idea should be encouraged for a portion of Jewish children". Elias Charry felt "that all of our children need the public school experience. If there is to be a Day School type of Jewish education, then it should be patterned after

123 See also L. Nulman, The Parent and the Jewish Day School: Reactions of Parents to Jewish All-Day School (Scranton, 1956).
124 Based on Ms USCJE Minutes of a specified dates.
the Akiba Academy of Philadelphia where such studies are begun on the Junior High School level". Jack J. Cohen, evidently keeping with his Reconstructionist philosophy and in fear of further fragmentizing Jewish life, "urged that any attempt to introduce a Day School in a community should be initially a communal effort. He felt it unwise to think of developing 'Conservative' Day Schools. 'Non-institutional' Day Schools would provide a more democratic base for administration as well as for study". Several members, however, pointed out "that in practical experience it becomes necessary for us to work by ourselves, inasmuch as other segments of the Jewish community, i.e., Orthodox groups, will not cooperate with us. Also, their pedagogic standards and techniques are unacceptable". It was agreed that a subcommittee draft a statement of policy on the subject for further study.

On April 30–May 1, 1957, a National Conference on Day School Education was held at the Jewish Theological Seminary under sponsorship of the USCJE. 125 The keynote address on "The Philosophy of the Conservative Day School" was delivered by Simon Greenberg. The main point he made was that America consists of a quadruple melting pot of Protestant–Catholic–Jew–Secularist; by living his religion through the day school, the Jew is merely true to himself and to the Jewish version of American civilization.

His support of the day school thus rested
upon the faith that the Jewish religion, rooted

125 Reported in Sys, XVI (September 1957), 3-47.
in the Bible and in the Rabbinic tradition, is the highest and noblest principle for the integration of the life of the individual Jew and of the Jewish community, and that in this land we have the opportunity to make it the center around which to develop the Jewish version of American civilization (p. 12).

He set the upper limit for day school attendance at 25% of the total number of Jewish children of elementary and high school age.

At the same conference Jack Cohen, while pointing at the many dangers lurking in the day school idea, advanced the following two reasons in its favor: 1. "It seems plausible to assume that day schools, in which American life can be examined from the perspective of a particular heritage could add to the general spiritual wealth of our country" (p. 33). 2. The day school is justified if it is interdenominational, just as the public school keeps religion out.

We talk of the unity of the Jewish people, but we have not yet sensed that unity deeply enough to enable Orthodox, Reform, Conservative and secularist Jews to establish and maintain a common system of Jewish schools. I contend that Jewish day schools which are to be justified in terms of the needs of American education can be so justified only if they reckon with the internal problems of the Jewish tradition in the same spirit of freedom with which we expect common American education to treat all aspects of human experience (p. 34). 126

In 1957 all the Conservative movement could show for its labors were eleven day schools, two of which were in Canada, four had just started as foundation schools and one was a joint venture with an Orthodox congregation. 127

126 Cf. E. Shereshevsky, "The Jewish Day School" SYN, XVII (March 1959), 8-11.
127 Ms USCJE Minutes, January 19, 1957.
The Ladder of Jewish Education. In 1947 Moshe Davis thus entitled his proposed program for Jewish education in Conservative Judaism. This ladder included the following rungs: 1. nursery school for ages three to seven; 2. the afternoon school five days a week; to be supplemented by a high school, summer camp, the college campus, adult education, the Teachers Institute and Seminary College of Jewish studies.

The 1958 edition of the Objectives proposed the following structure: 1) foundation school, 2) Gan, 3) primary department, 4) elementary, 5) junior high, 6) intensive Hebrew high, 7) Hebrew high (pp. 16-19). There was a special section endorsing the day school (p. 21).

Official Objectives

Drafting the 1946 Statement. Soon after assuming office in September 1945, A. E. Milgram set up a Committee on Objectives, Standards and Curriculum. This committee energetically proceeded to draw up a statement on objectives that was published in 1946. In view of the centrality of this statement to a Conservative philosophy of education we shall examine it in considerable detail.

The members of the Committee were: Simon Greenberg, chairman, Max Arzt, Jack J. Cohen, Josiah Derby, Theodor Friedman, Henry Goldberg, Max Kadushin, A. E. Milgram, Arthur Neulander, Louis Ruffman, and Edward T. Sandrow. Of the eleven men, nine were rabbis and two were educators. At that time there were

128 PRAJE (1947), 10-30; also published separately and in CJ, IV (March 1948), 1-14.
still very few principals of Conservative schools with long experience. The rabbis had been running their schools for many years. The committee thus consisted of rabbinic and lay educators. "The main criteria for choosing the members of this committee were: 1) experience in the administration of a relatively successful congregational school, and 2) personal affiliation with Conservative Judaism, based on educational background and personal convictions". 129

In 1953 Abraham Simon became chairman. In that year the members of the committee were: Elijah Bortinker, Jack J. Cohen, Josiah Derby, George Ende, Henry R. Goldberg, William Lakritz, Alter F. Landesman, Stanley Rabinowitz, Louis L. Ruffman and Simon Shoop, with Millgram ex-officio. 130

The committee to draft the 1946 statement met ten times for full meetings and there were many meetings of subcommittees. 131 All members received a copy of A. Dushkin's article on "Common Elements in Jewish Education". 132 The minutes do not show who prepared the original draft, nor do we have the text of that document. We do know that Ruffman, Goldberg and Millgram worked on the administrative section, Cohen on the sections on "Role" and "Objectives". On April 27, 1946 the Commission reviewed the committee's draft and decided 1) to eliminate in the "Role" section the reference to the decline

129 JE, XVIII (March 1947), 25.
130 Mimeographed USCJE Annual Report, 1952-53, 1953-54, the only two reports of this kind that came to our attention.
131 Millgram, PRA, X (1946), 179. The Ms Minutes of the committee show fewer meetings. Evidently not all meetings produced minutes. All dates hereafter in the text will refer to the minutes of the committee or of the Joint Commission.
132 JE, XVII (November 1945), 5-13, 59f; (February 1946), 40-43.
of the Talmud Torah and a quotation from Dushkin, and 2) to include a "statement that will explicitly include the aim of achieving an adjustment of the Jewish child to his American environment." The text was evidently submitted to men in the field for review, since on May 15th a letter by Leon Lang was considered. Lang wrote: "there seems to have been no thought given to the relation of Jewish educational goals vis-a-vis the American scene and within a democratic social milieu. This makes the whole approach very unrealistic, not to say unprogressive...To fail to integrate such goals and methods with the current American life of our youth and their social experience would be little short of disastrous, in my humble judgment." The committee, however, decided not to alter the statement in view of the fact that, in their judgment, this problem had been taken proper cognizance of in the statement.

A suggestion by Max Arzt to include an expression of attitude on the all-day school was deemed inadvisable, since the statement did not pretend to cover every aspect of Jewish education, and a brief reference would confuse rather than clarify the issue. It was probably published soon thereafter.

The Statement: The Objectives and Standards for the Congregational School published in 1946 by the Joint Commission on Jewish Education of the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue contained four sections: 1) The role of the Congregational School, 2) Objectives, 3) The Contents of the Congregational School, and 4) The Method of Instruction. The statement, however, was not widely distributed and was never adopted by the majority of Jewish educational institutions.

133 Also appeared in CJ, II (April 1946), 24-32. Lang perhaps read this draft.
gational School Curriculum, and 4) Standards for Organizational Structure and Administration.

1. **Role.** The introductory section granted that the congregational school has produced a lowering of standards. But these faults

are not inherent in the congregational school system. These faults may be traced to remediable causes. The congregational school, moreover, has potentialities for enriching the whole educational process, the most important being the opportunity it provides to bring the child into close relationship with the synagogue, its affiliated organizations, and its many activities. Equally important is the closer bond with the child's home which a congregational school affords.

If the child is in the school the mother is in the sisterhood, the father in the men's club and the sister or brother in the Young People's League. The rabbi, too, is in a strategic position to help establish a harmonious interchange of influence between home and school (p. 4).

2. **Objectives.** These are quoted below in full.

In order that our children may experience the worthwhileness of Jewish life and ideals and claim their Jewish heritage joyfully, our school curriculum should be based on the following goals:

1. To develop and enhance the child's spiritual and ethical sensitivity so that in act and attitude he may be governed by the moral and religious traditions of Judaism.

2. To equip the child with knowledge of the Hebrew language which is indispensable for a full appreciation of the spirit and content of the Jewish heritage and of its renaissance in modern Palestine.

3. To impart a knowledge of Jewish history, literature and culture, necessary for rich, meaningful and intelligent Jewish living and for an understanding of the contributions of the Jew and of Judaism to world history and culture.

4. To develop in the child the ability and the desire to participate fully in traditional Jewish observances and practices in the Synagogue and the home.
5. To provide for the child, during his school career, a wide range of group activities and observances through which he may experience the satisfaction and the inspiration of Jewish living.

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

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

8. To give the child an awareness of the essential harmony between the ideals and traditions of American democracy and of the ideals and traditions of Judaism to the end that he may be happily adjusted to his environment as a Jew and citizen (pp. 5f).

3. Contents of the Curriculum. Six areas were listed: 1) religious convictions and observances, 2) the Hebrew language, 3) Torah and its significance in maintaining the continuity of the Jewish tradition, 4) history of the Jewish people and the contemporary scene, 5) Palestine, and 6) American Jewish history and life.

4. Organizational Structure and Administration. The educational program should extend from kindergarten through high school. The one-day-a-week school cannot achieve the above objectives. "Therefore all children above the age of eight should be required to attend at least three sessions a week and not less than two hours per session" (p. 12).

There should be the following departments: 1) primary for ages 4½ to 8, 2) elementary from 8 to 14, 3) junior high from age 11 with an accelerated intensive Hebrew curriculum for gifted students, 4) Hebrew high school for graduates of the
junior high, and 5) extension high school with a more tenuous program. Both high school departments should be based on a three-year course of studies, the former six hours a week, the latter four hours, and should prepare the students for the respective departments of the Teachers Institute.

The balance of the statement dealt with Bar and Bat Mitzvah, as well as confirmation requirements, school board organization, competent teachers, a principal for enrollments of over 200, proper physical facilities, textbooks and materials, evaluation, school records, budget, and cooperation with the congregation and the community.

Comparison with Dushkin's Common Elements. As was noted above, the Objectives Committee consulted Dushkin's formulation of seven common elements which all schools do and should accept. Dushkin's text follows:

We believe that all American Jewish schools do teach or wish to teach the following:

1. The classical continuing Jewish tradition — religious, literary, institutional and ethical... Torah in its widest sense — recognizing, however, the existence of differences in selection of materials and interpretations of events and ideas; it being understood that the range of such differences in selection increases as it proceeds from the biblical period to our own day.

2. Concrete ways of personal Jewish living — Mitzvot, customs, folkways, language forms, obligations — recognizing differences regarding the particular Jewish activities and ways of life which are to be taught as obligatory commitments for children and adults.

3. Hebrew in Jewish literature and life — recognizing differences regarding the age level at which it is to be taught, the materials and forms of teaching, and the intensity and amount of Hebrew language study.
4. The Jewish people — identification with it, knowledge of its past and present, and desire for its survival and welfare the world over — recognizing that there are various conceptions regarding the character of the Jewish people and its future.

5. Palestine — its unique role in Jewish history and tradition and its continued upbuilding and development — recognizing the existence of different views as to desired functions and forms of Jewish life in Palestine and also as to its relation to the Diaspora.

6. The American Jewish Environment — the history and development of American Jewry, participation in and responsibility for its welfare and growth, the status of Jews as Americans and the relation of the Jewish tradition to American democracy — recognizing the existence of differences regarding the desired forms and choice of affiliation and the outlook, as to the character and future of American Jewry.

7. Faith in the divine purpose making for the betterment of the world and man, involving the human obligation to strive toward a better, democratic world order — recognizing the existence of differences as to how this faith is to be imparted and what its implications are in political, social and economic terms.

In the Conservative Objectives there is naturally a special emphasis on religion and the synagogue. Otherwise the Common Elements, especially in their expanded form contained in Dushkin's comments, do contain the germ of all that went into the Conservative Objectives. That probably could be said of any comprehensive statement of aims by a Jewish school system. It is, however, the special emphasis that makes the difference.

Emphasis. What was in the minds of the framers of these Objectives? Fortunately this is on record. In his report to the Rabbinical Assembly, Greenberg, chairman of the Committee

134 JE, XVII (November 1945), 8.
On Objectives, discussed the matter.

In the first place, we wanted to formulate for ourselves, as clearly as we knew how, what we considered to be reasonable and obtainable objectives for our schools. We were constantly thinking in terms of the congregations as we knew them, not as we would like them to be some time in the future, but as they now exist, so that the next step should not be a tremendous leap. We don't have the teachers, we don't have the equipment. But even within our present set up and within our present limitations, we need a formulation of our principles, and an understanding in our own minds of what it is that we want to achieve. We stressed, first, that our school is intended to be an institution for the teaching of Judaism, not for the teaching of democracy or Americanism, or a lot of other very fine things. But it is about time that we make it clear in our own minds that while we all want democracy and Americanism, we teach Judaism because we believe that within Judaism democracy and Americanism have their proper and appropriate and natural place. If we produce great democrats we may not necessarily produce great Jews, but if we produce great Jews, we will of necessity produce great democrats. And the same is true for Americanism. And therefore, our emphasis should be, in our schools, upon the Jewish content that we want to transmit.

We put our emphasis upon the religious aspects of our school. Our schools will be failures if we do not produce God-fearing human beings, God-fearing Jews. If we produce first-rate Hebraists, who have no place in their lives for Sabbath and for Kashruth and for the synagogue as a place of worship and for prayer in their own personal lives, then our type of school has failed. It is a very good thing to produce men who are wholehearted and devoted nationalists and Zionists and Hebraists. Would to God that we were able to produce those in any goodly number. But even at that, we would fail if there would be the absence of the religious element in our education, and therefore you will find this stress that we put on those objectives.

Third, we stressed knowledge and habits. It is all very fine to talk about creating an atmosphere where the child is going to be happy as a child, but if he grows up without the ability to handle the prayer book and the Bible, and to have some concept of the contents of both of these books, then again we have failed. I know Jews who have no knowledge of Judaism and are quite satisfied with themselves. But
we don't want a Jew merely to be happy as a Jew. We want him also to have the contents of Judaism, and that emphasis must be there in our school curriculum, regardless of what else we do. We must search constantly for new methodologies, for new ways of making content material interesting to the children. But we must never forget that our purpose ultimately is content and not merely the adornments of educational methodology.\(^{(135)}\)

Millgram pointed to these statements by Greenberg and to Davis' Ladder (above p. 192) as documents embracing the basic ideology and the over-all framework of Jewish education in Conservative Judaism.\(^{(136)}\) He pointed out that the major aim was not mere survival, but a worthwhile religious and national type of living.\(^{(137)}\)

In his evaluation of the Objectives, Louis Katzoff stated:

> It is important that this statement started with objectives. You will find that in all of the educational literature today, there is an emphasis on objectives of teaching. Yet I would remark that we must go from the general to the specific, and it seems to me that this statement contains only the general statements. As a matter of fact, it differs not too much from the common elements that many of us are familiar with that have been described recently as the product of the educators under the auspices of the Jewish Education Committee, the seven cardinal themes in Jewish education that are common to all schools, not just Conservative schools, not just congregational schools, but even to the Yiddish school. Wherein is our school different from the other schools? We ought to go from the general statements to the specific statements...

\(^{(135)}\)PRA, X (1946), 173-75. For another evaluation of the Objectives by Greenberg see PRAJE (1946), 39-44.

\(^{(136)}\)"Implementing a Program of Intensive Jewish Education in the Congregational School" CJ, V (June 1949), 1-9.

\(^{(137)}\)Cf. also "The Objectives of Jewish Education" JE, XVIII (March 1947), 24f.
I think we must revaluate our own place in Jewish education. Right now, the Conservative movement is certainly on the ascendancy in this country. As a matter of fact, many people believe that this might become the norm of Judaism in America. But you know, two generations ago that is exactly what they said about the Reform synagogues. They said that was becoming American Judaism. After two generations, we discovered how futilely weak they were, and I believe the weakness was inherent in their educational system.

Two generations ago, when the great influx of Jews started to America, we brought over the European idea of education, the communal Talmud Torah. Now we have gone from the communal Talmud Torah to the congregational school.

A tremendous responsibility was placed on our shoulders with this new assumption of responsibility. Now that a generation has gone, and we reap, I think, the results of a Jewish illiteracy, we should honestly ask ourselves: Our first generation is practically lost; are we going to do a better job with our second generation? 138

A little over a year after the publication of the first edition of the Objectives Millgram reported that a revision was in preparation, "because the Commission, too, has been groping. It put out one statement. Now on the basis of experience, on the basis of criticism, we are revising it radically. 139

There is no doubt that much of what was added in this later statement was in the minds of the framers in the first place. But in their first attempt they chose to be cautious. It was basically a matter of adding to the more formal educational aspects listed in 1946 some indications as to an expanded co-curriculum. This job of refinement continued in

138 PRA, X (1946), 176-79.
139 PRAJE (1947), 134.
later years.

At the Rabbinical Assembly Conference on Jewish Education in 1947 the following resolutions were adopted. They no doubt strengthened the hands of the Commission in its labors.

Jewish education should deal with the whole child. As such, it should impart a belief in God, develop an ethical personality, instill the love of observance of Jewish religious practices, foster a desire to fulfill American democratic ideals through a world order of peace and justice, create a personal vital relationship with Eretz Yisrael and transmit a knowledge of Jewish sources ancient and modern in the Hebrew language.

Day schools were endorsed. 140

In a letter of invitation to a meeting of the Committee on October 30, 1952 it was stated that the **Objectives** and **Curriculum Outlines** prepared by it "have had a revolutionary and salutary effect upon the Conservative congregational school."

**Upgrading Standards.** Three editions of the Objectives contain the major upward revisions of standards: those of 1946 (18pp.), 1948 (22pp.), and 1958 (29pp.). Minor changes were made in the 1952 edition (23pp.).

**1946 and 1948 Compared.** The 1948 edition was four pages longer due to the following additional features: a brief paragraph on the arts as part of the curriculum contents, the Foundation School, extensive and intensive junior high departments, LTF, junior congregation, clubs and other activities, all-day schools and summer camps, expanded statement on staff

140 **PRAJE** (1947), 151f.
standards, integration of home with classroom through the PTA. These additions reflected both new experiences, such as the Foundation School, the day school, and LTF, as well as more refined approaches.

Omitted was a short paragraph that set the age of curricular differentiation between students who have or do not have aptitude for Hebrew study at age eleven. It was evidently decided to leave that to the individual school.

A revised edition in 1952 differed from the earlier edition by an addition of a paragraph on nursery school and kindergarten for those congregations which could not establish a Foundation School. Otherwise the text was the same.

1958 edition. For a while the matter rested. It took some time to reactivate the committee's work on objectives, especially since they were busy with curriculum. On March 3, 1957, Greenberg reported that the committee had met four times and had prepared a first draft. We have in the Minutes several drafts of the section on "Contents" which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Here we shall note that the 1958 revision, which finally emerged, differed considerably from the previous ones. The list of objectives was completely revamped. There was more emphasis on religion, Mitzvot, God and ethical experiences. The statement was more America-centered. Hebrew was limited more to literature, rather than to its significance for a link with Israel. Democratic elements in the Bible and community participation received greater emphasis.

At the 1955 Rabbinical Assembly Conference Derby reported
that a survey showed that half of the congregations responding thought the Objectives satisfactory, only 20% thought them too high, and 10% felt that they should be raised. This was interpreted as an indication of basic agreement on educational philosophy. Millgram asserted that the Objectives were instrumental in spurring the abolition of the Sunday school.

Objectives Compared. In order to afford the reader a bird's eye view of the many attempts at framing educational objectives we prepared a table showing nine such formulations, almost all of them within the Conservative movement. In addition, we shall compare these to several surveys of aims in Jewish education generally.

The nine columns in Table 1 represent the following:

a) the official objectives of 1946 and 1948; b) those of 1958; c) Davis' in his introduction to his Ladder of Jewish Education; d) Dushkin's common elements; e) Dinin's summary of the Consensus by all participants in the Dropsie Symposium; f) Dinin's own in that same symposium; g) Irene Bush's for the Brooklyn Jewish Center Academy; h) Eugene Kohn's in 1933; i) Reconstructionist.

It will be noted that: A) represented the first attempt


Ibid, 206.

All the previous documents were reviewed above and will not be documented here. Kohn's "The Objectives of Jewish Education in America" PRA, V (1933), 13-29.

at formulating Objectives. B) in 1958 there was more stress on the God idea and on ethical experiences than in 1946. C) Davis' arrangement was different but it comes closest to the 1958 draft. D) Dushkin's common elements served as guide for the official objectives. F) The Dropsie Consensus speaks of "Torah in its broadest sense". F) Dinin stressed humanistic values and democracy in the Jewish community. G) Bush singled out attitudes and behavior. H) Kohn had few practical precepts and little emphasis on Hebrew, world Jewry and literature. I) The Reconstructionist aims were varied and all-embracing.

In the final analysis all, except Bush, stress very similar aims, because they all deal with the afternoon Hebrew School. Bush is different because her goals were designed for a progressive day school. We must reiterate again, however, that emphases are all-important. Even within the Conservative movement the supernatural approach of the theists is poles apart from the naturalist Reconstructionists and certainly from Bush, who altogether shied away from indoctrination and religion.

A quick review of surveys of aims in general Jewish education should also prove instructive. Honor discerned three stages in the historical progress of Jewish education. In the first stage the focus was placed upon making Jewish education more attractive; in the second — more pertinent, in the third — more meaningful. Mordecai Halevi diagnosed the essential

145 Jewish Elementary Education in the United States, 22f.
differences as between those who stress linguistics and others who emphasize experience and content. In his report on the National Study of the American Association for Jewish Education in 1959, Dushkin found that all whose opinions were polled stressed knowledge above everything; he also found little difference between the goals of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. The author of the Common Elements has consciously kept sufficiently aloof from some existing divisive realities in Jewish education in his wise guidance toward more unity in the Jewish school.

The Reform movement has boasted a department of education for over thirty five years, but its curricula were merely lists of suggested books without a statement of objectives. Not until its recent edition was such a statement of aims included. The Conservative Commission undertook this task the very first year it engaged a professional head. By making the goals realistic and yet setting the sights higher than reality, it produced a document that had great impact on Conservative education.

Summary and Conclusions

From meager beginnings four decades ago the Conservative school system rose to have the highest percentage of weekday enrollment. A Commission of Jewish Education has been active within the past fifteen years in publishing textbooks and clar-

147 Jewish Education in the United States, pp. 14-38.
ifying aims.

Conservative educators, after advancing progressivist notions, have settled on an essentialist philosophy. The Reconstructionists, however, have succeeded in adapting progressivist ideas to the Jewish school.

Structurally there was experimentation with a one-day-a-week education which led to dissatisfaction and evolution of the Ladder of Jewish Education, starting with nursery school, ending with high school, and including co-curricular activities, with the weekday afternoon school as the core.

The officially adopted aims are: love of God and goodness, spiritual and ethical experiences, Mitzvot, Hebrew language and literature, history, culture, the Jewish people in America, Israel and the world over, democracy in its relation to Judaism, and the study of the Torah as a life-long pursuit.

The following observations on the educational philosophy of the Conservative movement seem in order:

1. Essentialism. The spokesmen who represent the official Conservative line tend toward perennialism and essentialism: the heritage comes first, the child and the community are next in line of importance.

2. Comprehensive Scope. Both the aims and the content of education embrace a wide variety of elements.

3. Middle-of-the-Road Structure. The afternoon Hebrew school stands half-way between the Sunday and the all-day school. The Conservatives adopted it as their basic pattern of organization in line with their middle position within the denominations.
TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-Objectives 1946-48</th>
<th>B-Objectives 1958</th>
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<td>God</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>Spiritual ethical experiences</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
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<td>Mitzvot</td>
<td>Mitzvot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home, synagogue observances</td>
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<td>School observances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jewish People</td>
<td>Democracy and Judaism</td>
<td>Jewish sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy and Judaism</td>
<td>Torah life-long pursuit</td>
<td>Modern literature, art</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D-Dushkin Common Elements</strong></td>
<td><strong>E-Consensus Dropsie</strong></td>
<td><strong>F-Dinin</strong></td>
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<td>Torah</td>
<td>Education indispensable</td>
<td>Education central</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Torah-Jewish life</td>
<td>Indispensable to Am. Judaism and democracy</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hebrew</td>
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<td>Jewish people</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Palestine</td>
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<td>America</td>
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<td><strong>G-Bush Academy</strong></td>
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<td>Jewish and American participation</td>
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<td>Judaism &amp; democracy</td>
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<td>People &amp; Humanity</td>
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<td>Arts</td>
<td>Rituals, Home life</td>
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</tbody>
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Zionism | Hebrew, Arts | Peoplehood |
Chapter IV

THE CURRICULUM OF THE CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Introduction

The present chapter is divided into three major parts:
1. the reasons advanced for teaching the various subjects;
2. a history of the curricula of Conservative schools in America; 3. an examination of these Conservative curricula in the light of our findings on Conservative ideology and educational philosophy.

Justification of Curriculum Content

Our generation has experienced a complete revaluation of values. Jewish curriculum planners have been beset by claims of conflicting Jewish ideologies and general educational theories. The axioms of recent generations have all been put in question. Every one of the subjects of the old curriculum has been challenged. Bible, Talmud, Hebrew, prayer, observances, have been put on the defensive. Moreover, there has been an unprecedented expansion of the curriculum. History, holidays, modern Hebrew, ethics, current problems, Jewish community life are only a sampling of the new subjects taught in our schools. Altogether novel were the co-curricular offerings, such as Keren Ami, art, drama, singing, dancing.

We shall examine some of the rationales of the major subjects taught in the Jewish school.

Why Hebrew: We shall begin with modern Hebrew which is the expression and symbol of Jewish nationalism born of the millenia of yearnings and aspirations of a nation striving for redemption.
Ben Gurion, prime minister of Israel, states:

The Hebrew language is an indispensable condition to Jewish education. Without it there is no Jewish education. A knowledge of the Hebrew language provides us with a contact with all Jewish generations of the past and all Jewish centers throughout history. Moreover, it is the key to the treasure-house of Jewish culture.\(^1\)

Eliezer Rieger, formerly dean of the School of Education of the Hebrew University, writes:

Hebrew has a special importance for the Jews in the Diaspora. It is not a "foreign language" for them. It is a language which binds them to their people's past and to their historic home as well as to their people in present-day Israel. It is also the language of their religion, the language of the Bible and the Prayerbook. It is the common denominator of all Jewish groups wherever they may live and whatever their particular characteristics.\(^2\)

We shall now quote from one of the earliest Reform curricula:

Hebrew is the characteristic subject of the curriculum of the Jewish Religious School; the other subjects, biblical history, ethics and religious principles, it shares with other denominational schools. Only Hebrew is an avowedly Jewish subject. When the Hebrew is dropped out of the religious training, the Jewish school loses much of its uniqueness. The Hebrew accentuates all the other subjects of the school and gives them their Jewish "genius" and charm. Jewish heroism and Jewish martyrdom, Jewish poetry and Jewish philosophy, Jewish customs and Jewish ritual lose the largest part of their distinctiveness when they are taught without relation to that tongue which is the source of their life.\(^3\)

Another Reform authority states:

\(^1\) The Day, Yiddish daily, October 30, 1955
\(^2\) Modern Hebrew (1953), 6-12.
No one can doubt the great cultural value of the Hebrew language. To know the Hebrew language is to have access to the idealism of the Jewish people in its most original forms of expression. That such a knowledge is of great survival value will be seen from the tenacity with which the Jewish people clung to it throughout the ages, both in prayer and in study.4

Henrietta Szold wrote in 1896:

Literature in the vernacular...is effective...so far as the head goes, but it can never stir the heart as hearts should be stirred to uproot apathy. The Hebrew language itself is freighted with untranslatable Hebrew ideals. A Hebrew word conjures up a whole train of religious thoughts; therefore our public worship is bound to lose its Jewish character in the measure in which Hebrew is banished (p. 14).

There is a vast literary storehouse filled with treasures; the key, the Hebrew Language, is in our guardianship; have we a right to throw the key into the ocean of oblivion, and deprive the world of the enjoyment of those treasures? More than that: when we have ceased to be the efficient guardians of our treasures, of what use are we in the world?...

As there is but one God, so there is but one Judaism, and that Judaism has but one language — the Hebrew...5

Solomon Schechter, in an address in 1907 on "The Problems of Religious Education" (Seminary Addresses, pp. 105-17) delivered a most telling argument on the indispensability of Hebrew in Jewish education.

It is the sacred language, it is the language of the Bible, it is the language of the prayer Book and the depository of all the sublimest thoughts and noblest sentiments that Israel taught and felt for more than three thousand years. It is the tie that unites us with millions of worshippers in the same sacred language,


who are our brothers and our brethren in spite of all the latest theological discoveries and ethnological hypotheses. It is the natural language of the Jew when in communion with his God; he divines more than he is able to explain. Translations are a poor makeshift at best, and more often a miserable caricature. For more than twenty-three centuries the world has been busy with the interpretation and translation of the Scriptures, and yet no agreement has been reached as to the exact rendering of the fourth verse of the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy containing the confession of Israel's creed. But the Jew reads the Shema Yisrael and does know it. He cannot translate it, but he feels it and is it. For, as the mystics have it, to be a thing is to know a thing, and to know a thing is to be a thing...

When the last sound of Hebrew will have disappeared from our synagogues, the last trace of Judaism will also have gone (p. 110).

Judah Pilch, in an article on the subject under review, states:

A minority, like the Jewish people, cannot exist away from its homeland without that inner strength which will protect it against assimilation and national disintegration, namely, an independent cultural life. No Jewish independent culture can exist without the Hebrew language which nurtures it and gives it vitality; Jewish culture in translation alone will be ineffective in stemming the tide of complete cultural assimilation. Whenever the Jewish people preserved the Hebrew language in one form or another, they continued their national existence even though their spoken language was not Hebrew.

From this we can deduce that in spite of the fact that we share national and universal cultural values with the people among whom we live, our existence as a people is not endangered as long as the Hebrew language is part and parcel of our individual and collective lives as Jews (p. 20).

In a major declaration written in the heyday of progressive

7 "Some Guiding Principles for the Curriculum of the Jewish School of Tomorrow", JE, IV (December 1932), 150-62.
currents J. Golub and L. Honor stated:

We believe that the restored active use of our historic language will greatly facilitate communication among world Jewry. Above all, Hebrew is indispensable to continued progress in our national literature, which requires not merely the literary artists, but an audience freely conversant with the Hebrew idiom. We must, therefore, strive toward a condition in which as many of our children as possible shall be bi-lingual, using Hebrew as freely as English (p. 158).

In his book *Hebrew the Eternal Language* (1957) William Chomsky of Dropsie College, Philadelphia, presents one of the most learned statements on the importance of Hebrew in Jewish education in America. He then proceeds:

Young people, and adults too, who possess the proper Hebraic orientation will be not only the builders of Israel, but also the backbone of a meaningful Judaism in the Diaspora, which will integrate itself with the revitalized Judaism of Israel and model itself to some degree on the ideal patterns evolved there, while evolving and creating at the same time values and life patterns indigenous to their particular locale (p. 277).

The only guarantee for the survival of the Jewish community as a creative force in Jewish life is an effective, functional, Torah-centered and Hebraic type of education (p. 278).

David Bridger analyzed sixteen curricula, nearly all of them designed for both Orthodox and Conservative schools. He found in them the following objectives of Hebrew instruction.

1. To teach elementary language skills.
2. To teach national-religious content through the use of the Hebrew idiom.

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8"Objectives and Standards of Achievement of Hebrew Language Instruction on the Primary Level", *JE*, XXV (Fall 1954), 37-45; See also: *JE*, XXIX (Fall 1958), 50.
3. To enable the pupil to read selections of the Hebrew Bible with understanding.
4. To enable the pupil to read and understand Hebrew story-material.
5. To prepare the pupil for subsequent reading of classical and modern Hebrew literature.
6. To enable the pupil to understand Jewish values, concepts and institutions in their original idiom.
7. To enable the pupil to become familiar with Hebrew words and expressions which have become the vocabulary of Jewish life.
8. To enable the pupil to read and understand Hebrew prayers.
9. To enable the pupil to translate simple passages from the Prayer-book and the Bible.
10. To enable the pupil to use Hebrew as a means of self-expression orally and/or in writing.
11. To enable the pupil to understand Hebrew conversation.
12. To enable the pupil to appreciate the Hebrew language as a living and creative force both here and in Israel (p. 45).

Zvi Scharfstein has espoused maximalist views, demanding a maximum of Hebrew in the program as well as the teaching of all other subjects in that language. What were his reasons?

Fortunately we have a recent collection of his essays where his views on the subject are stated very clearly. 9

There was a time when language was considered a vestment of thought and a distinction was made between form and content, that is, it was believed that thought and words existed separately in our mind, and the speaker merely fitted the words to his thoughts. In reality thought cannot exist in a vacuum. When linguistic form is absent, thought is errant and uncertain (p. 10).

Why should we not teach Judaic subjects in English and Hebrew merely as a language? Jabotinsky remarked that the school implants in the hearts of its students not the language that is studied, but the language of instruction. A person grows with his studies. Every day his world widens and new

9 Hinukh Vekiyum (no date; epilogue written in 1957), p.352.
horizons reveal themselves: the mysteries of nature, of biology, of the nature of society. Daily his concepts are enriched and all this wealth is contained in a new vocabulary. Concepts and words become indissolubly united.

This brings about the supremacy of the language of education over the mother tongue (p. 23).

Bible too must be studied in the original. In studying the Torah and the Prophets it is almost impossible to distinguish between form and content. They are as inseparable as a flame from the wick. Often the difficulty of language is an advantage rather than a disadvantage in an important subject...Facility has been of little benefit to Jewish education. The instruction in Jewish religion in the Jewish schools of Germany and in "the courses in religion" in France took place in the vernacular; see what happened to them. I do not claim that it is not possible to know the Bible in another language or that it would have no influence at all; only that departure from the Hebrew language and the sources brings about alienation from the people and its culture (p. 56).

Finally, the most compelling reason for Hebrew is psychological.

The stories about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not different from the stories that his Christian neighbor's son hears from the minister in his religious lesson. Abraham is generally a type known to him from the history of the United States and its great leaders; in the child's mind there is a resemblance between them. It is different when the child is transferred into an atmosphere of a new language; he then lives in a new spiritual world, the world of Israel (p. 113).

The plank on Hebrew in the Reconstructionist education platform reads as follows:

10 Hebrew must play a major role in the Jewish school. Where the students have language ability (to be ascertained over a period of the first two or three years in the school), they

A Plan for Jewish Education, Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation.
should be taught entirely in Hebrew, except where it is necessary to employ English for the understanding of some concept. Students who have little language ability should be given a course in functional Hebrew. All students, however, should have sufficient background in the language to be able to participate intelligently in public worship (p. 22).

A summary of Kaplan's views is contained in his answer to the question "Must Jewish education be based entirely on the Hebrew language, and must Jewish religion be taught only in Hebrew?"

Outside the State of Israel the Hebrew language should not be the sole means of imparting a Jewish education. On the other hand, no Jewish education can be deemed adequate which fails to impart facility in the understanding of the Bible, Prayer Book and other Jewish literature in the original, and which does not enable the individual Jew to maintain contact through the Hebrew language with the inner life of Israel (Questions Jews Ask, p. 357).

Louis Katzoff made a survey of the objectives of Conservative schools. His study is based on a questionnaire answered by 93 rabbis, 51 weekday teachers, 26 principals and 32 Sunday school teachers. His findings on Hebrew are summarized as follows:

The Conservative congregational school does not aim to develop a linguistic ability in Hebrew as an instrument for self-enrichment through reading or conversation. This may not be attributed to a negative attitude toward an intensive knowledge of the language; on the contrary, the responses on the most desirable conditions disclose a rather positive outlook toward the development of speaking and reading the language. Optimum conditions differ markedly from current

practice in the preparation for either speaking the language or for silent reading because reality does not permit the fulfillment of such objectives, due mostly to lack of time. Therefore since a choice must be made between preparing the pupil for a study of the Bible and the Siddur or developing the ability to use Hebrew as a vehicle for speech, preference is necessarily placed upon the former. To this extent most congregational schools do not very seriously regard linguistic facility as a prerequisite to a full comprehension of the Bible and Siddur. The study of the Bible is cardinal and may not be postponed because of its language complexities, and under present general conditions there is a feeling that the pupil, again for lack of time, may never arrive at such study if he must first acquire sufficient facility in the language to enable him to read it with ease (p. 61).

Katzoff further states that the lack of full preparation even for a study of the Hebrew Bible is explained on the grounds that the translation method is used and that other than linguistic objectives are emphasized in Bible study. On the question of Hebrew as a sacred or secular tongue the Conservative movement seems to be on the horns of a dilemma, since both the religious and national attributes of Judaism are almost equally emphasized.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that most of the above statements are more declarations of faith than the results of scientific research. Take, for example, the axiom that Judaism never flourished in translation. To our knowledge this proposition has not satisfactorily been demonstrated on the basis of a historical study. It is therefore desirable to submit all claims as to the value of a particular subject to careful scholarly scrutiny.

Why Teach the Bible. The Bible has been another universal
in Jewish curricula. For the elementary school it meant the Five Books of Moses.

Whereas in practice the Bible is still largely taught as a linguistic exercise, there seems to be universal agreement among thinkers that the main purpose of studying the Bible should be to elicit its spiritual values. This approach results in selection of passages for their religious content and in advocating the use of the vernacular for discussion of that content.

As to the selection, W. Chomsky suggested an anthology of the stories of Joseph, Moses, Samson, Solomon and others from the Pentateuch and the Early Prophets, which could easily be taught with 186 basic words as a core. Sol Coledner recommended the elimination of all narrative portions, which are known to the child from related studies, and substituting for its legal and ethical selections. "The study of Humash thus becomes a study of religion and 'a way of life'."

The principle of selection and the extensive use of English is advocated by Louis L. Kaplan whose teachers' guides and pupil workbooks have become fairly popular. The aim is to teach a central idea in each portion of the week.

12 "The Problem of Bible Teaching in Our Hebrew Curriculum", JE, X (June 1938), 85-90.
13 "Humash in Our Schools", SyS, XI (September 1952), 25-27.
14 "A New Approach to the Teaching of Humash", JE, XV (January 1944), 85-89. See also his Introduction to the Teaching of the Torah by the Cycle Method (Baltimore, 1942), mimeographed. Another educator experimented with excerpts from the original text. Israel Kanovitz, Darkah Shel Torah Bvet Hasefer (1943), mimeographed.
A storm of protests arose among all lovers of Hebrew when a professor of Bible at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem suggested limiting Bible study to the vernacular, plus a selection of verses in the original Hebrew. This was suggested in order to make Bible study a true educational instrument, that of "translating the values of the Bible into the language of modern life." These values incidentally were essentially national, not religious; namely, pride in the Bible as a product of Jewish genius.

He explains his idea of gems (gvishim, crystals) as follows:

When I tell about creation, I say to the children: You wish to hear how God spoke. How is it written in the Torah? "Let there be light, and there was light"; four words which are two. And when we teach about Adam in the garden of Eden we shall drill: "It is not good for man to be alone." In connection with Cain and Abel we shall teach the verse "Am I my brother's keeper"? In the lesson on holidays we shall teach "Thou shalt rejoice on thy holidays" or "thou shalt be very happy." When we tell of Elijah the Prophet we shall teach "a still voice" or "My father, My father, worth chariots and horsemen to Israel." When we teach the story of Nehemiah we shall inculcate into the children's heads the verse "to provide us with guard duty at night and with labor during the day," etc. These phrases we shall drill by heart, we shall make drawings about them, sing them as much as possible, use them in dramatizations, and in the future the pupil will find them printed in Hebrew in his vernacular text. The phrases taught that month — not more than five or six — shall be displayed in letters of gold on velvet in the classroom... What will happen to Hebrew? More will be achieved in it than by the present method...

There are children with whom it should be possible to base the study of Hebrew from the first moment on a drill of gems...These gems should eventually become the common cultural language between all parts of our nation, both abroad and in Israel (pp. 71f).

He proposed that the first three or four years of Hebrew study shall be devoted exclusively to teaching Bible and Judaism by means of the gems.

Josef Azaryahu, an Israeli educator, set down a comprehensive set of goals for Bible instruction.16

1. Religious — to activate religious sentiments, to educate in a spirit of faith and religion. 2. Ethical — the lofty teachings of the prophets on social justice, the moral lessons to be derived from the stories, prophecies, poetry and laws. 3. National — a love for the wholesome life of our people in its land and a powerful aspiration to renew our nation's days as of old. 4. Esthetic — to develop a sense of beauty and art in the epic narrative, the prophetic pathos and the lyrical poetry. 5. Practical education — a realization of the formation and dissolution of societies, an understanding of the world about. 6. Linguistic-literary — to develop the Hebrew language in line with classical sources. 7. Social science — the history of our people and the world; the geography of Palestine.

Zvi Scharfstein wrote extensively on aims of teaching the Bible.17 First he points out that each ideological group in-

16 Kitve I Teaching the Bible (Jerusalem, 1946).
terprets the Bible to its own end. The Reform movement emphasizes the mission idea, the traditionalist — ideas and actions, the nationalist — hopes for restoration, the socialist Zionist — religion of labor. Whereas in the Heder the Torah was studied unquestioningly as a religious duty, the school of today must reckon with two new and fundamental considerations: 1) a shift from the subject-centered to the child-centered school, 2) the view of the Bible as the literary creation of a people.

Scharfstein then proceeds to define the purpose of Jewish education generally as that of "imparting to the child national consciousness, aspirations, culture and values, and of strengthening in him the desire to live an active Jewish life" (p. 27).

The educational value of the Bible from this viewpoint would be: 1) that the spiritualized narratives aid in personality development; 2) they provide a realistic picture of life — such as the relationships between Joseph and his brothers; 3) satisfaction in a dynamic and moving story; 4) the ethical motivation, such as Nathan the Prophet's challenge to David "You are the man!"; 5) socialization into the Jewish people with its heroes and ideals; 6) Love of the Jewish people as a common bond of Jews everywhere.

While Heschel did not, to our knowledge, state explicitly the reasons for teaching Bible, the treatment of our subject will be incomplete without a few samples of his rapturous poetry on the values to be derived from the Bible. It is up to the teacher to impart these values to his pupils.
There are many literatures, but only one Bible. The Bible is an answer to the question: how to sanctify life. And if we say we feel no need for sanctification, we only prove that the Bible is indispensable. Because it is the Bible that teaches us how to feel the need for sanctification...

The Bible has shattered man's illusion of being alone. Sinai broke the cosmic silence that thickens our blood with despair. God does not stand aloof from our cries; He is not only a pattern, but a power, and life is a response, not a soliloquy.

The Bible shows the way of God with man and the way of man with God. It contains both the complaint of God against the wicked and the shriek of the smitten man, demanding justice of God.18

In two virtually identical essays 19 M. Kaplan first reviews past motivations in teaching the Bible — traditional, Haskalah and Zionist; the four versions of Peshat, Remez, Derush and Sod; and then proceeds to state the purpose of teaching it in our day.

The main emphasis, however, when the Bible is taught nowadays must be on what it should mean to us in view of the elements in our environment which constitute a serious challenge to Jewish life. Those elements are: modern nationalism, modern scientism and the acceptance of force as the final arbiter in human affairs. Each of these modern developments is a menace to the existence of the Jewish people. In its struggle for survival, it has to reckon with all of them. One of the principal means at its command is the Bible. It is the duty of a Jewish teacher so to interpret the Bible as to enable the child, when he grows up, to withstand the impact of these three tendencies upon his life as a Jew in the modern world (Future, p. 456).

This can be achieved not by viewing the Bible merely as a literary creation, but by reinterpreting its meaning for the

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18 God in Search of Man, 237-39, see also Man is Not Alone, 129.

19 "A New Educational Approach to the Bible" in The Future of the American Jew, pp. 447-68; and in Scharfstein, ed., Yesodot Mahnuch Hayehudi Baamerika, pp. 48-75. The references are to the English text.
Jewish needs of our day. The Pentateuch lends itself best for such interpretation.

As early as 1917 Eugene Kohn stressed the moral lessons in the biblical narrative. The aim, according to this first major pedagogic publication of the Conservative movement, was not merely general character lessons, but the teaching of Judaism.

In his essay "The Study of the Bible" Schechter put himself squarely in favor of some of the conclusions of Bible criticism.

That tradition cannot be maintained in all its statements need not be denied. The Second Isaiah, for instance, is a fact; not less a fact is it that Solomon cannot be held responsible for the scepticism of the Book of Ecclesiastes, nor can David claim the authorship of the whole of the Psalms for himself (p. 39).

At the same time he equated Higher Bible Criticism with Higher Anti-semitism (Seminary Addresses, p. 35).

In a recent article Moshe Greenberg, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, University of Pennsylvania, offers his


22 "On Teaching the Bible in Religious Schools", JE, XXIX (Spring 1959), 45-53. One may agree with the author that Bible should be taught for its spiritual values and that these are to be derived by interpretation. But it is difficult to assent to his statement, that "the basic requirement of a Bible teacher is not faith, but understanding; not assent, but recognition of the profound issues of which the Bible treats" (p. 45). A teacher of religion must himself believe what he teaches, certainly on the elementary level. It must be an affirmation of faith, of truths to illumine life's path; it cannot be a mere intellectual grasp.
view of reinterpretation of the Bible.

The object of teaching the Bible in a religious school is, I submit, to make the student aware of the spiritual issues raised by the Bible, and to delineate the manner in which these issues are answered or otherwise dealt with. A teacher having this as his object will allot time to linguistic or merely historical matters — much as these may intrigue him personally — only to the extent necessary for clarifying the thought, taking as his model the Bible itself, which treats language and history not for themselves but as vehicles of a religious message (p. 45).

In his survey of practices and desiderata Katzoff found that Conservative schools included formal study of the Humash as a major offering.

The primary aims in the study of Bible were: 1. the value of teaching the social and ethical ideals contained in the scriptures; 2. the teaching of the religious concepts of Judaism; 3. the development of character. The secondary aims included the values: 1. of developing the facility of the Hebrew language; 2. as a guide for the observance of traditional law; 3. in teaching Jewish history; 4. in developing an understanding of democracy. Emphasis of Bible as folklore or of Bible criticism was rejected in favor of interpretations based on rabbinic lore.

The reliability of the surveyor's findings on Bible instruction must be questioned simply on the basis that Katzoff's questions were probably misunderstood due to their brevity. To claim, for example, as the respondents did, that Bible study aims at character training and at the same time to spend

23 Issues in Jewish Education, pp. 64-75.
so much energy on struggling with translation of difficult words is rather incongruous.

It is evident from all the above that the rationale for Bible study is still far from clear. All proponents will struggle with the problem of reconciling their deep sense of love and of sacredness of the Hebrew language, on the one hand, and on the other, the equal importance of teaching ideas. Our forefathers had no such problems; they believed the simple Bible stories and were guided by the world outlook it provided for them.

**Why Teach the Siddur.** An interesting conference on The Teaching of Prayer was convened by the Chicago Board of Jewish Education in 1949. Samuel M. Blumenfield raised the question of understanding prayers. Both Reform and Conservative leaders have sought to introduce prayer in the vernacular.

Just because they know and understand the language of worship, do people today pray more than their fathers, many of whom did not understand the words of their prayers? I don't think that we are really conscious of the meaning of prayer when we introduce the question of understanding. When we deal with prayers, we operate with another dimension where the question of rationalism and understanding are no longer valid (p. 31).

Simon Greenberg criticized two statements of aims of teaching the Siddur, one of the Chicago Board of Education, the other is an article by Samuel Levine. Greenberg's main

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25Prayer Course of Study for Congregational Hebrew Schools, mimeographed.
criticism was that neither provided for personal prayer; instead there was an emphasis on the communal service.

In the introduction to his book *The Ideals of The Prayer Book* (1942) Greenberg writes:

> It is becoming more generally recognized that in our personal lives and in our educational activities we have not made the best use of our Prayer Book. We permitted it to become a book in which children and many adults merely practised the mechanics of Hebrew reading, or whereby they participated in a meaningless ritual. The wealth of ethical and historical material embedded in its pages remained largely unexploited.

This commentary on a portion of the Siddur is an attempt to direct our attention to the national ideals, the ethical doctrines, the religious principles, and the universal aspirations which form the heart and substance of our prayers (p. 7). 27

The Chicago publication mentioned above (note 25) lists the following immediate aims:

1. To prepare the pupil for participation in home ceremonies that involve the use of prayer.

2. To prepare the pupil for participation in school activities that involve the reading and chanting of prayers. (Sabbath Morning and High Holiday Services, Passover Seder Party, etc.)

3. To prepare the pupil, insofar as possible within the limitations of the amount of time available, for participation in adult services, especially the Friday Evening and Holiday services.

4. To acquaint the pupil with some of the significant concepts contained in the prayer book, more especially those that are expressed in simple language that the pupil would be capable of understanding after a period of almost three years of the study of Hebrew.

5. To familiarize the pupil with the liturgical melodies that would function in children's

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27 Another Conservative publication is Arthur H. Neulander's *What Is In the Prayer Book?*, mimeographed.
services, in home ceremonies, and in some instances, in Jewish adult religious life.

6. To teach the pupil the use of the prayer book, and more especially the order of prayers that is followed in adult religious services (p. 1).

The following excerpt is from an address by A. Millgram:

Men normally resort to prayer, especially in times of personal or social crisis, when their own insufficiency cries out for strength, vision, and guidance. But the Jew, in addition to his normal yearnings for communion with God, frequently experiences a longing for kinship with his people and its culture. He seeks his brethren in the synagogue, and he wants to join them in prayer to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These yearnings stir with rhythmic regularity every year during the High Holy Days and during the important milestones in his own life or in the life of his family (p. 1).

If a congregational school program is to be evaluated, one of the first questions should be: Does the child who attends that school learn how to pray? Is the experience of prayer relevant and meaningful? Is it sufficiently frequent and regular in its occurrence to become a part of the child's routine habits and needs? In brief, does the curriculum provide for effective teaching of prayer and does that teaching lead to the development of a Jew who will find solace and strength in his periodic dialogue with God? Does the school's program tend to mold a Jewish personality who will find the traditional Siddur a vehicle for his communion with God, and the synagogue a place where God's nearness is a sensed reality? (p. 3).

Robert Gordis comes closest to stating the official Conservative view of prayer. It is based on the author's statement prepared in connection with the Conservative Prayer book. He distinguishes four rungs in prayer: petitional,

28Teaching Prayer To Our Children, Address, RA. Convention, May 18, 1959, mimeographed.
29The Ladder of Prayer (1956).
Thanksgiving and praise, confession and forgiveness, and study. He lists four basic principles that guided the movement in editing its prayer books: continuity with tradition, relevance to the needs and ideals of our generation, new creative expression, and intellectual integrity.

The Reconstructionist prayer book was a major departure from the traditional text in line with a new theology. The major purposes of prayer — according to this conception — are: to experience the reality of God and to have a sense of oneness with Israel. Traditional passages on the chosen people, revelation, a personal Messiah, restoration of the sacrificial cult, retribution and resurrection are modified. Additional readings from medieval and modern Hebrew literature are supplied.

In his study Katzoff notes that the Conservative school had again given status to the Siddur after it had been under attack and barren for many decades. The cardinal aim of instruction in the prayer book was preparation for participation in Synagogue services and in home ceremonies. Hence a fluency in mechanical reading was desirable. Corollary aims were an attitude of reverence for the synagogue, for the Siddur and for prayer, and familiarity with the order of prayers.

It seems to the writer that, in practice, the schools follow consistently the general orientation of the Conservative outlook. Having accepted the dilution of Jewish religious life, the Conservative group centers its attention upon loyalty to the synagogue and upon the need for public worship. Habitual prayer, which is a personalized reaction to worship — particularly private worship at home — is usually sidetracked. For here it may be observed that home ceremonial observances, such as prayer each morning and
evening, prayer with "Tefillin" and making the blessings before or after meals, were found to be little accentuated, while on the other hand, attendance in synagogue on the Sabbath was universally stressed. All this points to the realization that the Conservative school does not emphatically aim to make the prayer book the personal companion of the child, but limits its use primarily to synagogue service (op. cit., p.79).

The survey indicates that the contents of the Siddur, the religious ideas in it, are accorded secondary importance.

It is doubtful, however, whether any appreciable number of schools actually did anything worthwhile in the realm of ideas of the prayer book when Katzoff made his survey, or whether they do so even today. The emphasis on mechanical reading, so clearly reflected in the survey, is the main existing fact to be stressed. However, the prevailing practice of the junior congregation on the Sabbath and the introduction of liturgical music into the classroom have tended to make worship more functional and esthetic.

**Why Teach History.** On the purposes of history teaching we have a recent collection of essays.31 Morris R. Cohen points at the difference between the Orthodox view of history which accepts the supernatural and traditional, and the newer interpretations which replace these concepts by social, economic, geographic, political and cultural approaches (pp. 3-36). Salo W. Baron prefers to present events topically and sociologically rather than chronologically (pp. 39-63); this he did in his monumental *Social and Religious History of the Jews*.

We shall dwell more extensively on Leo L. Honor's article "The Role of Memory in Biblical History" (pp. 72-90) because the current history textbooks by Deborah Pessin, published by the USCJE are written with that philosophy as a foundation. Honor's interpretation is an elaboration of Ahad Haam's idea that the historical or archeological Moses is a purely academic concern, whereas the Moses "whose image has been enshrined in the hearts of the Jewish people for generations and whose influence on our national life has never ceased from ancient times till the present day" is the one to impress on the memories of future generations (p. 76).

A deliberate effort has always been made by Jews to keep memories alive. The Bible is full of injunctions to remember, to tell the children, to maintain ceremonies of remembrance, such as circumcision, Tefillin, Mezuzah; all this with a view to the ethical lessons to be learned.

Despite the significant and illuminating information which has been gleaned from archaeology and other extra-biblical sources, the main source or reservoir from which the historian engaged in the biblical period derives his basic data, is the biblical story as it has come down to us. This story can be used as a source, however, only if that story is recognized as being in itself a reconstruction of the past, a reconstruction which was not motivated by the desire to tell the story of the past, but rather by the aspiration to trace Divine influence in the experience of his people and to draw inferences from this tracing for the present and the future...From the point of view expressed in the above principles it follows that thaumaturgic elements of the biblical story should not be told as happenings, nor should any attempt be made to rationalize miraculous elements. Those elements should rather be taken as the mold into which the story of significant occurrences has crystalized in the light of ideas and conceptions prevailing in biblical times.
In other words, in the process of unravelling a people's past from the incomplete remains which have survived, attention should be given to how that past was remembered, for, the manner in which it is remembered is also historic fact which played a role in shaping the destiny of the people. To lose sight of this is to distort history (pp. 88f.).

Deborah Pessin herself elaborated on memory as the purpose of history teaching.

History should be not a record, but a remembrance of things past. The record is something over and done with. It is the museum piece, the reference book. Remembrance is part of consciousness and life. It is the past flowing into the present (p. 5).

Since the purpose of teaching Jewish history is to develop in the child a loyalty to his people and to the Jewish way of life, he must obviously know and understand his people and its way of life. A people and its way of life are, of course, two sides of the same coin, and it is impossible truly to identify with the one and not with the other. Consequently, when we teach Jewish history, and as the story of the Jews unfolds, what must emerge in bold relief is the Jewish way of life — love of freedom and democracy, love of Torah and learning, Binyan Eretz Yisrael, reverence for and observance of religious traditions (p. 6).

The means for achieving these purposes is concretization. Paint a vivid picture of corruption in Israel, then present the prophet. The generalization of social justice will emerge in the mind of the child. Let the child direct his own development through research, exploration, creation of his own dramas, songs, dances, poems, art work.

Jacob S. Golub's (Readings, pp. 113-18) idea of the outcomes of studying Jewish history is summarized as follows:

A pupil should emerge with a sense of development in Jewish life; a habit of passing moral judgements on events both past and present; a sense of Jewish pride; a sense of identification with the great Jewish spiritual values; an understanding of how the present came to be what it is; a concept of the Jews as an entirely normal people; and a sense of security in relation to antisemitism (p.111).

In addition to time perspective and developmental insights supplied by history in general, A. S. Halkin discerns two additional values in a study of Jewish history; exile and survival. No one can deny that for 2500 years Jews have lived in a Diaspora. Those who look upon dispersion as a virtue may not attach much importance to this fact; but both cultural pluralists and Zionists recognize the alienation of Diaspora as compared to the natural conditions in a national homeland.

As to survival —

What were the internal forces that guarded this people against assimilation? Community organization, courts of law, the many institutions and forms of life which supplied for the Jew as an individual both what he wanted and needed, and above all the Jew's faith, his Torah and his laws. One must not turn the history of the Jewish people into a history of the Jewish religion. But it is our vital duty, for the sake of truth and utility, continually to emphasize that Jewish existence in the Diaspora is inseparably tied up with religion. When two fundamental national values, language and land, slipped away from the people, because the people became scattered to all corners of the world and spoke every language except Hebrew, religion arose and saved them from extinction by clothing both in a garment of holiness, the Holy Land and Holy Tongue, and elevated them to the status of religious commandments and beliefs.

In short, history will teach the student the secret

of what has kept Jewry alive. It will also help provide the internal fortitude required to face the vicissitudes of our day.

M. Kaplan points out that the differentiation between the religious and peoplehood elements has given rise to a new subject in the Jewish curriculum — history. It is further important to distinguish between the legendary earlier portions of the Bible and the historical later narratives. Jewish civics should be added to social studies. Historical perspective will aid in understanding the principle of continuity and change in our past and present.

Katzoff’s discussion of the objectives of Jewish history instruction (op. cit., pp. 82-88) misses the mark at some points. The distinction between theistic and humanistic religion is not made clear. Nor is his characterization of Jewish historiography as predominantly idealistic entirely correct. His treatment of replies to the theory that "the hand of Providence is evident in shaping the destiny of the Jewish People" (p. 85) does not seem to take into consideration the possible fact that respondents misunderstood the intent of the question, which has to juxtapose supernatural and natural causes.

His findings nevertheless are interesting.

The dominant aim is to kindle a sense of loyalty to the Jewish people in the consciousness of the

34The Future of the American Jews, p. 444.
child and to foster a feeling of personal identification with Israel's eternal hopes and ideals (p. 83).

Other primary goals are development of an appreciation for Jewish values and of a sense of identification with Israel's hopes and aspirations and a desire to promote Jewish survival and creativity in America. As a result, contemporary and American Jewish history are stressed to a large extent. Character development, an appreciation of democracy and spiritual resistance to antisemitism are secondary aims. No clear preference is evident for either the providential or naturalistic theories.

Why Teach Israel. Hillel Bavli's article on "The Place of Israel in Jewish Education" contains a strong plea in favor of a central position for Israel in the curriculum. Israel should be taught as a separate subject and in addition should be correlated with every other subject.

With mere platonic love for Israel and the Hebrew language and culture we shall not insure our survival. Only a youth rooted in the Jewish traditional-national soil, that shares the destiny of the Jewish people in its struggle for existence and in its hopes for the future can save American Jewry from degeneration and assimilation. We look forward to a young Hebrew generation that will be imbued with the spirit of Hebrew reborn, so that its spirit will be imprinted on its way of life and all its activities. We are hoping for a generation of whom very many will seek and find fulfillment for their soul in pioneering Aliyah. Only then will the entire Jewish community of America arise and an abundance of strength will

37 See also D. Kuseleowitz "Israel and Zionism in the Curriculum of Our Schools" JE, XXVIII (Spring 1958), 74-83.
awaken in it to a life of honor and creativity (p. 131).

According to Katzoff’s survey (op. cit., pp. 89-95) Palestine is not studied as a separate subject; only in correlation with other subjects. Zionism is taught as a solution to the problem of Jewish homelessness: to highlight the need for a Jewish state, and the need for a cultural and religious center for world Jewry. But there is little concern with the socio-economic forms evolved there or with the social idealism of the Kvutsa.

Despite its constant emphasis, this superficial connection with Palestine is reflected in the Hebrew school. Though the cultural, religious and social dynamism of Palestine is recognized, it has affected the thought and behavior patterns of American Jewry and of their schools very little. The lack of emphasis upon the newer economic and social forms that Palestine is developing is thus explained. And also somewhat clearer is the general absence of stress upon the Hebrew language as a living tongue. Palestine is important but it is not real in the congregational schools (p. 91).

Katzoff further finds that there is no sympathy in the movement for the idea of Shilat Ha-golah.

This would imply that the Conservative schools manifest an optimistic outlook on the vitality of Judaism in America. Despite the admittedly weak condition of the Jewish religion at present, the Conservative movement is definitely committed to the principle that Jewish life in America is their central concern and that their dominant energies must be expanded upon continuing and developing a vibrant and creative Jewish expression as part of the process of adaptation to American culture and society (p. 93).

Why teach Observances. The subject that is taught most and that has most meaning in the life of the child — holidays —
has received the least attention from our ideologists. It is taken for granted that they are an essential ingredient in any curriculum. Observances are less emphasized, since largely the public ritual is still in force, whereas personal and private religious practices have been reduced to a minimum.

M. Kaplan prefers to employ the term usages (in the earlier period: folkways) for customs and ceremonies. He sees the rationale and hence the purposes in teaching them as basically three: consciousness of kind, survival and salvation.

He has this to say on Jewish consciousness:

Just as the American flag causes all Americans to feel themselves united in a common enterprise, though they live as far removed from one another as New York and San Francisco, so such symbols as the sefer torah, the tallit and all the other concrete objects, and rites of Jewish tradition bind the individual Jews to all other Jews who live, have lived or will live, in the consciousness of belonging to Israel, and participating in a common historic civilization, Judaism (Future, p.209).

Survival alone is not a sufficient reason:

A satisfactory rationale for Jewish usage is one that would recognize in it both a method of group survival and a means to the personal self-fulfillment, or salvation of the individual Jew. Through it, the individual Jew will know the exhilaration of fully identifying himself with his people and, thereby, saving his own life from dullness, drabness and triviality. Jewish tradition brings to the daily living of the Jew, to his holiday celebration, to the celebration of turning points in his life, a wealth of beautiful and meaningful symbols embodying the sancta of his people, expressive of its ideals and native to its culture. These should be retained and developed; for, no creed, no value, no self-identification of the individual

38 See S. Sussman "Festival Celebrations in the Jewish School", Sy6, III (January 1943), 6-15.
with his people is effective. Unless it is translated into action of a systematic and habitual nature (p. 418).

The Conservative emphasis on the importance of Jewish usage as an expression of the collective will of the Jewish people to survive is correct. But it is wrong to make the existence and continuation of the group the sole end of Jewish observance. In doing so, Conservatism impairs the religious significance of Jewish group life, and evades the problem of making the law function as an instrument of salvation (p. 417).

**Teaching Values.** Our discussion thus far of the aims of teaching the various subjects was essentially a study of values. Values refer to what man ought to do. The most common view is "that values occupy a different realm from facts and that values are not the concern of the scientists but of the moralists, philosophers, and theologians." Whether moral and spiritual values derive from a transcendental divine source or are the products of human experience is the essence of the quarrel between religionists and secularists.

Gamoran based his book *Principles of the Jewish Curriculum in America* on an analysis of basic Jewish values. In 1937 Morris Leibman reported on an experiment in Chicago in reorganizing the curriculum in the higher grades of the elementary school in terms of functional objectives, rather than in terms of subjects of instruction. He selected the following:


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41 "Jewish Values as a Basis for Curriculum Organization" *JE, IX* (December 1937), 163-68.
and of Reward and Punishment; 7. Ethical ideals, Social and Individual Virtues (Justice, Truth, Peace, Cooperativeness, Responsibility, Kindness, Pity, Tact, Manners, etc.); 8. The Ideal of learning; 9. The Ideal of Tzdakah or Care for the underprivileged; 10. Messianic ideals; 11. The Sanctity of Life and the Importance of Human Personality; 12. Love for Work (pp. 164f.).

M. Kadushin suggested this partial list of rabbinic value-concepts: "Torah, Mitzvah, Tzedakah, Tefillin, Malchut Shamayim, Teshuvah, Shechinah, Kiddush Ha-Shem, Chillul Ha-Shem, Tzadik, Rasha."42

Alexander A. Stenbach43 made the following important points. 1. In our religious education we must distinguish between secular and sacred values. Washington the Father of America is not the same as Abraham the Father of the Jewish people. The latter has the connotation of Zechut Avot. 2. Jewish values emphasize the group element rather than individualism; Hillel's injunction "Separate not thyself from the community", the insistence on Eloheinu, Our God, and on Tzibbur, are examples. 3. The child must experience in the classroom the joys of Jewish living. 4. "He shall live by them" is the ultimate objective in religious education.44

Ethics has recently come into the curriculum as an independent subject. Textbooks on ethics have appeared. A quarter of a century ago E. Kohn outlined eight objectives in

43 "Teaching Jewish Values" JE, XXIV (Fall 1953), 20-23.
44 See also Yudel Mark "Teaching Jewish Values Through Stories" JE, XXIV (Fall 1953), 24-30.
teaching social justice. Walter I. Ackerman recently reviewed three textbooks on ethics and came to the conclusion that instruction in ethics does not assure transformation into character-building substance. He stated that the only means is teaching by example, by identification, where "the teacher can bring before his pupils the image of a great character."46

Character training, personality growth received considerable attention in the thirties. In two articles Eugene Kohn called for a community of interests in the Jewish school in order to promote child growth.

Within the school community, rabbis, teacher, pupils stand in personal relationship owing to one another that consideration and respect of personality which is implied in the doctrine that Man is created in the image of God. Particularly must the adult members of this community possess and manifest faith in the spiritual possibilities of their charges and exercise the utmost care at no time to subject them to humiliation or to show a ruthless disregard of their wounded pride even where it may be necessary to discipline and punish. All discipline must lead to self-discipline to enhancing the power and the desire of the pupil to control his own conduct to moral ends (PRA, IV, 62).

Julius Maier called attention to the principle of specificity enunciated by the Columbia Study of Character training and advised against formal instruction in ethics, which is doomed to failure. 48

46 "Ethics and the Jewish School" SYS, XVIII (September 1958), 3-9.
Character education to be effective, must permeate the whole curriculum and the whole Jewish school. It must not be given in the form of a special subject of instruction or given during a certain grade or year (JE, IV, 114).

The need to teach the God idea and the methods for doing so have occupied educators for many years. Twenty-five years ago, S. Dinin reviewed five books and seven articles that had appeared in both Jewish and non-Jewish sources in the previous five years. These had a wide range of approaches, from that, for example, of a) the Brooklyn Jewish Center Academy where the ceremonial or practical expressions of religion were taught, but indoctrination in any formal creed was studiously avoided, to b) Brickner's recommendation to avoid a theological conception of God in favor of teaching ideals which would eventually bring the children "to think of God as the force in life which makes life purposeful, worthwhile and holy" (p. 70).

Dinin himself concludes thus: "It is not suggested that children be subjected to formal courses on the God-Idea, or to formal worship" (p. 72).

In a review of M. Kaplan's The Meaning of God in Modern Religion R. Gordis points out that Jewish religion need no longer be taught as customs and ceremonies since Modern Judaism possesses content as well as form, Torah as well as commandments, a vital system of

49 "Teaching the God Idea to Children" JE, VI (June 1934), 66-72; S. R. Brav "Teaching the God Idea to Young Children" JE, XI (1939), 40-44 is largely a guide to parents.

50 JE, X (December 1938), 193-95.
beliefs concerning the eternal issues of God, man and the universe, which find expression in a colorful ceremonial and an exalted ethical law (p. 195).

Roland B. Gittelsohn who has recently produced a fine textbook on religion pointed at the strange fact that the Jews who "are supposed to be the most religious of peoples, have probably written and published less on the subject of teaching God than any other modern and progressive liberal religious group" (p. 33). He counseled eight preliminary steps to an abstract conception.

M. Kaplan called upon teachers to teach the God idea. The teaching of religion is carried on by means of subject material dealing with the idea of God, and it is assumed that the child will somehow work out for himself the meaning of that idea. The result is that among the factors that make for present-day irreligion we might well include the so-called religious schools. It is high time that all who have the cause of Jewish education at heart make sure that the first step in the problem of teaching religion be taken without delay (p. 113).

After outlining his own idea of God as the power that makes for salvation, he recommends the feeling of growth, both mental and physical, as an experience which is due to a power outside the individual.

Teaching Democracy. During World War II there was much talk of the Jewish school and democracy. The Conservative

51 Little Lower Than the Angels (1955)
53 "The Belief in God and How To Teach It" JE, XII (September 1940), 102-13.
movement even established a periodical by that name which sought the advancement of democratic ideals.

In answer to a call by the president of the United States in January, 1939, religious groups organized to meet the challenge emanating from a hostile philosophy in Europe. A committee of Jewish educators took part in a Congress on Education for Democracy in the summer of that year. Eugene Kohn summarized their discussions as follows: The very obligation in Jewish tradition to provide an education is democratically motivated. The content of Jewish education is also democratic in spirit. The Bible is the very charter of democracy since it posits a moral law that proceeds from a divine source to protect humanity against injustice. The prophets felt free to challenge the authority of kings. To political democracy was added economic and social justice. Condemnation of absolute private ownership, lenient laws on slavery, rest for servants on the Sabbath, love of neighbor, man created in the image of God, all spelled a trend toward equality and fraternity. It is therefore no accident that the Founding Fathers of our country so often quote the Bible.

Later Jewish history also reflects aspirations to democratic living. The Maccabean war, resistance to Roman imperialism, and to the medieval stress on conformity were a struggle for the liberty of conscience. Emancipation gave birth to

54 JE, XI (January 1940), 176.
55 "The Values for Democratic Living to be Found in Jewish Education", Ibid, 159-72.
democracy which freed the Jew; he is therefore committed to strive toward a democratic world order.

Dushkin and Honor also sought to point at the basic similarities of Torah and democracy. Edidin wrote a textbook on the Jewish community as a practical course in Jewish civics.

The magazine _Jewish School and Democracy_ established in February 1943 by the Committee on the Child of the United Synagogue Mobilization for Victory and edited by S. Sussman and A. Segal was at first fully devoted to an exploration of how to introduce democratic ideals into the Jewish school. The first issue carried an article "Democracy and the Belief in one God" (pp. 4-6). Patriotic holidays were emphasized. Teaching America was stressed. The issue of April 1944 carried an article on "The Bar Mitzvah and Democracy" by S. M. Cohen; the next issue: "The Siddur for Teaching Democracy." Simon Greenberg contributed "Teaching Ideals Through the Hebrew Lesson", in which he counseled association of Hebrew words with Jewish values and pointed at Judaism's revolt against idolatry, an idea which is central in his _Hayehudi Harishon_ textbook. Liberty, brotherhood, equality - these were the central themes.

Peace turned the attention of the movement back to its own internal affairs. It was Simon Greenberg, a former member of

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56 Dushkin "Democracy and Jewish Education" _JE_, XIV (December 1942), 94-100; Honor "Jewish Education and American Democracy" _Ibid_, pp. 68f.

57 See his article "Teaching Democracy in the Jewish School" _JE_, XIV (March 1943), 155-60.
the committee to mobilize for victory, who began stressing that democracy is not enough for the Jewish school. After all, he claimed, it was the Jews who taught democracy to the world. Let us therefore get back to the source from which all mankind can learn lasting lessons. 58

Much has been written on the techniques of co-curricular activities in Jewish schools, 59 but there is very little on record as to the philosophy behind them. The rationale is taken from the general educational literature.

The junior religious services have received the most attention in the congregational school. 60 The arts, music, assemblies, clubs, sports, confirmation were also treated in Conservative literature mainly on the level of technique. 61 Summer country and day camps came in for considerable treatment. 62

Conclusion. From the above collection of statements on the

58 PRA, III (1943), 183-90.
59 "Co-curricular Materials for the Jewish School" Pedagogic Reporter, IV (May 1953), 5-10 — a bibliography.
60 J. B. Grossman, PRA, II (1928), 149-54; M. Davis, JE, IX (January 1937), 26-33; M. Arzt, RA Bulletin, II (March 1939), 13-15; S. Sussman, SyC, II (1941), June, pp. 4-6, December, pp. 6-8; SyC, XVII (December 1958), 22f, (March 1959), 3-7.
61 "The Jewish Arts in Jewish Education" JE, XXIII (Fall 1952) 49-62; H. Coopersmith "Jewish Music Education" JE, XIX (Spring 1948), 23-27; S. Sussman, "Bible Reading in the School Assembly" SyC, III (October 1942), 9f., 15; M. H. Lewittes, "The Place of Clubs" SyC, I (September 1940), 11, 14; B. Mandelbaum, "The Junior Synagogue of America" SyC, IV (March 1944), 9f.; B. Charon "Integrating a Recreational Program for the Hebrew School Curriculum" SyC, II (June 1941), 9f., 14 (sports); L. S. Lang, "What Have We Done with Confirmation?", PRA, V (1936), 288-307.
62 S. Ellenbogen "Integrating a Home Camp and Hebrew School Program" SyC, I (March 1941), 13f.; Symposium on Camps, JE, XVII (June 1946), 6-44.
rationale for curriculum content it is clear that Conservative educators have given insufficient thought to curriculum content. A philosophy of what to teach and why is therefore still a desideratum.

How explain it? First of all, the movement is still too young. Secondly, it was much too preoccupied with standards of organization and with finding time for instruction. Thirdly, it took over the curriculum content of the Talmud Torah without much questioning. Above all, most of the subjects taught in the Conservative school are accepted by all other Jewish groups in America and need no justification. Just as in general education little time is spent on whether to teach arithmetic or reading, so in Jewish education there are things which are taken for granted.

From the long-range view, however, this should not be the case. Conservative educators must think through every step of their work in order to make sure that the curriculum offered to the children is the kind that is needed to maintain a creative Jewish life in America.

Curricula of Jewish Schools — Historical Sketch

We cannot adequately understand the Conservative curriculum of the present without the historical background, first, of the curriculum of Jewish schools in general, and then of the special Conservative efforts.

In the absence of a monograph on the subject, our information is of necessity spotty. We may view the story as containing three periods: 1) to 1910 — individual efforts, 2) to 1940 — revaluation, 3) to 1960.
1. To 1910. During the first period, from the inception of the Jewish school to 1910, there were only curricula prepared by individual schools. They were patterned after European models. A. Dushkin analyzed the programs of fourteen schools from 1731 to 1910. He found that the scope of curricular offerings kept increasing with the years. However, the rise of the Sunday school was accompanied by a watering down of Hebrew school content too. The East European migration helped intensify studies in the Talmud Torah. Withal, whatever improvement took place in Jewish education, it was due to the influence of the public school. The Talmud Torah curricula of his day analyzed by Dushkin were purely literary; their ideal was to raise a generation that knows books; all education was directed to the past; only holiday celebrations dealt with the present.

For the period around 1910 we have a statement by Israel Friedlaender, who thus described the program of the Talmud Torah (which was to extend over seven years):

A sufficient knowledge of Hebrew, which would enable the children to understand the prayers, the Pentatench, the historical portions of the Bible, selections from the Prophets and Hagiographa, selections from the Mishnah, the easier Midrashim, some portions of the Talmud, and some specimens of medieval Jewish poetry, Jewish

63 I. Levitats "The Organization and Management of Jewish Schools in America" Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science, XI (1957), 98f.
64 Jewish Education in New York City, pp. 132-34, see chart opposite p. 132.
65 Ibid, pp. 303-310
history, ancient and modern, and an acquaintance with Jewish religious observances. 66

2. To 1940. Israel Kanovitz, veteran principal, described the situation in the second decade as follows:

A standard curriculum that is more or less standardized and graded was rare indeed in the Talmud Torahs. The four or five principals who had among themselves prepared some kind of a meager program did not really get together to follow a uniform procedure. The custom was that each teacher was free to develop his program as he pleased. The result was that even in one institution it was hard to find any articulation between one teacher and another, one class and another. 67

Here and there the nationalist element succeeded in developing fine programs. The Talmud Torahs of Minneapolis and New Orleans gained prominence. A fairly representative nationalist-Hebraic curriculum of that period based on the twin objectives of Hebrew literature and Zionism was formulated by Simon Ginzburg.

The New York Bureau of Jewish Education prompted an upsurge of thinking and revaluation. Dushkin suggested the addition of the subjects of America, Palestine, and Israel among the Nations to the program. He proposed the following differentiated curricula: 1) a three-year course in basic skills,

67 Shevilei Hachinuch, I (November 1925), 73.
69 Ibid, II (May 1926), 64-67.
to be followed by either 2) an intensive Hebraic program for able students, or 3) a program of content subjects in English for those of lesser linguistic aptitude. He advocated the direct method for Hebrew, the concentric method in history and generally sought to prepare Jewish children for life in America by a study of the Jewish religion, the arts and music.

E. Gamoran reviewed the historic experience of Russian Jewry and proceeded to evolve principles of the Jewish curriculum in America based on an analysis of Jewish values.

Unless the curriculum is so organized as to be in harmony with the present Zeitgeist and with the conditions of American life, the school will fail to appeal to the young. The human ideals of the Jewish people embodied in its language and literature must be transmitted in such an effective manner that they function in the life of the child. This can best be done if present-day Jewish life and present-day Jewish problems will be made the center of correlation of school subjects and activities. Jewish values thus organized and tested by the criteria of democracy and modernism will actually affect the lives of people. 72

He recommended that Hebrew and music be made functional, history inculcate ideals, Bible be taught as literature, liturgy through general meaning and participation, and the addition of active participation in Jewish institutional life. 73

H. L. Comins experimented in teaching Bible through construction work, for which he wrote two volumes on The Life

71 Dushkin, op. cit., pp. 312-31, 539f.
of the Early Hebrews. J. S. Golub made a blistering attack on the older pedagogy assumed that the school's primary task was to impart knowledge (p. 49). He called upon his colleagues to follow the newer education which aims primarily at attitudes and habits. Jewish holidays were, in his view, the best instruments for such pedagogy. "The miraculous, the supernatural or impossible, we believe, has no room in a program for very young children...Activity must be completely within the intelligent understanding of the child" (pp. 52f).

L. L. Honor joined Golub in an equally daring and revolutionary, though more subdued statement. They called for a progressive, naturalist, humanist, nationalist and reconstructionist school.

S. Dinin was the most vehement in his denunciation of existing practices.

As soon as we realize that a great deal that we have termed extra-curricular activities constitutes the activities of life, of experiencing, and of living; as soon as we get a new insight as to what education means and implies, so soon will we cast overboard all the rubbish which we have been attempting to thrust down the throats of the children of the Jewish schools, and substitute for it purposeful activities, actual life experiences involving Jewish dances and songs, Jewish cooking, Jewish handwork, Jewish painting, Jewish stories, Jewish games, and hundreds of other things at present kept out...Our aim is to guide the pupils to choose those activities having a leading on quality...

75 "A Curriculum for the Primary Grades", JE, III (March 1931), 49-55.
76 "Some Guiding Principles for the Curriculum of the Jewish School of Tomorrow" JE, IV (December 1932), 150-62.
77 Judaism in a Changing Civilization, pp. 205-12.
If the Jewish school of the future is to reconstruct its curriculum along the plans here outlined, it will mean doing away with the teaching of reading Hebrew the day the child enters the school. It will mean discarding the present process of teaching Hebrew to all children as soon as they can read — without ever finding out whether they want it, or are ripe for it. It will mean casting out any activity which is not taken from the actual living experiences of the child, and which is not purposed. 78

He proposed a curriculum based on projects: stories, play, handwork, excursions and finally learning of skills only as a direct result of a felt need and purpose.

W. Chomsky advocated a Palestine-centered curriculum, 79 while Gamoran pleaded for a program centered in the present. 80 Both were attacked for advocating a bookish and subject-centered program. Z. Scharfstein and Kalman Whiteman, however, argued that "the Dewey-Kilpatrick theory" cannot apply to Jewish education because "Jewish education must accept the philosophy of a minority fighting against its environment" (JE, IV, 182). 81

Chicago intensified its curriculum revision activities. Israel B. Rappaport, supervisor of the Board of Education there, postulated the following ideas.

81The New York Bureau of Jewish Education published D. Rudaysky's Hebrew School Curricula Leading to Graduation, mimeographed.
82"Some Essentials in the Reconstruction of the Jewish School Curriculum" JE, VIII (December 1936), 141-46.
Our failure may be due to a lop-sided emphasis in our program of Jewish education, an emphasis on language and literature as initial bases of the educational process rather than as secondary consequences or corollaries of a primary program of personality adjustment and pleasurable identification with Jewish living (p. 141).

This paper is based not on the proposition that there is a given body of cultural heritage which must be transmitted to the growing generation, but rather on the postulate that the primary task of education is the development of a wholesome, harmoniously integrated, personality in the child (p. 142).

The three elementary psychological needs of the Jewish child are a sense of Jewish worthwhileness; attachment to Jewish living through joyous experiencing; and a sense of Jewish kinship. To develop these is the primary task of Jewish education. The method to be pursued in reaching these objectives is that embodied in the activities program (p. 144).

3. 1940 to Date. In a joint effort of J. S. Golub, I. Berkson, B. Edidin and S. Dinin the clamor for improvement continued. Soon central local and national agencies began producing curricula in rapid succession. These, together with the Conservative curricula which will be described later, were hailed as a turning point in American Jewish education.

83"Reevaluating Jewish School Curricula" JE, XI (January 1940), 200-12.
There was a feeling that at last forward steps had been made toward an indigenous and American-oriented program.\footnote{86}

The Reform group was also stirred to reevaluate its school content. The old courses of study\footnote{87} were replaced after study and experimentation.\footnote{88}

Despite all this progress, dissatisfaction still prevails. D. Rudavsky has been calling for more content courses for students who have no linguistic aptitude.\footnote{89} And at the First National Conference on Jewish Education convened in 1951 by the American Association for Jewish Education, "The Content of the Jewish School" was still found wanting.\footnote{90}

**History of the Conservative Curriculum**

We saw above that a Conservative school system did not evolve till the middle of the second decade of this century.

\footnote{86} For a bibliography of Hebrew articles see Z. Scharfstein, ed., Sefer Hayovel Shel Agudat Hamorim, 1944, pp. 383f.


\footnote{89} "A Shift in Emphasis in the Curriculum of the Weekday Afternoon Jewish School", JE, XXIV (Spring 1953), 13-18; Educators Assembly, Third Convention, 1955, p. 8.

\footnote{90} JE, XXIII (Winter 1952), 60f.
We have a record of the discussions at the early conferences of the United Synagogue consisting mainly of rabbis. At first they talked of a curriculum for the training of Hebrew teachers by rabbis in each locality. In 1918 the rabbis of the larger schools were urged to get together for the drafting of a curriculum for elementary schools. The following year it was reported that at the last meeting of JTS alumni (the Rabbinical Assembly) an entire session had been devoted to education. At that time the rabbis were asked to send in their school curricula to the chairman, Julius E. Greenstone, to serve as a basis for a "standard" program, but the response was so meager that the idea could not be carried out. Instead, J. B. Grossman, rabbi of the Educational Alliance in New York, was asked to mail the curriculum of his school to all the rabbis.

Coordination was further pursued by mailing a list of "Minimum Requirements for Graduation from Religious Schools" covering the subjects of prayer book, Bible, Hebrew, religious ceremonies and Jewish history to all rabbis and superintendents of schools. The proposed plan was that the examinations be supervised by the local rabbis or superintendent of the school and then mailed for marking by members of the education committee of the United Synagogue. Students who passed would be eligible for joining a Junior League and would receive prizes.

94 Ibid, p. 46.
But only three schools took part in these examinations, and only eleven children passed all (or at least part) of the three tests and were awarded diplomas. The idea of a Junior League was abandoned. Appeals for funds for prizes and for publication of a second volume of E. Kohn's *Manual of Jewish History* were made. A plan for "introducing and developing the use of design and art in Hebrew and religious schools in this country" was discussed. In 1922 the Committee on Education of the United Synagogue published A. F. Landesman's *A Curriculum for Jewish Religious Schools* with a foreword by Julius H. Greenstone.

The idea of extramural examinations was abandoned. In 1928 S. M. Cohen met with a number of rabbis in Flatbush to work on a uniform curriculum. Rabbi Harry Halpern soon reported that such a uniform school curriculum had been adopted by the Religious School Committee.

A survey of schools in the South showed that the prevailing method for the teaching of Hebrew was translation into English; only two schools employed the natural method.

In 1931 L. S. Lang's *Curriculum for High School Departments of Jewish Religious Schools* was published. In the same year

95 *Ibid*, VIII (1920), 79.
100 *USy*, 19th Convention, mimeographed p. 1.
the principal of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism described the program of his school. It extended for six years, 4 1/2 hours a week for the first two years, 6 1/2 hours thereafter. The purposes of the school were: 1. Hebrew language and literature, 2. Jewish social-mindedness, 3. creative group activities (one hour on Sunday), and 4. development of Jewish religious character through self-sacrificing conduct. Most of the ingredients of the modern curriculum were included, among them Keren Ami, school paper, art, drama, music, current events, in addition to the usual subjects, except for the Hebrew Bible, which was strangely absent. Hebrew was taught both orally and by goals in the upper grades. Multiple tests were used in social studies.

The Curriculum and Course of Study of the Talmud Torah of the Central Jewish Institute, published in 1931, contains a statement of the theoretical basis of the proposed program. Although the institution was but a school center that was not identified with Conservatism, its leadership was very close to the movement. The statement follows:

To enable children to grow into an intelligent participating member of the American Jewish community. It is the function of the Jewish school to assist the Jewish child at every stage of his growth to find himself in Jewish life on a plane of intelligent useful and joyous participation. In order to develop an effective mental and emotional background for the Jewish life of today and tomorrow, the children must acquire a knowledge of and an appreciation for the Jewish spiritual treasures which have accumulated during the many centuries of our history. The child's

consciousness should be so integrated with the history of Jewish group life that he will feel himself direct successor to the Jewry of all times, heir to their difficulties and contributor to their destiny. The curriculum, therefore, is formulated primarily not for the purpose of producing erudite Hebraists or Talmudists. The scholarly pupil nevertheless will find ample material to engage him. The average boy and girl however, acquire only an acquaintance with Jewish lore. For them, a correct understanding of and a right attitude toward Jewish life in America is the most imperative need.

Three types of program follow: for six, four and two years.

In 1932 S. M. Cohen's The Progressive Jewish School appeared.

The forties were a period of extensive curriculum work by Conservative groups, just as in the other school systems. The newly organized Jewish Education Committee of New York (1939) began prompting work in that direction. The Joint Commission on Education of the United Synagogue and Rabbinical Assembly first published mimeographed editions of Simon Greenberg's The First Term in the Hebrew School, 1941, and The Second Term, 1942, and then put it out in 1946 in a one-volume printed edition.

It contains the following statement of aims:

The whole curriculum is to be permeated by 1) a spirit of love for all aspects of the Jewish religious tradition — the synagogue, personal and communal prayer, the rebuilding of Eretz Yisroel, the Hebrew language, the love of Israel and of man in its broadest sense; 2) an appreciation of the affinity existing between

102 Supra p. 114.

103 The JEC library files contain two documents without date which seem to belong to the early forties. Composite Minutes of the First Three Meetings of the Curriculum Committee for Congregational Schools; and Uy, Curriculum of Schools of New York.
America's ideals of democracy and Judaism's religious and ethical teachings; 3) a desire to participate in the activities prescribed by Jewish religious tradition and in all other activities which make for the welfare of Israel and of mankind (p. 4). 104

Finally, Louis L. Ruffman prepared a mimeographed Curriculum Outline for the Congregational School, under auspices of the Commission, Primary and Elementary Divisions, 1948, 47pp; Junior High School Division, 1951, 59pp. By the end of 1959 the 1948 curriculum sold 2,900 copies, the 1951 — 1,800 copies and of the 5,000 published copies of the 1959 revision, 1,406 had sold.

About the same time Leon S. Lang worked on a doctoral dissertation at Dropsie. His experimental mimeographed edition entitled A Curriculum for the Conservative Congregational Schools, by the Curriculum Commission, Board of Jewish Education, USy, Philadelphia, was tried in several schools in 1949-51. A book of 240 pages Curriculum for the Congregational School under the same auspices appeared in 1951. 105

Courses of study for Sunday schools were also produced: J. S. Golub, Tentative Outline of Curriculum for Sunday Schools; E. Nudelman and E. Ehrman, A Course of Study Outline for the Jewish Sunday School by the USCJE. L. Schwartzman's Curriculum Guide for Sunday schools of Greater Miami was also designed mainly for Conservative Schools.

104 The USy published a Tentative Five Year Curriculum (mimeographed 5pp) in 1942 and expanded it in later editions.

Ruffman's outlines were elaborated by George Ende in his JEC syllabi by grades for the first four years entitled Courses of Studies by Principals Council of the Associated USy Schools in Queens, 1950-51, and in an abbreviated revised form by Elijah Bortniker Outline of Studies for First Year, 1957. The most recent and most widely heralded publication has been Ruffman's 1959 revised edition of his Curriculum Outline.

Official Action on Conservative Curricula

The first curriculum, that of Landesman, was the effort of one person, as was S. M. Cohen's activity curriculum, The Progressive Jewish School.

The Tentative Five Year Curriculum For Congregational Schools prepared by the Curriculum Committee of the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education in cooperation with the Jewish Education Committee of New York, mimeographed, has no date. It was probably done in 1947 or thereabouts. The above curricula by Landesman and Cohen are not even mentioned in the bibliography, probably because they were considered out of date. This is the only Conservative Curriculum we know of that has no individual author. Apparently no one wished to claim authorship because of the tentative nature and sketchy content of the product. Millgram and particularly Ruffman probably had a large share in the work. Arthur H. Neulander was chairman of the Curriculum committee at the time.

In any case it was after 1946 since publications of that date are noted in the text. It is regrettable that a national organization neglects to date its publications.
Next in chronological order came the two parts of the *Curriculum Outline for the Congregational School* by Ruffman that appeared in 1948 and 1951. Both were mimeographed, thus emphasizing the still tentative nature of the offering.

Ruffman had had long experience as principal in a congregational school and for ten years as supervisor of Conservative schools in New York for the Jewish Education Committee. Some assistance was rendered him in his work by George Ende, also on the staff of JEC, as supervisor for United synagogue schools in Queens. The curriculum committee examined Ruffman's draft and made some alterations. This was thus the first curriculum that had the wholehearted support of the national office.\(^{107}\)

Another effort that was in progress at the same time, but which had no national sanction was that of Lang (1951). Only after the book was published, the Commission grudgingly assented to sell it. The sponsors of this dissertation at Dropsie were L. Honor and I. Berkson. It was also sponsored by the Board of Education of the Philadelphia Branch of the United Synagogue. Simon Greenberg, then rabbi at Har Zion in Philadelphia, wrote a foreword. At his own school at Congregation Beth El Lang had the assistance of his principal Harry Glatstein. Principals and teachers of schools affiliated with the Philadelphia regional board also tried out an experimental mimeographed draft for two years prior to the publication of the book.

In the same year, 1951, Ende's syllabi appeared. These syllabi were prepared for a group of Queens schools — nine in

\(^{107}\) See Millgram's prefaces to both publications.
number—which undertook to implement Ruffman’s curriculum. Although in the introduction authorship by the entire principals council is hinted, the present writer has personal knowledge from participation in several curriculum committees that actually it was George Ende who was the sole author. These syllabi were the product of one mind, not the result of a cooperative effort by consultant, principals and teachers. In addition to being an elaboration of Ruffman's outline, use was made also of the Boston syllabus and a New York curriculum. Once again, then, a major curricular document emanated from the study of an expert, rather than from the classroom. Of course, the novel thing in the forties was that a new type of professional educator had come onto the scene—the supervisor or consultant—who could make many schools his laboratory. However, under the loose relationships existing between schools and the consultant, no worthwhile experimentation or direction could be effected. For there is no doubt that even with a uniform curriculum to be followed, practices in individual schools varied considerably. The consultant was powerless in his quest for uniformity. The product therefore reflected desirable rather than actually achievable goals.

Before we proceed with an examination of the authorship of the 1959 curriculum, let us retrace our steps to see what we can find in official minutes on a national curriculum. This

108. B. Shevach, Syllabus Outline for the Talmud Torahs of Boston and Vicinity, Boston, Bureau of Jewish Education; Curriculum for the Talmud Torah, part I, prepared by the Curriculum Committee of the Hebrew Principals Association, 1946.
will involve mainly Ruffman's early (1948, 1951) and latest (1959) creations. Ever since the reorganization of the Commission under Millgram, Ruffman has acted in two capacities in matters of curriculum: he worked on it in New York as JEC consultant for the United Synagogue; at the same time he regularly attended meetings of the Commission and of its Committee on Objectives, Standards and Curriculum, which was a national effort. As we examine the scant references in the minutes on our subject we shall keep in mind two things: 1) what was the contribution of the Commission as a body and of its standing committee on matters of curriculum?; 2) did the classroom teacher have any influence on Ruffman's outline?

At a Joint Meeting of the Committee on Objectives, Standards and Curriculum, the Committee on Textbook Publication, and the committee on Hebrew Textbooks, held June 18, 1946, Simon Greenberg, presided, and nine other men were in attendance. A full-dress discussion of curriculum took place. Ruffman was not present at this meeting.

The chairman pointed out that it is urgent for us to develop a curriculum for the congregational school, based on the principles enunciated in our recently published "Statement on the Objectives and Standards for the Congregational School."

There are two approaches to this problem: 1) merely to draw up an outline of subjects and textbooks, or 2) to develop a detailed integrated curriculum containing adequate guidance for teachers and administrators. Dr. Greenberg suggested that the latter would be a more constructive approach and the members attending accepted that approach as the more practical and useful.

Rabbi Derby claimed that a curriculum without accompany text books will prove of little help. However, Dr. Eisenstein pointed out that our approach should be reversed. We cannot possibly plan textbooks without a curriculum which should be our
guide. Rabbi Sandrow stressed the fact that in addition to guidance for teachers and administrators we also need guidance for the pupils' parents. Without the proper environmental influence of the home, teaching is usually ineffective. Rabbi Derby also urged that our emphasis should be centered not on subjects but on the interplay of Jewish values in the life of the child and the community.

Dr. Eisenstein suggested that we develop a curriculum which should approach Jewish life from three angles. All of them properly integrated:

1. Jewish life as it is related to the home, synagogue, community, Diaspora, and Palestine.

2. A chronological perspective of Jewish life which should proceed from the known to the unknown and from the present to the past. (To include five periods). Each of these periods should constantly be made relevant to the child's life and experiences.

3. A cross section of Jewish life, based on the calendar (involving the Holy Days, festivals, fast days, etc.).

Rabbi Jack Cohen claims there was a basic fallacy in such a division of the curriculum since the child's concepts of the home, etc. change as he grows older. He therefore suggested that we have at least two cycles of instruction:

a) A two year cycle covering the approximate ages of 8 to 10, and
b) A four year cycle covering the approximate ages of 10 to 14...

Dr. Eisenstein stated that in developing our course of study we should not work on the assumption that the child is with us a relatively short period and it is our duty to cram all Jewish knowledge into his mind, a process which ultimately leaves the child with practically nothing. We should rather give the children the highlights of each period or of each unit of study.

Rabbi Sandrow urged that there is a danger of forgetting the important role of ethics and ideals which should be implanted in our children's minds.

Rabbi Neulander suggested that we choose the historic events that have a direct bearing on modern Jewish life and that we build our curriculum around them.
Dr. Max Arzt pointed out that it is important that history be made relevant to modern Jewish life, but it is equally important that it be taught in a chronological manner for it gives the child a sense of depth and joy.

Dr. Eisenstein again referred to his original suggestion by pointing out that before we teach history chronologically we should give the child an apperceptive mass of information which is later put into order in the form of a chronological course in history. Dr. Greenberg referred to the TEACHER'S GUIDE to the HARISHON SERIES which is now in press, wherein such an approach is followed. Children are given a large number of stories which are correlated with the Hebrew texts. Those stories are not given in chronological order but they make up the apperceptive mass for a subsequent course in Jewish history.

Rabbi Neulander suggested that we appoint several members of the Committee to compile lists of historic items that have a direct bearing to modern Jewish life and that we should build our history curriculum around this material. The chairman acted upon this suggestion and asked Rabbi Neulander to compile such a list dealing with the theme of Palestine; Rabbi Derby was asked to compile a similar list dealing with the synagogue; Rabbi Jack Cohen was asked to compile such a list dealing with the home; Dr. Eisenstein was asked to compile a list dealing with the community; and Dr. Millgram was asked to compile a list dealing with the Diaspora. These lists of historic events that are most relevant to modern Jewish life are to be duplicated and sent to all members prior to the next meeting, which is to be held in the fall.

Emerging from this discussion are the following insights:

1) a wide variety of conceptions of the organization of content; 2) history was the most troublesome subject; 3) the problem of correlating content to present-day life and values; 4) the work was to be attempted as a cooperative project.

By the next meeting on November 14, 1946, all the lists of historical events related to modern areas of Jewish life seem to have been forgotten. At least, there was no mention of them. Greenberg kept advancing his idea of organization.
Dr. Greenberg pointed out that the Commission's most recent publication, *THE FIRST YEAR IN THE HEBREW SCHOOL — A teacher's guide*, followed that plan. Indeed, it goes beyond Mr. Ruffman's suggestions in that the stories are not only related to specific areas of Jewish life but are correlated with the Hebrew texts.

Rabbi Derby claimed that from personal experience he found that teaching must be more formal. Otherwise, both the parents and pupils felt that the class time is devoted to "more stories." He felt that a more chronological and more systematic approach is more practical.

In discussing the second level of instruction (ages, 11-14), where it was assumed that the children would be divided into two groups in accordance with the plan developed in the statement on "The Objectives and Standards for the Congregational School," Dr. Greenberg suggested that the Junior high school group should have a curriculum in which all the areas of study should be integrated with their study of the biblical text.

Rabbi Derby disagreed with this approach. He felt that the content subjects should be given more emphasis.

Rabbis Greenberg, Kadushin, Millgram, however, felt that for the Junior high school group it is important that the curriculum be Hebrew-centered. It is to this group that we must look for students who will continue in the schools of higher Hebrew learning.

Mr. Ruffman, in discussing the second level, pointed out that the curriculum assumes that the students will be divided into two groups. In one group the curriculum will be Hebrew-centered, while in the other group the curriculum will be content-centered.

Mr. Ruffman also stated that it is impossible to develop a curriculum in which all the materials will be correlated with the Humosh studies. In the second level it is also important that we provide for a systematic course in history. It is also important that we give special attention to the prayerbook.

Rabbi Greenberg, however, doubted the value of chronological history, even at this level.

Dr. Millgram suggested that it would be practical to appoint one or more small committees to prepare curricula or syllabi for the first and second levels,
so that the Committee, at its next meeting, may be able to discuss concrete plans.

The Chairman acted on this suggestion, and the following committees were appointed:

1. M. Huffman undertook to develop a syllabus for the first level at his curriculum workshop (a group of educators affiliated with our congregational schools in the metropolitan area).

2. Rabbi Greenberg, Mr. Huffman, and Rabbi Sandrow were appointed to develop a tentative curriculum or syllabus for the junior high school level. Rabbi Kadushin also agreed to cooperate with this committee.

3. Rabbis Jack Cohen, Josiah Derby, and Abraham E. Millgram undertook to develop a tentative curriculum for the second group for the Junior High school level, i.e., the pupils who, because of linguistic or other difficulties, continue in the elementary Hebrew school during the ages of 11 to 14.

The committee was still grappling with knotty problems. This time the main issue was whether to eliminate Hebrew on the junior high level in favor of Humash. The idea of a two-track — Hebrew and content — arrangement on the junior high level, as stated by Huffman, probably evoked no protest. This was the year E. M. Edelstein's Kitot Meyuhadot on content subjects for slow students was published by the JEC. As at the previous meeting, the work was to be attempted cooperatively and tasks were assigned.

On April 8, 1947 Huffman alone was finally commissioned to write a curriculum. The first part appeared in 1948. Huffman thus had the benefit of committee thinking before writing his first curriculum outline. If anything, it must have been more confusing than helpful. But we still do not hear of work with teachers.

Curriculum Workshop. The only curriculum workshop with
teachers by the national body we know of took place in 1949-50. Its purpose was to prepare units of study for all subject areas covered in Ruffman's 1948 outline for the primary and elementary grades. Each unit was to contain detailed suggestions relating to the aims, content, teaching procedures, activities and bibliography. In other words, they were to prepare syllabi based on Ruffman's curriculum.

The members of the workshop were: Nathaniel Entin, a principal, and the following teachers: Rose Epstein (no record of attendance), Theresa Kohn, Annette Steinman and Mrs. Evelyn Zussman. Some meetings were attended also by Mrs. L. Fankushin, Miss Simon and Mrs. Hochberg. Working with the group were Ruffman, Miss Leah Klepper, and Ende. At the Jewish Education Committee we saw typewritten minutes of ten meetings between February 10, 1949 and February 6, 1950.

The procedure evolved was to assign certain areas, such as Hebrew or Jewish life, to one or more persons. They would bring in outlines of suggestions to be discussed by all the members; on that basis a revised and more elaborate plan was then brought in. Theresa Kohn Silberschutz (Silber) and Steinman worked on Hebrew and holidays, Entin on prayers and holidays, Zussman on history, Bible stories and legends.

It was natural that that kind of workshop should deal mainly with problems of content and method which interest us only to the extent that they throw light on the philosophic approach.

In Hebrew the problem was how to introduce the newer method of oral-aural language instruction involving several months of
oral comprehension and whole word recognition prior to reading, as well as how to relate it to the child's Jewish experiences. The problem was also how to achieve it with existing textbooks. Holidays were to be taught in connection with direct classroom experiences and home life. In history the concentric approach was preferred over the regressive or holiday-related approaches. The problem was how long each cycle should last and how to relate it to Soloff's texts. Specialists in arts and crafts, music and drama were to help in integrating art media into the lesson. Bible stories were considered along with related legends. There was consensus that legends be integrated with Bible stories without differentiation. Legends on Abraham's discovery of God, the idol story and the three strangers were accepted by the group; the ones on the birth of Abraham, and his trial in the furnace were rejected. No definite decision could be reached on the Akedah.

Non-biblical stories related to all aspects of Jewish life were also considered. The criteria for evaluation included age level, related content, intrinsic interest and child life.

At the last meeting on record, February 6, 1950, it was agreed that members of the workshop complete the first drafts of their units by May 1st. That evidently remained a pious wish. The goal which the workshop had set out to achieve — that of preparing units — was not carried out. Although viewed thus the committee failed in its task, no energy properly directed is ever fully lost. Within a year Theresa Silber produced the Hebrew textbook Shalom Yeladim and a Teachers Guide to it. This highlighted the fact that textbooks were
more needed than units, since most teachers find it easiest to work from a textbook than from syllabi which require specialized training and additional work.

Also, the work which this workshop had set out to accomplish was actually completed later by a member of that committee — George Ende. M. Entin was also on the Queens principals council under whose auspices Ende's work finally appeared.

One of the possible reasons for the failure of the workshop to achieve its purpose was the lack of a full-time curriculum director. Much smaller public school districts than the Jewish Education Committee of New York have such professional experts. Executives busy with a host of other responsibilities cannot activate and lead a sizable group of teachers.

The Conservative nature of the workshop was implied, but not made explicit. It was implied in the structure and content of the Conservative elementary weekday school. The only direct discussion of philosophy, stated in ambiguous terms, related to motivation and meaning of the creation story. Both a theistic and a humanistic approach were suggested.

The general agreement to tell legends along with Bible stories does not necessarily tag both as folklore rather than the word of God; however, the hesitation in endorsing the Akedah is in a way a denial of revelation.

No attempt was made by the group to ascertain that Conservatism stands for by a study of the literature on the subject. Clearly then the workshop operated on the level of technique, not expressed philosophy. Every technique, of course, implies a philosophy. But on a professional level philosophy should
be plainly stated.

One final word of comment that relates not only to the above workshop but to work of the Commission generally. At crucial points in a discussion, when a proponent of an idea were challenged with the query "How do you know?" there were some who sought support in theory; however, the ones who were most certain of their views were those who had had personal and direct classroom experience. Ruffman especially would refer back to his work as teacher and principal rather than as supervisor. This, we believe, proves that experience in solving specific and concrete problems done critically and with high purpose is the ultimate guide in educational engineering.

In the meantime the curriculum work of the Commission and its Committee on Objectives continued. On March 12, 1951, Ruffman's outline for junior high was discussed. His approach to Humash — that of Hebrew selections plus content in English — was endorsed. Derby objected to the alternative course in history for Grade 4 (junior high 1) on migrations on the ground that such a course was not suitable for eleven year olds. Ruffman countered that the course was based on personal experience with children of that age level. The course was retained in both the 1951 (pp. 25-28) and 1959 (pp. 254-59) editions.

No sooner was the junior high division done than a revision of the elementary section started. On November 30, 1952, the objectives Committee devoted part of its meeting to the following discussion.

Second Year Hebrew.
Rabbi Ende urged that the second year of the elementary school anticipate the usual plateau
which develops during that year. The second year should therefore aim at thoroughness. Fortification rather than coverage should be the major goal. He also urged that in the area of mechanical reading fortification should be a major aim of the second year and that the approach to the achievement of this goal be spelled out. These suggestions were adopted.

Third Year Hebrew.

Mr. Huffman pointed out that the collateral Hebrew reading as recommended in the third year of the curriculum outline is premature. The curriculum should include guidance for silent reading with special attention to the more promising students. Mr. Huffman therefore moved that the curriculum should provide for one period weekly to be devoted to cursory reading and silent reading, and that such materials as the Sippurim Yafim and parallel Hebrew texts be recommended. The motion was carried.

Rabbi Ende urged that during the third year preparation for the study of Humash should be given special emphasis. The curriculum emphasizes this element but it does not spell it out sufficiently. The curriculum should also provide for the teaching of a few small selections from Genesis, such as Vayekulu. Rabbi Ende also urged that the curriculum contain a stronger statement on the necessity of accelerating the reading skills.

Rabbi Shoop suggested that it might prove practical to recommend using Divinsky's Mavo at the end of the third year, and start with the twelfth chapter of Genesis in the first year of the junior High School Department. Rabbi Derby disagreed with this approach. Since the first chapter of Genesis is of such central importance that it must not be eliminated or even abridged.

This excerpt from the minutes shows that attention was given to technical aspects of curriculum development and that some rabbis were quite vociferous and insistent on their views.

Then for several years activity slackened, until a June 23, 1955 meeting was confronted with this agenda of curriculum revision problems:

1. Is the time ripe for a revision in the structure of the congregational school? Shall we advance
the start of the elementary department to the age of seven instead of eight?

2. How can we provide for better teaching of faith in God, ethical living, and religious observances?

3. How can we provide for greater emphasis on parent education and on parent involvement in the school program?

A clear consciousness of the need for teaching faith in God and other Jewish values is evident from this set of questions. Whether this was provided for in the 1959 revision will be discussed later on. On November 15, 1956 the Commission accepted a recommendation to change the six-year to a five-year curriculum in order thereby to retain more children in the high school department. On February 3, 1958 only three persons in addition to Ruffman were present at a meeting of the Objectives committee to study his first draft of the revised curriculum. Questions were raised concerning the teaching of values, group survival, ability grouping within grades. It appears that on the whole there was comparatively little deliberation on the 1959 revision.

The objectives. However, considerable work was done on revising the Objectives and Standards. The general study of the several revisions of this document was given in Chapter III above. We reserved a discussion of the section on content of the curriculum for this chapter, where it properly belongs. We also found in the minutes two revised drafts of this section that were prepared in 1955. Since the printed revisions of the Objectives and Standards are easily available we shall not dwell so much on comparing their texts, as on a comparison of
the 1958 edition with the two unpublished first and second drafts of 1955. Perhaps we shall thereby gain insights into the development of official thought on curriculum.

The section on content in the 1958 revision was completely different from its predecessor. Four instructional areas were provided in the 1952 edition: 1. religious convictions and observances, 2. the Hebrew language, 3. the Torah, and 4. history of the Jewish people and its literature.

The 1955 drafts also provided for four areas: Torah, Hebrew language, Jewish living, and the Jewish people. The final published revision had only three areas by combining Torah and Hebrew language into one area, since the new plan provided for Hebrew only on the elementary level, to be replaced for the majority of students by Humash only in the junior high division.

The first 1955 draft was not as detailed as the second on the contents of the Humash course or of Hebrew. Nor did it have paragraphs on the synagogue or participation in Jewish community life in the area on Jewish living. Instead there was a paragraph on personal participation in religious Jewish life, which included the habit of worship — daily and on holidays.

The final 1958 revision was as detailed as the second draft. It differed, however, in a number of ways. The following sentences were omitted from the introductory section.

While the content to be covered in all subjects will reflect the wide variety of interests characterizing Jewish life, all areas of instruction will be pervaded by the ideals, practices and
beliefs of the Jewish religion, which have been its noblest achievements.

The Jewish school should educate our children to become ethical Jewish personalities, rooted in an abiding faith in God, finding their greatest joy and self-fulfillment in ordering their lives in accordance with the living tradition of Judaism. This purpose must necessarily permeate all of the school's activities.

A paragraph was added in this introductory part on the need "to encourage Jewish patterns of living at home." This statement replaced a paragraph on the home in the second draft under Jewish living.

The two descriptions of the Hebrew language as 1) "the language of the renascent Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael" and 2) "the language of the Bible the Siddur and the Mahzor," which appeared in that order in all previous editions, was reversed, probably to accentuate the primacy of the Hebrew of the Siddur over conversational Hebrew.

From the area of Hebrew this was deleted in the latest edition:

Pupils who show little aptitude for language should be given a knowledge of Hebrew sufficient to participate in the religious services, to comprehend the contents of the most widely used prayers, and to recognize the Hebraic terms most frequently associated with Jewish religious life and practice.

This idea of special classes for those with low linguistic aptitude was thus abandoned in favor of ability groupings within classes with provisions for enrichment of the program for the more able.

The first paragraph in the area of Jewish living has instead of "attitudes necessary for daily Jewish living" the
substitute phrases "for ethical living, for daily observance of Mitzvot." And then, right after the first paragraph on prayer and worship, was added the statement on teaching "basic Jewish tenets, particularly those relating to God and the Mitzvot."

Thus there was an increasing emphasis on religion, ethics, and Mitzvot. The shift from attitudes and knowledge to modes of behavior via Mitzvot is especially to be noted.

The Syllabi. We shall now briefly examine the syllabi for the first four years prepared by George Ende and the one for the first year by Elijah Bortniker. In an interview on October 29, 1959 Ende stated that his syllabi were prepared largely on the basis of previously published curricular aids. These are listed in his introduction to the first year and in the bibliographies for teachers, and need not be repeated here. It was designed to spell out in greater detail — in the form of units — the curriculum prepared by Ruffman. The syllabus for the first year was done seriatim in eight monthly units. It was later revised to form the course for the year. The other three were done as complete units, not in parts. The first three were tried out by teachers; discussions with them resulted in revisions. The first year course was rewritten four times, the second three times, the third twice. The achievement goals set for the year were designed as realistic objectives for the cooperating Queens schools. As the syllabi were tested, it was found that the first and second year goals could be attained, whereas the third was too ambitious. The fourth was not tested in classrooms under his guidance.
Metropolitan Principals Council. We know little of the curricular activities of individual principals of Conservative schools or of their regional associations, whether in Long Island, Philadelphia, Chicago or elsewhere. We could not obtain all the minutes of the New York Metropolitan Principals Council of the United Synagogue for all the years of its work on curriculum under the leadership of JEC ideological consultants. First L. Ruffman acted in that capacity, then Elijah Bortniker for two years, and for the past six years Samuel Dinsky has done this work. We saw at the Jewish Education Committee the minutes of two years only, 1958 and 1959. Ruffman's curricula of the forties and Bortniker's syllabus for grade one (1957) are outgrowths of this work. Dinsky's curriculum committee worked on the second and third years fairly intensively and had begun work on the upper grades. Bortniker submitted a syllabus also for the second year which was adopted by the group.

The most striking fact about the work of the principals' curriculum committee is the total absence of philosophical discussions. The principals themselves would probably disavow any inclination to ideological problem solving. There is too much immediate practical work to be done. Besides, the principals, by and large, are technicians, not theoreticians.

The same observation might incidentally be made for most of the supervisors and curriculum writers. The empiricism of Conservatism as a whole, which shies away from philosophy, extends particularly to its professional school leadership. Conservative ideology is still too nebulous for conversion into
a guide for daily routine. We find, therefore, throughout the minutes miscellaneous suggestions for changing a technique here, scope and sequence there, but no fundamental issues of educational or religious philosophy.

One experience of the curriculum committee of the Metropolitan Principals Council, however, deserves to be noted. In planning for syllabi the principals aimed at producing directions for classroom instruction that would be uniformly applied in the New York Conservative schools. To ascertain existing practices, a questionnaire was first circulated in 1958 concerning practices in the third grade. The responses brought to the surface the startling, though generally suspected, rainbow-like pattern of practices. In 25 schools there were 24 different Hebrew texts used. Seven different textbooks in history were in use. Thirteen schools employed a mixed method of teaching Hebrew, nine — Ivrit B'Ivrit, and seven the translation method. In general it appeared that the schools followed curricula and syllabi more in the breach than in observance. We doubt that this great diversity of practices is due in any appreciable manner to differences in ideology. In part it is certainly due to negligence and ignorance. How to raise standards in schools each of which is a law unto itself remains a cardinal issue in Jewish education.

Surveys. We have not come across any specialized surveys, either national, regional or local, of the curricular practices of Conservative schools. Yet a responsible agency should not seek to legislate for its constituents before it finds out how much the traffic will bear. The experience of the Metropolitan Principals Council, just cited, is a case in point. All talk
of uniform requirements ceased when the survey showed the extreme variety of practices. Without a survey the curriculum writer cannot know the areas that require particular care and correction. It is argued, of course, that the school consultants who write curricula and syllabi know the situation from direct and intimate observation and contact. Still, these are impressions, not scientifically gathered facts that lend themselves to interpretation by other educators as well. It is true that some of the published curricula have had a salutary effect by their mere presentation of standards to be emulated.

All these considerations notwithstanding, we feel that prior to launching its next curriculum revision effort, which may not occur for a long time, the Commission should effect surveys of curricular practices in Conservative schools. Moreover, along with that a survey should be made of the sociology and philosophy involved. The sociological study would address itself in part to the existing state of religious practices and cultural needs of Conservative Jewry. The philosophical survey would probe the aims that scholars, philosophers, rabbis, principals, teachers, parents and students set for the Conservative school. The results of such studies would aid in producing a realistic curriculum.

Is there anything in the general surveys of Jewish education made in recent years that bears upon our problem? Very little. We refer to the New York and national surveys.

The Survey of
Jewish Education in Greater New York, 1951-52, Qualitative Studies, published in 1959, has several pages (12-15) that examine the aims of instruction. Schools were asked to indicate the rank order of seven stated aims. The Conservative weekday afternoon school heads ranked the aims in the following order of importance: 1. favorable attitudes towards Jewishness; 2. observance of Jewish practices; 3. self-identification with things Jewish; 4. knowledge of subject matter; 5. participation in Jewish communal life; 6. personality development; 7. ethical behavior with one's fellow men (Table Vb).

The tables do not reveal how many Conservative schools responded. The reliability of the instrument may be questioned on the basis that no explanatory paragraphs were attached to each aim to elaborate on its precise meaning; no two respondents may have interpreted the particular aim in similar manner. The meaning of the findings must therefore be taken with reservations.

We shall now compare the Conservative schools with the other ideologies. Only the Reform Sunday school placed favorable attitudes first. The Orthodox ranked observance first. Self-identification appears close to the bottom with the Orthodox, in second rank with Reform and first among Yiddish schools. Knowledge was second with the Orthodox, next to last with Yiddish and Reform.

How interpret these findings? The accompanying text, written by Ruffman, states: "The attitude of the Conservative group of schools is evidently affected by the wide range of practice and attitude prevalent among the Conservative group with respect
to religious observance" (p. 13). We might ask: how uniform is Orthodox practice and attitude? Moreover, maybe attitude is primary with the Conservative, irrespective of diversification in practice?

We are on firmer grounds as regards actual practices. Concerning subjects taught we read:

The curricula of Orthodox and Conservative congregational Weekday schools were basically very similar. The differences that were revealed were minor in character. Hebrew was more consistently a major subject of instruction in the Conservative schools than in the Orthodox schools, particularly in the upper grades, where the offering of Hebrew language diminished as the educational level rose. Bible-Humash occupied the same relative position in both groups of schools. In each case it received increasing emphasis from the third year up. Bible-Prophets was offered rarely in the Conservative group and infrequently in the Orthodox group of schools.

A similar pattern regarding time allotment was shown both by the Conservative and Orthodox sponsored schools. The only significant differences revealed was that more time seemed to be allotted to Bible-Humash among the Orthodox group than in the Conservative group. This would correspond with the greater degree of frequency with which the Hebrew language is used in the Conservative schools as compared to the Orthodox schools. As far as language is concerned, the same situation exists in both types of schools with English and the combination of English-Hebrew serving as the prevailing language media for both schools.

It seems fair to conclude that the curricula of the Orthodox and Conservative schools resemble each other quite closely in respect to the subjects offered, the frequency with which they are offered at the several elementary school levels, the relative time devoted to the subjects and the language of instruction that is used (p. 28).

In the balance of the report written by Isaac Levitats we find only one pertinent statement. It is based on uniform tests administered in schools and reads:
The Orthodox Non-Congregational schools do best in Hebrew; the Orthodox Congregational make the best showing in Holidays; the Conservative rank first in History; and the most intensive home environment is found among pupils in the Orthodox schools (p. 45).

The fact that the Conservative schools excel in history is perhaps due to the high rank assigned to peoplehood in the Conservative movement.

The National Study conducted by U. Z. Engelman and written by A. Dushkin also has little specialized information on Conservative schools. They are lumped together with other congregational establishments. Nonetheless, we do find several interesting and highly instructive items. First, several instruments were used in polling opinions of 8,000 persons on aims and objectives. Teachers answered the New York seven aims scale. These seven were reclassified into four categories. Three hundred sixty-two Conservative teachers ranked these as follows: 1. (highest rank) knowledge (so did the Orthodox and community Hebrew teachers); 2½, beliefs and values (also community Hebrew teachers); 2½, (same rank) self-identification; 4. practices and participation. Although the Reform ranked beliefs and values first, they had in common the last rank for practices and participation (p. 24). We may have to correct the prevailing impression that most Conservative teachers are Orthodox, for in teaching aims they seem to tend to Reform attitudes.

Dushkin and Engelman arrive at this illuminating conclusion.

from this first opinion poll of its kind:

If then American Jewish parents, community leaders, teachers and adolescent youths really do consider Jewish knowledge, in its various components, to be their prime desideratum, however vaguely, several important implications seem to follow. The first is that American Jews apparently continue our deeply ingrained classic tradition in defining Judaism not primarily as a system of beliefs and concepts, nor even primarily as a set of practices, but rather as Torah, classic knowledge; both in its differentiated specific forms and in its most general form — daath Elohim — knowledge of God. It is amazing to find this classic insight and outlook in a general sampling of parents from all types of Jewish schooling. Apparently, American Jews of all orientations and outlooks have this basic view and conviction in common — that both the sources and the purposes of Jewish education are to be found in study, in the knowledge of our literary historic materials, biblical and post-biblical, from the ancient to the modern; these record and exemplify knowledge, and are also the materials for teaching the other aims of Jewish education. This is also in line with the classic Jewish tradition, which in the quest for the Unknown, included what other traditions considered separate: both religious and ethnic culture. It would seem that this fundamental approach still functions vitally among American Jews, and probably determines in no small measure the unique place of Judaism in the American religious cultural pluralism (p. 26).

Another very striking comparison (Table IV) of parallel aims of official Orthodox, Conservative and Reform curricula leads Dushkin to the unmistakable conclusion that "there seems to be very little indeed in the statements of one group that the others object to" (p. 32); in other words there is similarity in basic aims.

A closer look, however, may reveal a number of important dissimilarities not noted by Dushkin. The Conservative "ethical sensitivity" of the second aim (p. 35) is not really paralleled by the other two denominations. As to the sixth aim
(p. 36), we find the Conservative stress on communal responsibilities neither among the Orthodox who make apologies for "galut life," nor among the Reform who emphasize philanthropy. Finally, whereas the Conservative, in the seventh objective, seek "reciprocal influence" between "the teachings of Judaism and the ideals of American democracy" (p. 37), the Orthodox merely accept the law of the land, dina di malkhuta, and the Reform extend "the universal ideals of Israel's prophets and sages" to a "dynamic involvement in service for freedom, brotherhood and peace." We may note that the hedonistic element in observance creeps into all three religious groups, as they speak of "joyous meaningful observances," "joyous participation," and "happy experiences" (objective number 3, pp. 35f.).

Table XXX (p. 79) highlights the very remarkable finding of the study that a great majority of children, including the Conservative, have a positive attitude toward the Jewish school, especially those who attend weekday classes, rather than Sunday only.

The Conservative schools attach great importance to Hebrew and devote to it more time than the Reform (pp. 183f.). Conservative schools score lower in a test on Hebrew fundamentals than noncongregational weekday schools (p. 207), but — remarkably — "the selected pupils who stay in school long enough to reach the top grade in these intensive Weekday schools may score better in Hebrew fundamentals than pupils in the corres-
ponding grades of the Day schools" (p. 207).

A comparison of prevailing practices leads to the conclu-
sion that "the curricula of Orthodox and Conservative Weekday
schools resemble each other quite closely at the elementary
level" (p. 245).

The major recommendation that resulted from the study to
establish a National Curriculum Institute (pp. 251f.) is to
be congratulated. It seems to be the best remedy for deepen-
ing the stream of Jewish education in America which at present
is "a monstrous big river — a mile wide and an inch deep"
(p. 4).

EXAMINATION OF CONSERVATIVE CURRICULA

Landesman, 1922

One opens a curriculum written some forty years ago with a
good deal of condescension. After all, what did they know
then, what kind of schools did they have, where was the Con-
servative movement? But as one turns the pages of Landesman's
Curriculum for Jewish Religious Schools the realization gradu-
ally dawns that they were not as backward as we assume. In
fact, the underlying conceptions have changed very little.
Then the most puzzling question of all arises: if they knew
the why and how, what was the reason for the barrenness of
Jewish education all these years? And most painful of all:
What guarantee is there that the allegedly good curriculum we

110 A glance at Table 6, New York Qualitative Survey, p.51
does not bear out this sweeping conclusion. The skewed curve
for the congregational schools is almost certainly due to
selection. See comments, op. cit., p. 53.
have today will produce a good school tomorrow? Patently, there is none. Besides philosophy and method there are clearly other factors — sociological, we presume — which make the difference between good and bad schools. However, since that is not the subject under study, we shall return to the content of Landesman's curriculum and the motivation behind it. But first a few remarks as to the structure of the book.

There are outlines for four types of courses: A — six-year course of 6½ hours of instruction in five days a week; B — six years of 4½ hours in three times a week; C — two years of six hours per week for students who start at age eleven; and D — six years of two hours on Sundays only. These were the realities of the time.

The schedule of course A on pp. 28f. is strikingly similar to today's offerings: modern Hebrew, the prayer book, Bible in Hebrew and English, hero stories in the first two grades and a chronological treatment in the other four grades, with America and Palestine in the sixth; principles and practices of Judaism in the home, the synagogue, other lands, the calendar, ethics, Hebrew terms for specifically Jewish concepts (pp. 94, 99, 112, 120f.); folk and liturgical music; extra-classroom activities such as Sabbath services, assemblies, holiday entertainments, social service.

Course B (pp. 172f.) which is two hours less a week reduces the amount of modern Hebrew studied as well as of the Hebrew selections from the Bible. The other subjects are similar to A.

This outline is sufficient for our purpose. We shall not advert to courses C and D. The arrangement of Course A is by
subject, not by grades, just like Ruffman's 1959 revision, except that there is no division into elementary and junior high departments. Our analysis is based on Course A.

In appraising this curriculum we shall follow the outline of topics in their alphabetical enumeration in our schedule or check list (below pp. 327-31).

A. Conservative Philosophy. There is not a word to indicate that there is such a thing as a distinct Conservative philosophy. Organizational ties with the United Synagogue are acknowledged in the foreword and preface, as well as in connection with the graduation examinations prepared by the Committee on Education of that body (p. 17). But ideologically the curriculum is "Jewish." There is not a hint that there are several kinds of Jews with diverse points of view.

B. Educational Philosophy. This is not stated in any particular section; it has to be inferred from the entire presentation.

There is mention on several occasions (pp. 1, 8) of the needs of the child, but the content and methods are definitely subject-centered. There is no recognition of individual differences or of the need for ability grouping or for a Hebraic fare for the gifted and content subjects for the less able. There is a recognition of the need to stress a balance of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

C. Religious Beliefs. For the sixth grade a broad and sympathetic view of the principles and practices of Judaism is recommended (pp. 116f). The main beliefs of Judaism are outlined as: 1. belief in one God as revealed by justice and
truth; 2. revelation of the divine will to the prophets; 3 freedom of will; 4. future life, reward and punishment; 5. election of Israel and messianic hope. We may remark that only articles 1 and 3 would find fairly wide acceptance in Conservative circles today.

The beliefs are followed by practices (pp. 117ff.). We need only note that divine sanctions for non-observance, implied in the above article 4 are omitted and replaced by the ethnic meaning of the precepts. Moreover, elsewhere there are direct instructions to the teacher not to arouse fear in children by holding out the threat of divine punishment (p. 62). If all other curricula maintain the same line, as no doubt they do, then this represents a major departure from traditional, theistic Judaism. Preservation of the Jewish people, ethics and the joy of divine Mitzvot seem to be the foundations of religious behavior in Landesman.

D. Subject Aims. The author is careful to state the general aims of a particular subject as well as the specific aims for a particular grade.

He has this to say on Hebrew:

To impress the child with the importance of Hebrew in Jewish life because it has ever been the language of Prayer, the language of the great products of Jewish literature and is again becoming a living language in the land of our ancestors. We should, therefore, aim in this course.

1) To enable pupils to read and understand most of the Pentateuch and the historical sections of the other books of the Bible, and the important prayers;

2) To enable pupils to read and understand simple modern Hebrew and to recite or carry on an easy conversation.
3) To enable pupils to write a paragraph of about ten or fifteen lines of simple Hebrew free from misspelled words and common grammatical errors (p. 31).

The Aim of Teaching Bible.

1) To impress the children with the belief in the divine origin and the binding authority of the Bible as conceived by the Jewish people;

2) To impress upon the children the fact that the Bible is not one book but a literature representing a development of a thousand years. "This literature relates the religious experiences of the Jewish people, their conceptions of God and duty, their ideals of conduct, and the divine help given them in their struggle for holiness and perfection";

3) To give to the children the ability to handle the Bible, i.e., the ability to find book, chapter, and verse which they may need;

4) To supply to the pupils such knowledge of the background of the Biblical narratives as will enable them to understand and appreciate more fully their teachings;

5) To bring the children to such familiarity with and love for this literature as shall lead them to a desire to live the life of the Torah, and to continue the study and reading of the Bible in later years (p. 71).

Landesman seems to object to reinterpretation.

The teacher must try to avoid the danger of wresting texts from their contexts, and placing upon them constructions they were never intended to bear. The Bible is not a collection of copybook maxims, a sort of "sacred scrapbook." The Bible gives us the attitude of the Jewish people toward their own past. We must therefore not only give "a Jewish moral to each episode in the Biblical narrative but we must give the child the specific moral that the Bible itself attaches to that episode" (p. 73).

In some respects the view of the Bible is extremely liberal. The teacher should answer questions with frankness and honesty (p. 76); the Bible took 1,000 years to write (p. 85).

It is interesting to note that the idea of selections from
the original text of the Humash based on ideas and connected narrative is already expressed, albeit weakly, in this first Conservative curriculum.

The purpose of the prayer course is:

1. To help the children cultivate and cherish the habit of prayer as one of life's supreme privileges. To give the child an idea of prayer, a love for prayer, and a desire to pray is one of the most important tasks of the religious school.

2. To impress upon the child not only the importance of private devotion, but also of public worship as one of the most potent influences in the preservation of Judaism. By attending the synagogue and joining in its service the Jew proclaims his attachment to Judaism and his loyalty to his people. It is also a powerful incentive towards arousing religious emotion and devoutness in prayer.

3. To impress upon the child the importance of Hebrew as the language of prayer, as the tie that unites us with millions of other worshippers who are our brethren (p. 58).

It is remarkable how many of the "modern" ideas of the latest curriculum are already contained in the first one. For example, teach the meaning of a prayer before reading it (p. 59); have a classroom service (p. 60).

In the other domains of Jewish life there is emphasis on home observances (pp. 93ff.), the synagogue, the calendar and holidays. Not found in other curricula are lessons in morals and manners (pp. 90ff.), and Jews in many lands (pp. 101ff.) recommended by Landesman to be taught in specified grades. There is also mention of communal institutions (p. 115).

The purpose of the history course is

To instill in the child a love for his people and a pride in its history. It should give him a clear and unbroken view of the development of the Jewish people from its beginnings until the present time. "The central idea which the teacher is to
impress upon the child is the attempt on the part of the Jewish people to fashion and preserve its individuality and its distinctive institutions. The pupil must become aware that this feat was not accomplished without a conscious struggle, a struggle against all kinds of disintegrating influences and detrimental forces. The boy or girl should be made to realize that this struggle has been carried on successfully only because the Jewish people has never in the course of its long history been ready to yield to its environment. It has been willing to adjust itself to change, but unwilling in this process of change to surrender one iota of its historic continuity. Lastly, the pupil is to become conscious that facing the problems of the present and of the future, the Jewish people must preserve this same attitude of continuity and change" (Leo L. Honor: The Teaching of Jewish History in the "Jewish Teacher," May 1917.) (p. 122).

E-F Outcomes and Behavior. The outcomes in the main subjects are very similar to those in the 1959 revision by Ruffman. The vaunted expansion of the curriculum has really not occurred in the past forty years. In some respects Landesman expected more: certain Piyutim were to be covered in the Mahzor (pp.69f.); 1,000 Biblical verses were to be mastered in the sixth grade (p. 86). The major innovation perhaps consists in Ruffman attempting in three days what Landesman had proposed for five days.

As was noted above, desired behavior includes also general morals and manners; there is the erudite observation that these are best learned by example. Teaching of home practices is designed for the first grade (pp. 95ff.); of the synagogue in the second grade (pp. 99f.).

There is a little more stress than in Ruffman on Kashrut, such as the laws of Kashering meat (p. 118); "Zizit" (p. 96) is probably an anachronism for a Conservative curriculum.
There is not as much stress on holiday observances in school, possibly because there was more of it in the home then; but the evidence is inconclusive. The question of how much of Jewish law is to be maintained is not discussed at all.

G. Co-Curriculum. One might expect the widest expansion in recent decades in the area of co-curriculum. Actually, there has only been some change in terminology and perfection of some methods. Junior services (p. 131), a school paper (p. 33), music (pp. 14, 28), library (p. 17), Hebrew literary society (p. 33) and holiday entertainments (p. 28) are expressly mentioned, whereas arts and crafts, dance and drama are implied.

There may not have been as much consciousness forty years ago of the values of an informal program in Jewish education, but in actual practice the congested neighborhoods of that day certainly produced much more social activity in or around the school than in the scattered suburbs of today.

Summary. For a first one-man effort in Conservative curriculum making Landesman has produced a remarkable document. Only 1,000 copies of the book were printed. Though it is out of print now, it seems to have had extremely limited circulation and very little real influence on the Conservative school. It was not the fault of the conception of curriculum in this book; the reasons for decline and stagnation in the Conservative school for several decades lay elsewhere.

Cohen, 1932

Earlier in the present study we had occasion to quote the

Some of the reasons are outlined in U.Z. Engelman, Hebrew Education in America (1947).
statement of Samuel M. Cohen's aims in his *The Progressive Jewish School* as well as S. Dinin's angry denunciation of this retrogressive composition which breathes only religious devotion without sound education (above, p. 5/).

A reading of the book soon convinces one that it is highly academic and impractical, not a curriculum tested and tried in a school. The style is highbrow, a strange mixture of psychology and Midrash, modern educational theories and Jewish religion. At best this essay can have only a historical interest. We shall therefore make our summary very brief.

Cohen starts out with an exposition of recent scientific studies of character. He proceeds quite unexpectedly to extrapolate this scientific research into the realm of religious education by proceeding from classroom to home, synagogue and the cosmos. His main purpose is to get away from the subject-centered school to one that builds attitudes, character traits, such as "pride in the Jewish past and...hope for its future" (p. 108).

There is not the slightest notion that Conservatism may stand for anything distinctive. It is simply "Jewish." There is much talk of God and the Divine as expressed in holidays and observances. No dogmas are mentioned and no attempt is made to clothe the abstractions with exact meaning.

Cohen stresses the emotional tone of the learning process as more important for character development than information. He therefore objects to placing informal activities into the extra-curriculum. To him they are the essence. Lessons are therefore to be motivated through and introduced by class com-
mittees. Skills are to be taught in connection with the holidays. "The subject matter of History, religion, prayer book, Bible, Jews in Other Lands, Music and Palestinian Geography are integrated with school activities" (p. 122). Every class elects a health commissioner; "judges are elected by the children from among those who are able to pass an examination on Exodus 18. 13-27" (p. 24) and similar Biblical selections. There is a gymnasium; tournaments and contests are arranged (p. 27). Financial administration, dramatics, assemblies, social service, festive celebrations, synagogue worship are some of the other activities. Worship exercises for the home are detailed (pp. 77-88).

The appendix contains model constitutions for a school and a class. All in all, it is not a professional curriculum by a trained educator. The basic fallacy is the idea that introducing a program or lesson through a "governing council" of students is all that is necessary for creating proper attitudes.

Lang, 1951

Leon S. Lang's Curriculum for the Congregational School stands out as a well-conceived instrument that was tested in the classroom. How intensive or successful that testing was, it is not revealed. It is much more ponderous than Ruffman's and therefore could not command as much popularity. It is not a guide or an outline but a fully developed curriculum centered around units of study and activity. It also claims the unique distinction of presenting a Conservative view of life for curricular purposes. It therefore deserves careful scrutiny.

The first striking thing is the plan of organization. It
provides for a Hebrew kindergarten for ages five to seven, a primary department for ages eight and nine (Mekhinah Aleph and Bet), an elementary department for ages ten through thirteen (Mahlakot Aleph through Dalet), and a Hebrew High school—fourteen through sixteen. A note on p. 23 suggests that the last three years of the Mahlakot may be designated Junior High, in which case the two Mekhinot and Mahlakah Aleph would constitute the elementary department. This corresponds to Ruffman’s designations.

The underlying idea is that "the first two years are needed for the primary or preparatory steps towards the child’s developing motivation interests in Jewish study" (p. 169). We do not know on what basis the author decided that two instead of three preparatory years are needed. The facile manner in which an alternative division is suggested seems to indicate that, like most other panaceas in Jewish education, the decision is arbitrary, not based on scientific studies. All in all, these divisions only tend to confuse. We shall therefore designate, as does the author, the six years of "Hebrew school" as first year, second year, etc. Incidentally, the provision for three years of Hebrew kindergarten prior to Hebrew school must be peculiar to certain schools in Philadelphia, since most other Conservative schools have for ages five through seven classes in English only.

Only the first three years are detailed (pp. 41-220). The last three years and the high school are given in brief outline (pp. 223-38) and were to be published in a second volume, which never materialized. The two mimeographed experimental
volumes of the same work, which appeared earlier, contained the first and second year only.

A. Conservative Philosophy. We are most interested in Lang's singular statement on the educational affirmations of Conservative Judaism (pp. 10-15). The first impression is that the statement lacks a review of the thinking of Conservative philosophers. There is no mention of any of the contemporary thinkers or their ideas on theology. Conservatism seems to be conceived as Jewish scholarship and law rather than the broad gamut of other issues agitating the modern Jew. There is an indication of the shadings of opinion from Orthodoxy to Reconstructionism but no outline of issues. God is mentioned only once; the God idea, however, is not explored. Judaism is comprised mainly of Mitzvot Maasiyot, practices rather than beliefs. We shall see later in what elementary form the God idea appears in the text.

A glance at our checklist to assess Lang's statement on Conservative philosophy will show that the elements of rabbinism, tolerance and the outer limits of forbidden thought or action are absent. All three may have been implied though not explicitly stated.

A further glance at the checklist under United Synagogue constitution shows that most of the elements of that document are present in Lang, except for Kashruth, which is mentioned in passing on p. 233 for inclusion in the sixth year. How strange that it was not deemed of sufficient importance to be included in a curriculum which lays primary stress on Mitzvot Maasiyot. Home observances will have to await discussion in
the sequel.

There certainly is no mention of any of the controversial issues in Conservative thought.

B. Educational Philosophy. Lang is careful to present a meticulously precise statement of his educational philosophy which he dubs a "special approach." The primary aim is "the optimum growth and development of a young Jewish personality" (p. 3). To achieve this purpose one must affirm that a pattern of Jewish living must embrace "the totality of Jewish relationships" as well as "the cultural and spiritual needs of the Jewish child" (p. 5). The result must be a curriculum not of subjects but of four areas of study and activity: Judaism, Israel, Torah, Hebrew (pp. 15f.). The areas are further divided into units that have coherent integration, proper motivation and progressive continuity (p. 27). Fourteen such units are provided for each year, each lasting several weeks. They are built around the succession of holidays and the Hebrew texts.

Lang thus follows the same philosophy as Ruffman in seeking a child and community centered curriculum. And although Ruffman speaks of instructional integration and areas of study, his outline by and large follows a subject curriculum. Lang outlines his units with considerable care in order not to deviate into a subject approach.

Attitudes and behavior are primary desired outcomes of education. Knowledge and understanding are needed to achieve a Jewish pattern of living.

The author does not provide for individual differences.
There is no mention of homogeneous or heterogeneous groupings. Nor is there discussion of differentiating between pupils who have linguistic ability and those who do not. A point is made by Lang of the fact that, unlike others, this curriculum does not indulge in too many "subjects." Yet one wonders whether the individual differences among teachers do not call for the type of resource units that provide a sufficient variety of activities and approaches to choose from. Ruffman is much more colorful in that respect.

C. Religious Beliefs. In vain do we seek a theology in the book. The sparse references to God are on such an elementary and simplified level that one wonders whether the author sought to descend to the child's level or, as we surmise, he himself has given little thought as to how to teach the God idea. Just a few samples. Every observant Jew is "to believe that there is only One God" (p. 48). Idols are no gods (p. 126). "Where is God?...God is everywhere, and yet He cannot be seen with human eyes. God's voice may be heard in one's thoughts, yet one cannot see Him speak" (p. 138).

Lang uses Greenberg's Hebrew text Hayehudi Harishon, the central idea of which is that an idol is not a God. Lang pursues the same line. One wonders whether the time has not arrived for us to discuss the God idea with children on a higher level. Probably even Torah knew that the statue is inanimate. Animism certainly is not an issue in our day. Why belabor it? Both Greenberg and Lang would grant that there are theological issues that are more pertinent to the thinking of the present-day Jewish child.
There is no hint as to the other Jewish beliefs included on our check list. The only reference that touches upon revelation is one concerning Moses who "followed what his conscience told him and what he heard through God's voice" (p. 148).

We find a similar situation with regard to supernaturalism. Biblical literalism is facilely dispelled by rationalizations and homiletics. Creation in six days? God's day may be a thousand years (p. 219). We must distinguish between legend and Biblical history, the author tells us (p. 145).

E. Outcomes. It is difficult to detail precisely what outcomes Lang expects, since he covers only the first three grades. Here Hebrew reading is taught by the phonetic method and there is no special emphasis on conversational Hebrew. Rather, there is emphasis on reading and comprehension in preparation for Humash study in the fourth year.

As to values, we find a list of social ideals in the Bible in simplified language (p. 204). A system of values is, however, lacking. The ideational element, though present throughout, is too elementary for the sophisticated child of today; it lacks challenge and contemporaneity. The problems that currently agitate Jewish minds are not treated.

F. Behavior - Hedonistic Religion. The Jewish educator is confronted by conflicting choices as to the rationale for religious behavior. The traditionalists speak of "the fear of the Lord". As we shall see, Lang advocates a spiritual hedonism. Heschel argues in favor of ecstacy in awe of God. Other philosophers suggest identification with the Jewish people. We ourselves submit that love of tradition might be
the answer.

The most striking impression one gains from the reasons given by Lang for observance of Mitzvot, including the Sabbath, is that they all stress the hedonistic element of pleasure and joy. "Mitzvah should be explained as a commandment of the Torah which if followed will bring about the happier way of living together" (p. 152). The Sabbath is a day of delight (p. 64). "The Sabbath is a day of peace and unity, for on this day we do those things that help to create a spirit of calm, of peacefulness of the spirit and that which brings Jews, in a family or in a community, into a happy relationship, through the observance of Judaism" (p. 118). "To learn that to live Jewishly, as the Sabbath inspires us to do, can give us much satisfaction and pleasure" (p. 179). What does all this add up to if not hedonism? Delight, happiness, satisfaction, pleasure.

It seems to us that this is a revolutionary shift in rationale. The old-type Orthodox Jew observed Mitzvot because they were God's commandments; non-observance was punishable by either worldly or heavenly sanctions. "The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord." All religion, it is claimed by Heschel, has an element of fear in it. 112 This is totally absent in Conservative educational thought. Not fear of the Lord but spiritual pleasure has become the keystone. Even within the Conservative movement those with more traditional learnings, like Schechter and Heschel, objected to this hedonism. Schechter's emphasis on Simha Shel Mitzvah, joy in

112A. J. Heschel Man Is Not Alone, p. 56; Man's Quest for God, p. 113.
doing God's work, or Hasidic Hedvah and Rinnah, ecstasy and song, were to be a by-product of faith, of a sense of the transcendence of God, "rejoicing more in giving than in acquiring, more in believing than in perceiving." And Heschel writes: "But since when has esthetics become the supreme authority in matters of religion? Customs, ceremonies are fine, enchanting, playful. But is Judaism a religion of play?"

It is clear from the above that within Conservatism there are differences of opinion on the hedonistic approach between the humanists and the traditionalists. It will probably be argued that the esthetics of observance has relevance in our day more to peoplehood than to God; that the very contribution of Conservatism to religious thought consists in relating the individual to Klal Yisrael, to the Jewish people past and present. The individual who lights Hanukah candles out of an awareness of performing an act of being united in spirit with all his brethren who at that moment act likewise, as well as with the Maccabees who lit the first torch of freedom, might have cause enough to have a sense of ecstasy and exultation. But then what is the meaning of the blessing over these candles "Blessed art thou O Lord our God who sanctified us by His commandments?" If it implies a dedication to the ideals of freedom, a readiness to lay down life for the preservation of Judaism, where does the command to do so, the moral imperative, emanate from? In our opinion the answer might be simple; from

113 Heschel, Man Is Not Alone, p. 94.
114 Heschel Man's Quest for God, p. 113. The pages that follow relate to our subject.
love, from the traditions transmitted to us by parents and teachers. That awareness could suffice for the masses.

G. Co-Curriculum. Out of a conviction that the Jewish school has spread itself too thin by attempting too much in the short time at its disposal, Lang makes no special effort to detail the co-curriculum, especially since activity is the very warp and woof of his conception of curriculum. Also, he treats only the lower grades; there is less opportunity there to formalize certain segments of these activities.

His plan for terminal ceremonies departs from accepted custom and deserves to be noted. He proposes a confirmation ceremony at age fifteen or sixteen for which there should be minimum requirements of three years of study. Graduation he postpones till after completion of Hebrew High school. This may be the custom in Philadelphia.

Ruffman's Curricula.

Louis L. Ruffman's earlier curricula, one for the elementary division (1948), the other for Junior high (1951), were expanded to form the latest 1959 revised edition entitled Curriculum Outline for the Congregational School.115

It is heralded in A. E. Milgram's preface to it as a new work by virtue of the following features: 1) it takes into consideration the social and curricular developments in the

past decade; 2) the organization of content is no longer by grade but by subject areas in three-year blocks; 3) a complete revamping and enrichment of content to make it a true curriculum guide with ample suggestions as to materials, devices and curricular approaches.

The author himself acknowledges the assistance of Abraham Segal who edited and expanded the entire manuscript especially on classroom procedure and method. Both Ruffman and Segal are past masters in simplicity and lucidity of style. The product, while rooted in advanced thinking on Judaism and progressive education, is extremely popular in presentation.

The first question that suggests itself is: Is this curriculum designed for Conservative schools only? On the surface it would seem that it is not. Like all other curricula or syllabi produced by the United Synagogue the term Conservative is lacking in the title. Throughout the text there are indeterminate reference to "the Synagogue school" (p. 9), "Jewish conception" (p. 13), "school program of the American Jewish community" (p.xx), all without the adjective "Conservative". It would thus seem that there is an intention to offer the book for use by Orthodox and other schools as well. Although we do find two references to "Conservative congregational schools" (pp. 103,189) and one to "United Synagogue schools" (p. 3) there is no reason why any afternoon school of like organization could not use it. Although it is based on the philosophy enunciated in the Objectives adopted by the Commission, the general tone is broadly Jewish, not denominational. Moreover, even the appellation "religious" appears very sparingly
in this curriculum that is designed for congregational schools.
(We found references to religion only on pages 191, 198, 215, and 218ff.) True, one of the three is designated "Jewish Life and Religious Practices" instead of the former usage of customs, ceremonies or observances. The content stresses mainly ethical and social concepts.

Despite all this there is no doubt that the 1959 revision is undoubtedly grounded in the experience of the Conservative congregational afternoon school. While some of the source material cited is still of Orthodox, Reform or community vintage, the social, ideological and organizational realities of the Conservative movement are clearly reflected in the contents.

How Much Philosophy Is There? Only the scattered paragraphs on the aims of teaching particular subjects and lists of values (pp. 133, 137, 163, 178, 197, 221, 225, 227ff., 249, 262ff.) contain references of a philosophical nature. Everything else is not Why but How; that is, the book deals mainly with method. The fact that philosophy is the special domain of a separate publication, the Objectives, is certainly a good enough excuse for not reiterating it here. Besides, the authors are technicians, not philosophers: they are concerned almost exclusively with techniques and practices. Their guide, furthermore, is meant for teachers and principals who are also technicians, not philosophers, by and large. There seems to be a conscious attempt to avoid theoretical discussions.

Yet, a philosophy is implicit in the presentation. At every step a stand is taken on the meaning of Judaism and on an educational philosophy. It will therefore be up to us to discover that philosophy which is implicit in the body of the presen-
The introduction, however, does outline several guiding principles. The first posits a child-and-community-centered school, one that meets both the developmental needs of the child, as well as the requirements of adult society.

The second principle is expansion of the curriculum beyond the academic subjects into "the total Jewish environment in which the child lives" (p. 3). The suggestions for a number of co-curricular activities are admirable and are all based on tested experience.

The third principle refers to the teaching of religious and ethical values. These are defined as "the child's ability to make sound value judgments and to base his daily actions on correct choices between right and wrong" (p. 13). The avowed stress thus is on teaching behavior rather than on teaching ideas. The inclusion of vicarious experiences with value-situations through stories and legends is especially noteworthy.

Thus, whereas again the stress is on techniques on which there is much sound advice, the philosophical foundations are not elaborated upon. We must remark, however, that unlike the body of the book, the introduction does stress some religious values.

To aid us further in our search for the philosophical underpinnings of Huffman's curriculum we shall now follow the checklist contained in the instrument we prepared for our analysis (pp. 327-31 below).

A. Conservative Philosophy. Does Ruffman reflect the basic tenets of Conservative philosophy as we ascertained them?
We already mentioned above that there is nowhere in the book a statement of the fundamentals of Conservatism. Relegation of that aspect to the official Objectives may be justified, but we do not even have the author's indication as to the extent to which these Objectives were used or the problems he encountered in adapting the curricular materials to that official philosophy. We must therefore conclude that the author avoided controversial or unresolved matters by stating ideological problems in a most general and non-committal manner. It was done because of the conviction that the Jewish teacher needed method more than anything else. That is why all references to values or theology were phrased to include "the Jewish view" rather than the Conservative view. These sections are therefore so innocuous as to belong equally in Orthodox or Reform curricula. Perhaps there was the feeling also that Conservatism does stand for a more all-embracing ideology, which is universally Jewish rather than for a particularistic approach.

Our basic finding that Conservatism embraces a wide range of ideologies and therefore stands for Jewish pluralism is nowhere expressed. There is no indication as to the several possible interpretations on any subject. The references in the bibliography do contain some items (p. 39) that range from a Reconstructionist viewpoint (e.g. Jack Cohen's) to a theistic outlook (e.g. Simon Greenberg's). Yet nowhere is the reader told that one may interpret the Bible or prayers in a variety of ways, ranging the entire gamut of the theological and ideological diversity that prevails in the movement. To leave it
to each teacher, rabbi and principal to work out his own point of view, or to shut one's eyes to the wide diversity of views is hardly helpful. A curriculum guide for Jewish schools must not fail to offer guidance on the most confusing problem in teaching a faith and a way of life that is being racked by so many conflicting and diametrically opposed interpretations.

If the Conservative movement has deliberately eschewed adopting a unified platform, its schools are at least entitled to know the outer limits of possible points of view. If the principle of ideological autonomy bids the movement as a whole to allow the free play of ideas, the school too must know how far it may go in interpreting our tradition. When a teacher is asked by a child whether a certain miracle is true, the teacher must have an official guide if not to one answer — which is hardly possible among Conservatives — at least as to what are the several possible answers. If the Conservative school is expected to teach religion, what is that religion?

Moreover, if we posit pluralism as a Conservative characteristic, the principle of tolerance necessarily follows. That is, teachers who have a variety of backgrounds must be told clearly the extent to which they are free to experiment in the realm of ideas. Orthodox fundamentalism is still too entrenched and too intolerant. All of the other more liberal and more modern views of Judaism are therefore kept underground. Can not the teacher be told forthrightly: You are free — free to think, to explore, and to lead your children on the path to intellectual freedom? Unless the curriculum makes that crystal clear, it is failing in the most important contribution of
Conservatism to Jewish religious thought; that curriculum is not Conservative. There is no clear statement as to what the dynamic principle of an evolving religion implies in the classroom. To merely make references to the Sabbath or Kashruth without spelling out the contemporary debates as to the permissibility of riding to synagogue on Saturday or the survival values — as against ancient taboos — of Kashruth, for example, is ostrich-like procedure. Possibly more observance can be attained by a more permissive and lenient interpretation of laws of Jewish religious practice than by the fear of supernatural sanctions for non-observance. Such an approach may make it impossible for many Orthodox teachers to work in Conservative schools. But unless Conservatism means what it stands for — change, adaptation — it will not raise a generation in its own spirit. This is particularly imperative in the education of children. There can be no equivocation in teaching a way of life. It is not enough to be all things to all men; Conservatism must provide specific and detailed guidelines for behavior, at least within a certain range of permissibility. The present domination of Orthodox approaches within a non-observing community results in avoiding the basic issues and in immobilization. There are so many things hardly anyone dares voice a candid opinion on, that the ideological atmosphere of the school is reduced to the most unenlightened lowest common denominator. Where the teachers fail to speak out on God, the Sabbath and Kashrut for fear of offending someone's sensibilities, the children formulate their views on things from antiquated notions — such as anthropomorphism from the Bible — or
from their home or Christian neighbors.

No, the element of change has not even been mentioned, let alone spelled out, in the present curriculum. This is a very serious shortcoming.

Finally, there is an area of Conservative foundations of thought, of which there is hardly any awareness at all. It is certainly not elaborated in the curriculum under review. We refer to the Conservative reaffirmation of rabbinism in the face of the return of classical Reform to the Bible as the only valid source of Judaism. Ruffman has an outline of the essential tenets of the Bible (pp. 197f., 215-22), but nowhere do we find an affirmation of the long chain of rabbinic tradition. True, legends are mentioned (e.g. p. 197) but the world view of rabbinic piety and Halakha is totally forgotten. Yet without such affirmation there is no Conservatism. A movement which started out as a Historical School cannot afford to maintain a school system whose curriculum has no mention of the Talmud, or of the Shulhan Arukh as a guide of faith and practice. Of late even the Reform movement has begun a return to rabbinism; Conservatism cannot deny its heritage. In this too the latest offering of the United Synagogue finds itself very far away from the fountain of Judaism.

The over-all conclusion must therefore be that we do not yet have a Conservative curriculum that guides to a Conservative way of life. And unless such a curriculum is produced there can be no claim to having come of age, of having attained

ideological maturity. All the techniques in the present curriculum are valueless unless they lead to a clearly defined set of guides for conduct. A religious school wastes its effort if it does not teach how to live, how to behave — as a human being, as a Jew, as a Conservative Jew. Jewish religious education must produce men and women who have acquired Jewish habits of living and of thinking about life. Rabbinic Judaism produced a Shulham Arukh. Without a similar code of conduct for the modern age for Conservative Jews much of the learning that goes on in Conservative schools fails in its true purpose.

It might be argued — and justly so — that one cannot expect the school to solve a problem — that of formulating rules for a way of life — that the adult community finds insoluble at the present time. That realization makes the task of Conservative philosophers and law-givers even more urgent. If the present generation of parents who still imbibed their Jewishness from their own parents and grandparents through home influence flocked to Conservative temples, their children, whose homes are largely devoid of Jewish patterns of behavior, may turn the tide into uncharted and possibly unwholesome directions. Now in the flush of prosperity and triumphant advance in numbers and edifices — now is the time to concentrate on quality rather than quantity, and on content that will enrich the lives of the next generation.

Compared to USy Constitution. In our checklist we have a section on the United Synagogue constitution. We skipped it for the other curricula, because it would have involved a departure from the topical treatment (that is, by items, not by
a particular document, such as the constitution just mentioned). However, we deem it worthwhile to pause here and look into the implications of that document for curriculum building. There is no doubt that this preamble to the constitution must be viewed mainly as of historical import rather than as a legally binding instrument. Yet a comparison of its charted goals with what we now teach Conservative children will throw light both on the charter and on the present stage of development. We shall follow the numbers assigned to each item on our checklist.

1. Advance cause of Judaism.

This is so general and common to all positive Jews as to be of universal application to all Jewish groups, not just the Conservative. There is no doubt that Judaism was employed in its religious connotation. The main goal thus was to advance the cause of the Jewish religion. Certainly the present curriculum fully subscribes to such an aim.

2. Maintain Jewish tradition in its historic continuity.

This precept is the most fundamental article of faith of Conservatism. It affirms the validity of Jewish law and beliefs as they evolved throughout the ages; it also implies — albeit quite imperceptibly — that there has been a historical development of tradition; that is, that the passing ages caused change.

We saw above that Ruffman has some tradition, but the element of change is even more imperceptible in his blueprint for the Conservative school than it is in the preamble to the United Synagogue constitution.

3. Loyalty to Torah and its historical exposition.
Here again we have two contrasting provisions. On the one hand there is a declaration of fealty to the Bible and to sacred Hebrew literature in general; on the other, the observation that that lore should be studied with the modern tools of scholarship.

Loyalty to Torah is definitely provided for in the 1959 revision. Historical or scientific commentary on that Torah is absent. It may be sagacious for a widely used document not to tread on dangerously controversial ground, but it is not good forthright Conservative education. In fact, the time has come to declare boldly in the classroom that we know so much more in our day about the origin and historical development of the Bible and of our other national and religious literature than did preceding generations, and yet we love that literature, respect it, and cherish it no less. And to deny our children all that knowledge for fear of some fanatical fundamentalists in our midst is, to say the least, bad education. If Schechter and Ginzberg did not hesitate to put on paper their modernist approaches to our literary treasures, why should we, nearly half a century later, hesitate and conceal?

4. Observance of the Sabbath and of the dietary laws.

Observance of the Sabbath and of dietary laws are the only two Mitzvot specifically mentioned in the organic law of the Conservatives. Why these two were singled out we can only guess. Probably it was due to the fact that these observances have, in addition to their religious origins, also survival or national value in setting the Jew off from the other nationalities and religions. Perhaps, too, they are the last line of
defense.

What of the curriculum? The Sabbath is mentioned frequently (e.g. p. vii, 133, 141-45), laws of diet only twice (p.11, 232). There is no hint, however, as to what Sabbath observance entails, or whether children should be taught that the Maccabees were ready to lay down their lives rather than eat a ham sandwich. If the latter point is not to be taught, as under present circumstances it cannot, what shall we teach? Or should we perhaps teach the historical fact concerning the Maccabees and point out to the children that conditions have changed and some Jews nowadays do eat ham? Is lighting candles and making Kiddush, eating Hallah and singing Zmirot sufficient? What does resting on the Sabbath mean? Is watching a football game or going bowling a proper way of relaxing from the week's toil? The point is again that merely prescribing "proper observance" without spelling out what that means is tantamount to the blind — albeit well-intentioned — leading the blind. And children crave guidance; they want to be told what to do.

Is this challenge to curriculum builders unfair, since we are asking them to turn lawgivers? The challenge clearly is both to the Committee on Law of the Rabbinical Assembly, the USCJE and the lay leadership to take note of the seriousness of the situation. The remark in the introduction to the curriculum that children must not be expected to reform their homes is very sound. Yet the school cannot shirk all responsibility and leave it all to the parents. Nor can the adult curriculum makers overlook their responsibility to seek joint action with the other Conservative bodies in producing a modern
edition of a Shulhan Arukh, at least for school children.

We are fully aware of the fact that modern man will not tolerate detailed prescription and regulation of the domain of the private; that he will resist the invasion of his private life by both state and church; that this is a fundamental aspect of the battle for human liberty. This, however, does not absolve the religious school from teaching a way of life, nor the Jewish school from teaching the Jewish way of life. If it did, its main reason for existence would fall away.

Two additional points must be made. We are not pleading for a unitary code of behavior, but rather for one that allows for the latitude that is inherent in the Conservative philosophy of Jewish life. Secondly, we are not advocating blind obedience to prescription. Rather, we insist on critical thinking that would illumine every act and would allow for an ongoing reconstruction of Jewish experience.

5. Retain in the service references to Israel's past and hopes for restoration.

It must be noted that this was not a Zionist declaration. The purpose was merely to dissociate Conservatism from the Reform practice. Yet by the same token the implications were far-reaching, since by this reaffirmation the founding fathers clearly aligned themselves in the nationalist ranks.

In this respect the curriculum seems to be fully in line with the preamble. There are ample provisions for activities on Israel and indications as to the use of the prayer book for nationalist aspirations (pp. 164, 174, 184, 259 etc.).

6. Liturgy to be traditional and in Hebrew.
On this, too, the curriculum is fully in accord with the preamble. Services are shortened by necessity, but the principle is there.

7. Traditional observances in the home.

While there is considerable attention paid to home observances (especially pp. 10ff.), the very essence is lacking, namely a list of specific Mitzvot. We find benedictions, home prayers, and general statements about home observances. If lighting candles and similar minima are satisfactory in the Conservative view, that is alright. But if more is expected, it should be spelled out in detail.

We have now come to the end of our appraisal of Huffman's latest curriculum in the light of Conservative thought. Two conclusions seem to be in order:

1. On the one hand, the curriculum contains the positive imperatives of the movement built into the program by means of broad provisions for progressive educational approaches in giving knowledge, skills, a value-system and patterns of informal co-curricular activities designed to produce a positive Jew.

2. On the other hand, the curriculum fails to spell out the range of Conservative philosophical thought, to provide for differences of opinion, to present a code of behavior and of values more in keeping with the fluid state of Conservative thought and behavior.

Perhaps this generation is not yet ready for the second type of approach.

B-C. Nature of Judaism and Theology. The author has this
The Jewish conception of what is desirable in the realm of human behavior is rooted in an awareness of God as the primary force in the universe shaping and guiding the life and destiny of man. The concept of God is made a concrete and living power in the life of the Jew through its organic association with the people of Israel. Through the Jewish historical experience, a general concept of ethical monotheism has been transformed into a living reality expressed in the daily life of the individual who lives as a Jew. The integral association between God and Israel is further fortified through their organic relationship with the Torah, which records the experiences of the Jewish people as they are inseparably related to God. Specifically, Jewish religious values can be identified as such as they emerge out of the recognition of God, Israel and Torah as the indivisible foundations of the Jewish faith and way of life (pp. 13f.).

In relation to the teaching of history the following "important and still operative Jewish concepts" are stressed:

a. Monotheism. The long self-struggle of the Hebrew people to accept, clarify, and purify the concept of One God, exclusive, all powerful and universal.

b. Ethical monotheism. The developing concept of God as granting and demanding freedom, justice, and love.

c. The Covenant idea. The unique relationship between God and the Jewish people as embodied and renewed in the patriarchal covenants, the Ten Commandments, Josiah's reading of the new-found Book of Deuteronomy, and the convocation of Ezra and Nehemiah.

d. The Torah. The specific collection of writings comprising the earliest literature of the Jews, and the broader concept of Torah implying a whole way of life based on learning, teaching and deliberate effort to fulfill the Covenant.

e. The specific expressions in modern Jewish life of all the foregoing concepts: worship; the holidays; Sabbath; etc., as originating in the experiences and strivings of our ancestors.

f. The prophetic tradition. Nationalism and universalism: ceremonialism and ethical practice;
history as having purpose and the future as a measuring rod for the present (pp. 178f.).

All that can be said about this conception has already been pointed out in our previous discussion. It is so general and universally Jewish as to have nothing specifically Conservative about it. There is no attempt to grapple with the ponderous problems of revelation, reward and punishment or the election of Israel (though the Chosen People is mentioned on p. 229), let alone the questions of a personal Messiah or resurrection. Yet children will ask questions on all these matters. There should at least be a listing of the several points of view that prevail on these issues as well as literature to guide the teacher. It is clear that we find little provision for critical thinking by students and teachers.

D. Subject Aims. We shall now examine in as much detail as necessary the aims of teaching the several subjects as stated and provided for in the curriculum, and will compare it with the aims stated in the Objectives as well as, in less thorough manner, with the aims outlined by a variety of authorities in an earlier section of this chapter.

First as to the range of subjects. While the curriculum is divided into three areas — Hebrew language or Torah, Jewish Life and Religious Practices, and the Jewish People — the number of subjects is larger, since Jewish Life includes the Siddur, holidays, the calendar and the synagogue; and the Jewish People is divided into history, Israel, America, Jewish community life and current events. Characteristically, religion, which is listed in the Objectives, does not appear as a
separate subject in the curriculum.

Hebrew and Torah or Bible are lumped together because Hebrew is to be taught exclusively in the three elementary grades and Torah in the three Junior high grades. This highlights the fact that Hebrew is taught mainly as a religious subject in preparation for Humash or to understand the Siddur. Nevertheless there is an effort to employ the natural method wherever possible and to provide for collateral Hebrew reading, especially for the brighter students. Study of conversational Hebrew as a means of contact with modern Israel is underplayed.

Despite all the varied and high-sounding aims of Hebrew study outlined earlier in the quotations from authorities on the subject, it seems to us that the Talmud Torah had basically experimented with only two major goals within the past half a century. One was conversational Hebrew, the other — preparation for Bible study. Proponents of the first goal attempted to introduce the Ivrit B’ivrit method in order to produce a Hebrew-speaking generation. It should be pointed out here that the Hebrew language then was a primary sanctum for the pioneers of Ivrit B'ivrit. The very idea of Hebrew as a subject of study was an innovation of the Heder Metukkan and of renaissance nationalism. It was a major curricular departure from the old-type Heder where Humash was the primary subject.

Now the clock has been turned back at least half way. The congregational school has relegated Hebrew to a secondary place in the curriculum; Humash is primary. There is also reconciliation to the translation method which has preempted the field. Although the Objectives (p. 10) provide that "wherever possible,
Hebrew should be the medium of instruction," and that only pu­
pils that are inadequately prepared linguistically should en­
gage in translation, the curriculum (p. 200) reckons with realties and admits that "the average congregational school" will rely on translation.

Thus the congregational school cannot have both worlds: the nationalism of Hebrew and the sacredness of the Bible. This is not merely because of lack of time, but to a large ex­
tent also due to the recent emphasis on the content, the ideas and values contained in the Bible. What influence the exist­
ence of the State of Israel will have on Hebrew instruction in America it is yet difficult to foresee. If the two communities of Israel and America are to maintain vital cultural contacts it must be through the medium of Hebrew. The perennial prob­
lem of a rich heritage and of little time in which to master it is thus with us and appears insoluble. The issue before the Conservative movement is this: if both Hebrew as a spoken language and the Bible as a source of values are indispensable ingredients of a school program, perhaps it is time to revise upward the time requirements for a Jewish education.

Torah. The curriculum makes it crystal clear that the aim is to teach both content and linguistics. To provide for con­
tent it is recommended to make selections based on a number of criteria, the most inclusive criterion being "selections re­
flecting the basic religious, social, and ethical ideals con­
stituting Judaism" (p. 198). There is a major departure from Louis L. Kaplan's plan of covering several verses from each Sidrah. Instead, selections are suggested largely from the
easier narrative portions, such as the Joseph story (p. 205) or a thematic approach through selections reflecting Jewish religious and social values (pp. 218f.). Study of certain Hebrew verses is to be interpolated by cursory reading in Hebrew for bright classes or by pupil reading or teacher narration in English for average classes. That the teaching of Bible for content is still in its infancy in Conservative schools is evident from the paragraphs on introducing the study of Humash (pp. 204f). Some of the suggested activities are quite helpful, but in order properly to equip the child to study Bible for content and meaning there is need for much more elaborate orientation period in which the child is afforded a taste of the vast treasures—literary, theological, artistic and so forth—that have accumulated around the Bible in world culture. For orientation purposes some children should follow their Humash study by consulting the commentary of J. H. Hertz, former chief rabbi of the British Empire; others should specialize on maps of Bible lands; still others should concentrate on illustrations, legends, archeology, film productions and a host of other ways of looking at the Bible. It will then be possible to have these specializations and insights accompany the entire three years of Bible study as associated learning. In the high school the Bible can be reviewed in a systematic course. Surely no true appreciation of the Bible is possible without placing it within the context of world literature and culture. Use of the Bible in English, in addition to a study of Hebrew selections, must become a part of every Bible course. Otherwise the People of the Book will know less of its own
Bible than its gentile neighbors. In providing for individual differences and interests in the course of three years of study it is inadmissible to limit it to narrowly Jewish concepts and experiences. The Dead Sea Scrolls, Nelson Glueck's and other excavations, and many other aspects of Bible study will enhance children's interest in the subject. Children who live in two civilizations must achieve integration between their most prized possession and the surrounding culture.

We can learn many things from laying side by side Ruffman's goals of Bible instruction and those enumerated above by the several authorities (pp. 27-25). We shall state only several of them. First, Ruffman selects only a part of those goals. It stands to reason that future Conservative curriculum builders should at least survey the omitted aims and test the practicability of including them. Secondly, M. Kaplan's idea of the need for reconciling the Bible and modern scientism is as valid for the school as it is for adults.

**The Siddur.** In general, the recommendations concerning prayer teaching are very helpful. On the one hand, teach prayer through classroom or synagogue worship service; on the other, explain as much of the meaning as possible (pp. 133ff., 225ff.). This is a tremendous advance over the erstwhile practice of mechanical reading of the Siddur.

Yet we must question a number of incidental remarks and assumptions. We wonder first of all how traditionally Jewish is the suggestion to encourage students "to compose original prayers related to some special occasion" (p. 137). We know of course that all of Piyut in the Mahzor and much of the Siddur
originated in prayers composed by individuals. But is it to be expected from children? Somehow there is much more to Jewish prayer than a mere verbal outpouring of the heart. It is the ancient symbols in which these prayers are expressed, the mystical, devotional, poetical allusions to a world of thought of generations past; in other words, it is not enough for the Jew to pray alone, with his own heart; he must relate himself in prayer through the spectrum of past yearnings and stirrings of the heart of his people. This issue requires further elucidation. For the past generations of Orthodox Jews prayer consisted of communion with God through the routine repetition of accepted formulas; understanding the prayers was not of the essence. The very idea that one needs to understand what he prays is a recent development within emancipated and enlightened Jewry. It is becoming even more established as a result of the English translations that accompany the commonly used prayerbooks, as well as due to the inability of most people to understand the Hebrew.

To what extent can the content of prayers really be taught to children? After all, much of the English translation is just as much an enigma to both child and adult as is the Hebrew original. It seems evident that verbatim translations are not liable to give much meaning to prayers. Nor is even a summary in simple words capable of evoking a proper religious mood. We must conclude, therefore, that in prayer, even more than in Bible study, there is need for re-interpretation.

A corollary idea relates to Simon Greenberg’s insistence on individual as against public prayer (above p.226). There is
no doubt that prayers like Modeh Ani, the bed-time Shema, benedictions over food, and similar prayers should serve the child as a means of personal communion with God in the privacy of his home. A school that succeeds in inculcating such home and private habits — an attainable goal, if properly motivated — has by that small contribution already justified its existence. To provide the human being with a light that guides and consoles at opening and closing one's eyes is a most precious gift.

The curriculum should therefore build into the school program an all-out effort to attain this goal.

The Synagogue. The procedure recommended (pp. 151ff., 233ff.) is to have a unit on the synagogue in one of the grades of both the elementary and Junior high division. The techniques are good. Especially helpful will be the several recent texts and resource units on the synagogue. A congregational school should certainly bring its charges to feel perfectly at home in the synagogue, as well as to possess a sense of awe in God's presence. Such a sense of divine presence should be inculcated through the habit of meaningful prayer.

The Community. On the whole the aims and devices outlined for teaching community (pp. 165f., 177f., 182f., 267-71) are sufficiently varied for a rich program, wherever such instruction is feasible. We should merely like to make one point. If the Conservative movement is not to stop its development at the doors of its synagogues and is to go out, meet and become part of Klal Yisrael, it must start in its schools. An American Jewry divided into several denominations, much like
the Protestants, will be a denial of a basic Conservative tenet of the unity of the Jewish people.

Unity means becoming part of a whole, and recognizing one's place in that larger unit which is the Jewish community. Although such a view may be read into the broad statements of the curriculum, it is not brought to the surface at all. It may be too much to expect in the present flush of ascendancy and expansion to ask the Conservative group to realize that in addition to synagogue they owe fealty also to the larger community. But a closer look, grounded in our historic experience, will show that precisely today is the time for Conservatives who are invading suburbia to begin building the larger community. With growing maturity such an approach may yet come.

Holidays. On teaching holidays (pp. 141-5, 153f, 157f., 239, 241) sufficient experience has accumulated in the congregational school. The provision is for a more or less special course in grade one, review and fortification in the following two grades and expansion into less known areas such as Rosh Hodesh, Shabbat Shkalim and the calendar generally in the upper grades. The two basic learning tools are stories and observance in both school and at home.

Tzdakah. Contributions through a Keren Ami fund, study of various charitable causes and allocations by students are recommended.

The Jewish People. In the Objectives the area of Jewish People is divided into history, Israel, American community and current events. The same pattern is followed by Ruffman. In fact, in each grade there is provision for both Israel and
America in addition to whatever else is recommended for history. There are of course many other instances where the same topic may be treated in correlation with any one of the three subjects, but the Jewish community is the only one that appears separately in two areas: Life and People; in the former as participation, in the latter as history. In this respect, then, the curriculum seems to attribute more importance to community than we were willing to grant before.

The choice of two approaches in history — cycle and chronological — and concentration on personalities in grades 1 and 2, as well as the several choices in the upper grades, relate to method rather than philosophy, and do not concern us here.

Although Honor's and Pessin's idea on the role of memory in history (above pp. 230-2) are not echoed in the curriculum, their basic notion that the value of history teaching resides in its meaning for the present generation is indeed reflected. The presentation is very solid. We shall therefore pass on without comment.

F. Outcomes. A good student of a good school would, according to Ruffman, after six years, know the following:

The content of the Humash as well as parts of the early prophets and several Megillot; to translate 1,500 verses of the Bible (p. 206); stories and legends from the rabbis; to read easy Hebrew prose and to converse in simple Hebrew; the order of Sabbath, weekday and festival prayers; the ability to take part in a service, both in singing and in reading; the Jewish calendar; how to observe the Sabbath and festivals; the past and present of the Jewish people, of Israel and of American Jewry, its institutions and philanthropic agencies;
the cardinal social, ethical and religious beliefs of the Jews.

The graduate, in addition, will understand: selected prayers, the why and how of festivals, the relation of democracy to Judaism, the meaning of God and other basic Jewish tenets.

He will also have developed wholesome attitudes to the above knowledges and understandings; he will have an emotional attachment to the Siddur; trust in God will serve as a basis for his prayers. His values will center around God, Israel and Torah as a way of life.

It will be seen at a glance that such outcome differ radically from most parents' and students' goals which center around Bar-Bat Mitzvah or other ceremonies. In other words, while the clientele seeks its reward in the social sphere, the educator has his eye on growth of the whole child as a person, as a Jew. Above (p. 28) we discussed Dushkin's conclusion that the Jewish public wants knowledge. That may be a true or a forced interpretation of uncertain data bearing on a deeper probe of attitudes. The popular conception, nevertheless, centers almost exclusively on a terminal ceremony. Dushkin's data may indicate, however, that the community is ready for a new and more wholesome approach to Jewish education, if properly guided.

Ruffman's ultimate goals for elementary Jewish education are on the whole unattainable for most schools under present conditions.

The low scholastic achievements both in the country as a whole and in New York City fully support this assertion. 117

Although these goals are far ahead of prevailing practice, they are worthwhile aims to strive for. Only the exceptional school can attain them. These better congregational schools are the best argument for concentrating on quality within the coming years.

F. Behavior. In addition to knowledge and understanding, the school advocated by Ruffman will inculcate certain habits of Jewish conduct at school, synagogue and home. The following list of customs and modes of behavior is certainly not meant to be exhaustive, since Ruffman did not set out to write a detailed Shulhan Arukh. The list is merely suggestive of the type of desirable behavior recommended.

The graduate feels at home in the synagogue. He not only is able to participate freely in a religious service; he is also able to lead it, if so inclined.

At home the child recites personal prayers at rising and at bedtime, makes blessings over food, chants the Kiddush on Friday night, lights the candles, observes the Sabbath and holidays, sings Zmirot after meals on festive occasions, sees a Havdolah service at a school-sponsored Oneg Shabbat in his home, and is generally aware of the laws of Kashrut and other more intensive forms of Jewish living. This inventory of Jewish practices is of course much too limited. In line with our previous discussion we advocate the creation of a new Shulhan Arukh for school use. It would have to be the product of cooperative work by rabbis, educators, scholars and laymen. A Jewish school must teach a way of life; that way of life must be spelled out, while at the same time permitting suffi-
cient latitude in the domain of private observance.

G. The Co-Curriculum. On our checklist we note the activities mentioned in the curriculum. We found in Ruffman the following co-curricular activities: junior congregation (pp. 9, 243f.), arts and crafts, drama, music (p. 29), Keren Ami (p. 159 and passim), Siyum, assemblies (p. 9), Hug Lvri, holiday celebrations, and the terminal ceremonies of Bar Mitzvah and graduation from junior high school.

There are many other activities suggested. They are not designed to supplant formal study, but rather to supplement it.

Conclusion. This completes our review of Conservative curricula. Perhaps more than any other group, the Conservatives have been receptive to new ideas. The result has been a fruitful, rich harvest of techniques and activities. The work, however, is still only beginning. More than anything, the Conservative school needs to be guided as to the paths to be explored in the realms of thought and of conduct.
CHECKLIST FOR CURRICULA
Practices and Ideas Recommended in Conservative Curricula

Items.

A. Conservative Philosophy

1. Consensus
   Statement of Con. Philosophy
   Pluralism
   Tolerance
   Outer limits
   Continuity and change.
   Bible and Rabbinism, Modernism

2. USy Constitution
   Advance cause of Judaism
   Maintain Jewish tradition
   Loyalty to Torah
   Observance of the Sabbath
   Observance of dietary laws
   Refer to Israel's past in the service
   Hopes for restoration in the service
   Liturgy to be traditional
   Hebrew as the language of prayer
   Traditional observances in the home

B. Educational Philosophy; choice between a:b
   a.
   Literary for able:
   Culture:
   Hebrew:
   Community:
   b.
   for all
   child
   content
   child

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#### B. Educational Philosophy

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#### C. Religious Beliefs

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#### D. Subject Aims

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#### E. Outcomes

#### I. Knowledge

| Content of Bible selections | x | x | x | x | x |
## Knowledge

1. Translate easy Bible portions
   - Easy prophets and Megilat
   - Rabbinic excerpts to enrich Bible
   - Read easy Hebrew prose
   - Collateral Hebrew reading
   - Converse simple Hebrew
   - Reading prayers
   - Order of prayers
   - Creative experiences in worship
   - Personalities, events
   - Jewish festivals
   - Israel-Zionism
   - American Jewish community
   - Current Jewish problems
   - Cardinal ethical principles
   - Communal institutions
   - Philanthropic agencies
   - Liturgical singing
   - Secular
   - Chant Haftorah
   - Familiarity with Jewish literature

## Understanding

2. Selected prayers
   - Meaning of God
   - Relation of democracy to religion
   - Why and how of festivals
   - Basic tenets

## Attitudes

3. Emotional attachment to Siddur
   - Trust in God as basis of prayer
   - Values

## Behavior: Synagogue

F. Torah blessings, participation
   - Junior congregation
   - Friday and Saturday service
   - Use of Tefilin

Home
- Chant Kiddush
- Food blessings
- Eat Kosher
Items

F. Behavior

Home

Daily observances of Mitzvot
Proper observance of holidays
Lighting candles
Prayer morning and evening
Havdalah
Zmirot after dinner
Pesach Seder
Pesach diet
Acquire ceremonial objects
Tsitsit
Support charities
Jewish patterns of living
Do it through parents

School

Holidays and festivals
Support charities
Experiences in Jewish community life

G. Co-Curriculum

1. General Aims

To reach beyond classroom
Informal children's community
Integrate with curriculum
Reach beyond synagogue

2. Activities

Junior congregation
Student Council
School Paper
Arts and Crafts
Dramatics
Music
Keren Ami-Public Welfare
Dance
Social clubs
Young Judea
Athletics
Scouts
Special interest groups
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Chapter V
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents a brief summary of our findings, followed by our recommendations. We have reviewed the historical and sociological foundations of the Conservative movement in the first introductory chapter. In the next three chapters we studied in detail the Conservative philosophy of Jewish life, philosophy of Jewish education, and how these two philosophies are reflected in the curricula of Conservative schools.

I Findings

History. The Conservative trend dates back to the Positive Historical school in Germany whose leader was Zechariah Frankel. In 1845 Frankel walked out of a conference of Reform rabbis in protest against their decision that it was not necessary to retain Hebrew in the religious service.

The Positive Historical school in turn was nurtured by the Science of Judaism represented by scholars like Zunz, Krochmal, and Graetz who applied modern methods of historical research to the Jewish past. This research concluded that Judaism was not merely a theology; that it was the Jewish people that had been the bearer of the religion, law and national aspirations.

Another European antecedent of Conservatism is to be found in Ahad Haam's spiritual Zionism which, too, placed the Jewish people and its culture as central in an interpretation of Judaism.

In America, too, the West European Orthodox rabbis first favored moderate reform. Isaac Leeser was the leader of the Historical School (1840-1855), which in 1885 broke with Reform
when they adopted the Pittsburgh Platform. In the same year the Jewish Theological Seminary was founded.

The traditional period (1900-1930) was represented by four leaders. Schechter and Ginzberg delved deeply into the Jewish past and studied it with the modern tools of scholarship, yet they remained steadfast in their loyalty to tradition. In fact, Schechter's ideal of Catholic Judaism referred to the body of Jews throughout the ages who were loyal to tradition. He faintly suggested the need for change in Jewish law, but never stated clearly how it should be done. Ginzberg resisted all change in Jewish law.

Friedlaender introduced Ahad Haam's ideas on cultural nationalism. Adler was a practitioner, not a philosopher. All four were determined to keep Conservatism within traditional lines. In fact, the Seminary became the bulwark of traditionalism.

In the course of the years the Seminary expanded to include not only a rabbinical school but many other activities for the propagation of Jewish scholarship and of the Jewish faith. The United Synagogue of America, comprising Conservative congregations, was founded in 1913. In 1919 the alumni of the Seminary founded the Rabbinical Assembly. Other national lay organizations were formed in quick succession.

Locally the movement grew from eleven congregations in 1885 to sixteen in 1913, 110 in 1919, and about 700 with a membership of one million at the present time.

Sociological Aspects. The Conservative movement began thriving when the sons of the immigrant generation moved to
the third area of Jewish settlement, mainly the suburbs. Here they found a largely Protestant population of middle class status. A process of acculturation set in: an adjustment of their religious life to the mores of western culture and to the secular forms of Jewish living. The synagogue expanded its functions to include all that is Jewish and human. The religious service was modified, women were permitted to occupy family pews, the base of lay rule of synagogue affairs was broadened. These laymen operate largely on an empirical level; they evince little interest in ideology.

Reconstructionism. When Kaplan arrived at the conclusion in 1909 that "the focal point in Judaism was not its theology but the Jewish People", a revolution in Jewish religious thought was set in motion. His new ideas became public with the appearance of his epoch-making Judaism As A Civilization in 1934.

Kaplan launched a complete revaluation of values. He rejected the supernaturalism of Orthodoxy, its belief in the miracles of the Bible and in revelation. He advocated a naturalist reinterpretation of Scriptures as the depository of the Jewish genius in religious and ethical matters. Judaism is an evolving religious civilization; its key concept is peoplehood. God is the power that makes for salvation, for human self-fulfillment. Torah is the way of life of the Jewish people. The rabbinic laws are to be regarded as folkways or usages that may be abrogated where necessary and should simultaneously be strengthened and expanded to insure survival. Organic communities should be fostered in America.
Eretz Yisrael must remain the heart of Jewry. World Jewry should enter into a covenant solemnizing the unity of the Jewish people.

Steinberg, Kohn, Eisenstein, Cohen and many others expanded or interpreted Kaplan’s ideas. Rejected by Orthodoxy, Reconstructionism greatly influenced the thinking of both the Conservative and Reform persuasions.

Theists. The majority of Conservative thinkers, however, remained theists who believe that God was transcendental, and that the Torah was revealed. Gordis, Greenberg, Finkelstein, Kadushin, Goldman and Agus, among others, belong in this group. They differ from each other on many points, especially on the meaning of revelation, the God idea, and the immutability of Jewish law.

Heschel stands apart as a neo-Hasid and existentialist who not on reason but on pre-symbolic, pre-conceptual awareness.

Philosophy of Jewish Law. The gravest issue facing the movement is that of Jewish law. On the one hand there is the Right Wing — men like Epstein, B. Cohen, Klein — who insist on the authority of Halakha and would institute change only in accordance with the hermeneutic rules for interpretation provided in that very law. To the other extreme is the Left Wing — Kaplan, Greenfeld, J. Cohen — who are prepared for a complete revision of Halakha by shifting authority from hermeneutics to modern conceptions of law involving a consideration of existing conditions and letting a body of rabbinic and lay leaders promulgate new laws. At present there is still an impasse between these two polar views, because the Center
party in this triple coalition is not yet prepared to tip the scale appreciably in either direction.

Consensus. The official bodies of the movement have studiously avoided formal decisions on some basic controversial issues. Nor has any kind of platform on philosophical, religious or legal matters been adopted, except for the preamble to the constitution of the United Synagogue of America. Despite an extremely wide range of interpretation, there seems to be agreement on the following five principles.

1. Religion. Whether Judaism is conceived as a religious civilization or as a civilizational religion, there is a consensus on the primacy of religion as the expression of collective Jewish life.

2. Peoplehood. A recognition of the unity of the Jewish people, past, present and future. This posits the will to assure continuity of the Jewish people, the will to remain a Jew and to bring up one's children as Jews. The practical tasks involve working toward strong Jewish community life in America, a virile center in Israel and solidarity with world Jewry. Democracy should be fostered within the Jewish community, in America and in the world.

3. Torah. The Jewish spirit is embedded in a vast literature that is an expression of a way of life. That literature embraces the Bible, all rabbinic sources and the prayer book. The Jewish way of life comprises both the rules of daily living, of ethical and religious behavior, as well as artistic expression through song, dance and other esthetic means. The Hebrew language is the cement that binds all elements of the
Torah, past and present. This Torah must therefore be studied and acquired. In Jewish higher learning the scientific approach must be encouraged.

4. Tradition and Change. A positive attitude to Jewish tradition of the past coupled with a recognition of the need for change in Jewish law, usage and ceremonial. Observance of the Sabbath, holidays and the dietary laws in the home, the synagogue and at school. A reconciliation of Judaism with modernism by finding valid criteria for changing Jewish law.

5. Pluralism. Recognize and sanction the fact that Conservatism embraces a wide range of beliefs and practices. This ideological diversity must provide sufficient latitude to embrace everything that is positively Jewish. A spirit of tolerance and democracy must not demand of them to think alike and act alike. Nevertheless there are certain attitudes and actions that are out of bounds for a Conservative Jew; they are a denial of and especially active antagonism toward any one of the first four principles stated above.

Educational System. The number of schools rose from 24 in 1914 to 650 in 1957; the enrollment — from 4,481 pupils to 213,719. Nationally matters were first handled by a committee on education of the United Synagogue. The latter, together with the Rabbinical Assembly, formed a Joint Commission on Jewish Education in 1938 and seven years later an educational director was appointed. The name was soon changed to United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education. The major activities were publication of textbooks and magazines, placement, adoption of a set of educational objectives and approval of a cur-
Educational Philosophy. Although Conservative educators still operate largely on an empirical level, some thought has been given to the pure science of education by men within or close to the movement. Philosophers like Kallen and Berkson remained outside due to their secularism.

We identified four schools of educational thought, the perennialists — Heschel, Agus, Greenberg, Engelman, Goldin — are mostly theists or neo-scholastics who counsel an emphasis on our classical sources. The essentialists — Scharfstein, Lang, Dushkin, Pilch — stress the more recent past. The progressives — Golub, Nudelman, Rappaport, Berkson — range from an emphasis on the here and now and on the child to stress of community aspects. The Reconstructionists — Kaplan, Dinin, J. Cohen, Ben-Horin — combine experimentalism with humanism and look into the future.

Notions on Structure. The dissatisfaction with the Sunday school and afternoon weekday school caused a search for the best type of structure. The Ladder of Jewish Education which was finally adopted provided for nursery school, foundation school, primary, elementary, junior and senior high levels as well as advocacy of the all-day school. The Conservative school structure thus stands in the middle — between the Orthodox all-day school and the Reform Sunday school.

Official Objectives. The educational objectives first adopted in 1946 and periodically revised thereafter, finally comprised the following: 1) love of God through prayer and observance; 2) spiritual and ethical sensitivity; 3) Mitzvot
at home, synagogue and school; 4) Hebrew — classical and modern; 5) Jewish history, literature and culture; 6) identification with Jewish community life in America, Israel and the world over; 7) Judaism in its relation to American democracy; 8) Torah as a life-long pursuit.

Content of the Curriculum. The reasons advanced for teaching Hebrew, Bible, prayers, history, Israel, holidays and observances were examined. It was found that thus far Conservative educators have not critically studied the curriculum content inherited from the Talmud Torah. In addition to the more traditional subjects there has occurred an unprecedented expansion of the curriculum to include ethics, current problems, civics and co-curricular activities such as Keren Ami, art, drama and singing.

History of the Curriculum.

a) General. Until 1910 there were only programs prepared by individual schools. The New York Bureau of Jewish Education prompted a flurry of experimentation which in the early forties yielded a rich harvest of curricula produced by groups and individuals.

b) Conservative. In 1918 Conservative rabbis were urged to begin work on school programs. In 1922 Landesman published his book, followed by S. M. Cohen, in 1932, tentative drafts in the forties by the Commission, Lang's in 1951 and the revised edition of Huffman's curriculum in 1959. Syllabi for the first four years were also prepared.

Some Characteristics. Notwithstanding some attempts in re-
cent years to organize curriculum workshops by teachers, to promote discussion by principals and to involve the Commission, each one of the curricula and syllabi is the product largely of one man's mind and one man's experience. No specialized surveys were made of existing practices, nor were the proposed programs experimentally tested in the classrooms.

The first Conservative curriculum, that of Landesman, is subject-centered, advocates leniency on Mitzvot, views the Bible as man-made, emphasizes the teaching of ideas in prayer and Humash, and is generally quite advanced in many respects. Cohen's attempt to couple religion with progressivism altogether miscarried. Lang produced a reputable instrument that is distinguished by a statement on the educational affirmations of Conservative Judaism, provisions for areas of study and activity in place of subjects, and hedonistic justification of Mitzvot. The religious concepts to be taught to children are, however, on a very crude level.

Ruffman's Curriculum. The Curriculum officially adopted by the Commission, that of Ruffman, is rich in techniques but poor in theory. It makes broad provisions for progressive educational approaches in giving knowledge, skills, a value-system and patterns of informal co-curricular activities designed to produce a positive Jew. It is child — and — community centered.

However, it does not provide a guide as to how a Conservative Jew should think or behave. It outlines the elements of tradition but fails to specify the elements of change, i.e. of the results of the studies of the past by the scientific
method. There is no indication that Conservatism is pluralistic, that it admits a variety of viewpoints, invites freedom of thought and advocates a democratic toleration of differences. Nor is there a guide to a code of religious behavior for school children.

II Recommendations.

1. Create A Conservative Curriculum. The Conservative movement has made great strides in a short time in evolving a good program for its schools. This has been due in the main to the attraction of the most creative minds in this country to the task.

However, the great contributions Conservatism has made in the realm of ideas and guides for action have not yet been incorporated into the curriculum, largely perhaps due to the indeterminacy and pluralistic nature of its philosophy. It is therefore necessary, in the next stage of development, to work on a curriculum that would be Conservative.

A Conservative curriculum does not carry the implication that the school would produce a special kind of Jew who would be Conservative and who would be set apart from Jews of the other persuasions. On the contrary, the conviction of Klal Yisrael, of identifying oneself with a united Jewish people, is deep-seated among Conservatives. All it implies is that within an orchestration of differences, the Conservative group should play its instrument well; that is, it should train its children in the light of its own most advanced thinking.

2. The Pluralistic Approach. If anything at all was learned from our present inquiry it is that there is no one Conser-
vative ideology: that it rather embraces a wide variety of outlooks; and that in this pluralism lies its strength.

This fact must be reflected in the classroom on the basis of freedom of thought, and of inquiry. It is not suggested here that the classroom be turned into a battleground for notions that are still nebulous even among the adults. Rather, it should guide the students along the path of accommodation, tolerance and a respect for differences. Supernaturalism and naturalism, the two polar choices, must be equally accessible to the child to enable him eventually to make his own choice.

3. **A Code of Behavior.** In addition to guiding the child along the path of making intelligent choices within a value system, the Conservative school must offer guides to conduct, a code of Jewish behavior. Since there is no consensus among adults as to what constitutes proper religious behavior, the following procedure might perhaps be adopted. First work out a set of minima upon which there is fairly general agreement. Then offer choices extending all the way to strict Orthodoxy. Finally, enlist the creative energies of the movement in evolving new patterns of Jewish living in keeping with the challenges of modern life. These efforts must involve not only the school and the synagogue, but the home as well.

4. **Everybody's Task.** The school must do its share toward a reconstruction of society, although it cannot be a prime mover. Curriculum planning is therefore dependent upon the interaction of all the forces that shape the Conservative movement. In the first instance the initiative must come from the professional workers: supervisors, principals, teachers,
rabbis. The lay community must also be involved: the leadership, the parents, the students. In fact, not until there is a meeting of minds on ultimate goals between the professionals and the laymen will an effective curriculum emerge.

5. The Scientific Method. Advanced scientific tools and procedures have been developed in general education on curriculum construction and planning. These should be utilized in the Jewish field. Surveys of existing curricular practices, inventories of existing and desirable modes of Jewish behavior, as well as many other scientific techniques should be employed.

The latest methods in group dynamics should be utilized in involving all elements that can make a contribution toward a better curriculum. Specialized personnel should lead principals, teachers and laymen in workshops and classroom activities that would yield ever better curricular practices.
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