The Jewish Community in Mexico: Its Life and Education

Jacob Levitz
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Abstract
The Jews have been associated with New Spain, as Mexico was formerly called, since the conquest of the country. It is known that among the conquistadores who accompanied Cortes there was the Marrano Hernando Alonso. The Marranos, or their descendants, who fled to New Spain hoping to free themselves from the surveillance of the Inquisition, soon found its very dreadful arm reached out to them in the new habitat. Even before the arrival of the official Inquisition (1571) for the purpose of freeing the land “which has become contaminated by Jews and heretics ...,” a number of persons where persecuted and tried for practicing Judaism.

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Comments
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN MEXICO
ITS LIFE AND EDUCATION

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To the Rabbis and religious functionaries, and to the socio-cultural, educational and philanthropic leaders of the Jewish community in Mexico I wish to express my gratitude for valuable information offered and for permission to take over classes in order to conduct a lengthy questionnaire which consumed a good deal of school time. I am greatly obliged to the directors of the Jewish schools in Mexico and to the teachers who so willingly and conscientiously answered the long list of questions also have earned my sincere thanks.

My thanks are also due to the Jewish teachers in Mexico for their friendly cooperation in general and for the information supplied directly or through the questionnaires designed for them.

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I am especially grateful to Miss Dina Abramowitz for her valuable assistance.

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For the many hours they devoted to conferences and meetings with me, and for permission to take over classes in order to conduct a lengthy questionnaire which consumed a good deal of school time, I am greatly obliged to the directors of the Jewish schools in Mexico. All the students who so willingly and conscientiously answered the long list of questions also have earned my sincere thanks.

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Monterrey, N. L.

March 1954
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CHAPTER I

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY IN MEXICO

A. THE FORMATIVE YEARS

The Jews have been associated with New Spain, as Mexico was formerly called, since the conquest of the country. It is known that among the conquistadores who accompanied Cortes there was the Marrano Hernando Alonso.¹ The Marranos, or their descendants, who fled to New Spain hoping to free themselves from the surveillance of the Inquisition, soon found its very dreadful arm reached out to them in the new habitat. Even before the arrival of the official Inquisition (1571) for the purpose of freeing the land "which has become contaminated by Jews and heretics ...,"² a number of persons were persecuted and tried for practicing Judaism. Among the victims was the very Alonso, who was the first Jew to be burned at the stake (1528). The extent of the persecutory


²Quoted by Dr. Cyrus Adler, in "Trial of Jorge de Almeida by the Inquisition in Mexico," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (Baltimore, Md., 1896, Vol. IV, p. 29.)
work in New Spain almost reached the proportions of the ill-famed Tribunal in Toledo.3

The majority of the New Christians or Marranos who managed to escape the Inquisition eventually disintegrated as a religious or ethnic group. Some, however, continued secretly to practice Judaism in one form or another.

The several thousand so-called Indian Jews in Mexico who claim lineage from the Marranos—of whom only a moiety really are of Jewish stock—are so deeply estranged and alienated from Jewish life, culture and tradition that it will take a long period of hard training and education to re-Judaize these biological

3During the years 1574-1600, the Tribunal of Toledo averaged 35 cases a year, while the one in New Spain averaged only one case less. The records of the 16th and 17th centuries show more than 900 cases against Jewish apostates from all walks of life. The National Archives in Mexico City also possess 1,552 volumes of inquisitional acts. Alfonso Toro, La Familia Carvajal (Mexico, Editorial Patria, 1944), Vol. I, p. 10. It is pertinent to mention that many documents were lost and still more were deliberately destroyed in order to conceal the Jewish origin of many prominent Mexican families.

Among the published cases of observing "the dead law of Moses" are "Trial of Jorge de Almeida," op. cit., and the "Process . . . of Gabriel de Granada (13 years old), Observer of the Law of Moses, 1642 to 1645," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (Baltimore, Md., 1899) Vol. VII, pp. 1-127. The most interesting cases of the period were, however, the trials against the Carvajal family. About this family see Alfonso Toro, op. cit. See also the letters of Luis de Carvajal, the younger, translated into Yiddish by M. Berger, in "Briv fun a maran," Yorbukh fun Amerikaner Opteyl (New York, Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, 1938), Vol. I, pp. 187-216.
Israelitas socially and culturally. So far, notwithstanding the efforts of their leader, the Rabbi of their congregation ("Kahal Kadosh Bene Elohim"), very little has been accomplished to ameliorate the social, cultural and economic conditions of the group.⁴

Some Jews entered Mexico after the abolishment of the Inquisition. In 1862, approximately one hundred French, Belgian and Danish Jewish businessmen, considered by the natives to be Freemasons, resided in Mexico City.⁵ During the last quarter of the 19th century, after President Diaz had established comparative tranquility in the country and granted general concessions to foreign capitalists, an additional number of Jews arrived in Mexico, as agents and representatives of French and German business houses. The Official Mexican Census of 1900 shows 134 Jews in the country, 94 males and 40 females.⁶

This figure, as well as all others appearing in the

⁴ A separate study of these Jews is being prepared by this writer. Interesting data pertaining to the group is to be found in the study of Raphael Patai, "Hayehudim Haindiyanim b'Meksiko," Talpioth, New York, Vol. 5, no. 3-4, 822 - 844. See also Khayim Laz'evski, "Meksi-kaner Shomre Shabat," Der Veg (Mexico), Cct. 12, 1946, pp. 5 - 6.

⁵ These Jews are said to have entertained plans to construct a synagogue in the capital. See Algemeine Zeitung des Judentums (Berlin), 1862, p. 463, 745.

⁶ Anuario. Estadisticos de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos 1941 (Mexico, 1943), p. 78.
subsequent Mexican censuses, should not be taken as representing the total number of Jews in Mexico. The actual number of Jews in the country was no doubt higher. Discrepancies are due, first to negligence and ignorance on the part of the census takers and, secondly, to the formerly prevalent tendency of the informants to identify themselves as Alemanos (Germans), Rusos, Polacos, or as members of other minority groups, but not as Jews, since such an admission would, in their opinion, not prove advantageous. The figure registered by the census takers connotes that in 1900 only 134 persons were willing to admit that they were of Jewish origin.

This group of Jews, as well as the preceding one, did not, for one reason or another, create a Jewish communal life. Moreover, the majority of them soon were absorbed by the new environment and lost their national and ethnic characteristics.

The first to reveal themselves to the Mexican people as Israelitas and to lay the foundation for a Jewish socio-philanthropic and religious life were the

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7Mexico is in this respect not unique. The Jews in Brazil, too, hide under the mantle of belonging to other nationalities. See Dr. S. Margoshes, "News and Views," The Day (New York), July 2, 1945, p. 1. With the establishment of the Jewish State this tendency is gradually disappearing among the immigrant group. The natives, characteristically enough, do not, on the whole, conceal their Jewish origin.

8M. Berger, "Yidn in Meksike," Yubiley Numer Der Veg, Jan. 1940, p. 46.
Sephardic Jews, who came to Mexico in the first decade of the 20th century.

During that time a group of immigrants from the Near East (Arabic-speaking Jews), succeeded by a number from Turkey, Bulgaria and Rumania (Spanish-speaking Jews), entered Mexico. Gradually many more of their compatriots, whose political, social and economic positions in their native lands were undermined by the revolution of the Young Turks (1907), by the Balkan Wars (1912 - 1913), and by the exchanges of the Greek and Turkish population (1923 - 1928), followed their co-religionists to Mexico.

It is told that their original plan had been to enter the United States of America, but many of the Arabic-speaking Jews were refused admission there because of the eye disease trachoma, a common ailment in the Near East. They therefore migrated to Mexico and to other Latin American countries where the health requirements were much less strict.

In 1908, about one year after the arrival of the Arabic-speaking Jews, the first House of Prayer was

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10 For the position of these Jews in their native lands see Mark Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948), pp. 112-113. Also Simeon Dubnow, Velt-gešikhte fun yidishn folk (Vilna, Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, 1928), Vol. 10, pp. 491 - 496.
established in the country. The succeeding year marked the introduction of shehita in Mexico. In 1912 a joint group of oriental Jews, the Spanish-speaking, and six Ashkenazim organized the Beneficencia Alianza Monte Sinai, a society which was planned to discharge the functions of a kehilah. In the same year a place to bury the dead was acquired by the Beneficencia. Soon, with the arrival of families, the problem of Jewish education for the young was to be met, too. The first Talmud Torah in the Mexican Republic was opened in 1917. In the following year a lot was purchased for the construction of the first synagogue in the land, Kahal Kadosh Monte Sinai, which was completed in 1924.

The number of Sephardim increased steadily. The fact that most of them came with intentions of remaining


12 The cemetery, according to the records of Monte Sinai, was purchased for the sum of 7,500 pesos, of which 3,600 were lent by Sr. Granat. Many Ashkenazim were buried on this cemetery prior to the acquisition of their own bet ham.

13 This corrects the data cited by Tovye Pushkar in "Der ideyisher veg fun meksikaner yidntum," Yorbukh fun meksikaner yidntum (Mexico, World Jewish Congress, 1950-1952), pp. 124-125.

14 By 1924 it was estimated that in Mexico City alone there were over 8,000 Sephardim. Maurice B. Hexter, The
in Mexico; that their immigration was rather gradual; that the customs and general mode of life of their native lands were similar to those of Latin America; that to a number of them the Spanish language was not entirely foreign, together facilitated the process of their adjustment. By 1921 they were already well established in the country.  

The immigration of the East European Jews to Mexico was preceded by a group of about 200 Jewish young men, originally from Europe, who in 1917 arrived in the country via the United States. The immigration of the Ashkenazim directly from Eastern Europe started in the latter part of 1920. The first boat brought to the Mexican shore about 100 passengers, and the second one carried about 200, most of them single men. Soon they were followed by

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16 Leon Sourasky, An araynfar tsu der geshikhhte fun yidn in Mexike. Typescript, Archives of the Yiddish Scientific Institute--YIVO, New York, p. 4. The other data was furnished by M. Glikowski, who arrived on the second boat, April 1921. Mr. Glikowski is at present a resident of Brooklyn, New York.
others, who were trying to rescue themselves from the political and socio-economic discriminations and oppressions of post-World War I Europe. The immigration acts of 1921 and the more stringent one of 1924, reducing the entrance of Jews from Eastern Europe (Poland and Russia) to the United States from 79,416 in 1921 to 22,453 in 1924, a reduction of over 71 per cent, accelerated the immigration of Jews to Mexico, although the world Jewish agencies and the fledgling Jewish organizations in Mexico did not at all encourage it, since at that time Mexico held very little economic promise.

The immigration of Jews to Mexico was further stimulated by the friendly invitation of President Calles (October 28, 1924), welcoming Jews to his country. It was estimated that there were 9,325 ashkenazim in Mexico

17 About the position of Jews in Eastern Europe during that period see Abraham L. Sachar, Sufferance is the Badge (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), p. 6 ff.


19 The statement of President Calles is reprinted from
by 1925. In the following five years there arrived an additional 7,064 Jews from Europe, the largest quota of immigrants coming from Poland and a lesser number from Russia.20

As was the case in Cuba, the majority of the Ashkenazi immigrants to Mexico too did not come with the intention of settling in the country. Practically all of them had viewed Mexico as a way-station, legal or illegal, to the United States.21

Since the influx to the industrially backward country was comparatively heavy, and the immigration neither planned nor organized, distressing conditions soon arose among the poverty stricken immigrants. In the early period of immigration the misery of the new immigrants

the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in Yubiley Numer Der Veg, p. 49.


was alleviated, at first in a very limited measure and later to a much greater extent, by the older settlers as well as by yesterday's immigrants themselves. 22 The stream of immigration, however, rendered their attempts insufficient.

Appeals for help were sent to the Jewish organizations in the United States. Some, among them the Emergency Committee on Jewish Refugees of New York, sent representatives to investigate conditions in Mexico. Not to minimize their good intentions, and certainly not the actual efforts of the young local organizations, such as the Froyen Farein, Y.M.H.A. (or as the immigrants renamed it, Yidishe Yugnt Geselshaft) and Nidhe Yisrael, to mention but a few, it must be stated that it was the B'nai B'rith Order of America which contributed most toward the development of the Jewish community in Mexico in its early period. 23

22 At first the Sephardim too were rather sympathetic. Sr. Jose Kenig, one of the first East European immigrants, at present a resident of Monterrey, told this writer that the Sephardic Jews supplied him and his shipmates daily with bread, permitted them to sleep over in their synagogue and sent them out with packs of various merchandise to peddle on the streets of Mexico City.


Pertaining to some of the activities of the Froyen
By 1928 the wanderlust feelings began to subside. The immigrants learned to consider Mexico not as a means to a promised land but as an end in itself. Those who were already residing there and those who were arriving in Mexico made up their minds to settle in the country.  

Farein see Buletin fun Y. M. H. A. (Mexico), June 1927 (hectographed), no. 2, p. 6; ibid., August 1927, no. 3, p. 5; Nov. 1927, no. 6, p. 5; Unzer Vort (Mexico), Jan. 1928, no. 7, p. 1-2; ibid., May 1929, no. 17, p. 12; June 1929, no. 18, p. 13.

About the relief work conducted by Nidhe Yisrael see Protokoln fun Nidhe Yisrael, Archives of the Yiddish-Scientific Institute--YIVO, New York, Sourasky Collection, pp. 2-12.

During its work in Mexico the B'nai B'rith offered various services to the immigrants, such as meeting ships and advising newcomers in various matters; providing the arrivals with board and lodging; helping immigrants to locate business situations or employment; organizing courses in Spanish and Mexicanization; furnishing medical and dental treatment, and discharging services of the nature of a general immigration bureau. From 1924 to 1929 the total disbursements, after deducting repayment of loans, amounted to $126,400 (dollars) or $275,000 in Mexican currency.

Data showing the varied work of the B'nai B'rith and the sums of money expended during the existence of its Bureau in Mexico are given in the "Report on the Mexican Bureau," op. cit., pp. 246, 248, 249 and 251.  

24 "Perspektivn fun der yidisher imigratsie in Mexi-ke" (editorial), Unzer Vort, March 1929, no. 15, p. 1.
The married people started to send for their wives and children. The single men brought over their girl friends and fiancées. The group was no longer on the go to a promised land . . .

Two years later, in 1930, it was recommended that the B'nai B'rith Bureau in Mexico City be closed, for there was already a Jewish Community in Mexico able, with combined, well-organized effort, to manage and to carry on its own mutual aid work and its social, cultural and economic life. 25

With the withdrawal of the B'nai B'rith from Mexico the Ashkenazic Jewish sector gradually came of age. The years which followed marked the solidification of the existing institutions and organizations and the creation of new ones to accommodate the manifold needs of the growing community.

The Sephardic group satisfied its social, cultural and religious wants by a House of Prayer, a Talmud Torah and a cemetery. Contrastingly, the ashkenazic immigrants, coming from the East European centers, where there pulsed an intense, effervescent and multifarious Jewish life, aimed at broader social and cultural forms of outlets and activities.

Although the majority of the arrivals did not represent the intelligentsia of Polish, Russian and Lithuanian Jewry, they had none the less been influenced by the Zionist and Bundist ideologies, by the ideas of the renascent Yiddish and Hebrew literature and by general and Jewish secular thinking and learning. These so-called liberal members of the Ashkenazic sector could not therefore very well join and commingle communally with the Sephardim. Even the orthodox elements very soon found it impossible to establish a mode of interaction with their estranged Sephardic coreligionists. By 1922 the handful of religious Ashkenazic Jews were forced to withdraw from the Arabic synagogue, where they had previously worshipped, and organized a place of prayer of their own, calling it, symbolically, Nidhe Yisrael. 26

26 Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Don, op. cit., p. 8. See also the text of the first protocol of this newly created institution, given in the appendix, p. The establishing of a separate cemetery, too, was due to inability to get along with the Sephardic co-religionists. See Protokoln un materialn fun Nidhe Yisrael, Typescript, Archives of the Y.S.T.—YIVO (Sarasky Collection), p. 19.

Notwithstanding the constant misunderstandings and antagonistic feelings of the groups, there is evidence that at least in some communal or religious matters interaction was maintained in one form or another. According to the minutes of D' Parashat Beshalah, Tarp'd, Nidhe Yisrael gave 5 humashim, 10 sidurim and 3 Mishnayot to the Talmud Torah of Monte Sinai. T. Kavelblum, Dos religieze yidishe lebn in Meksike, in Sarasky Collection, op. cit., p. 15. See also the agreement with the Sephardic Shohetim in Protokoln fun Nidhe Yisrael, pp. 20. 21.
Unable to get along in or to resign themselves to the Sephardic organizations (or, for that matter, to the Y.M.H.A., established in 1921 by the American group, which was then branded assimilatory by the East European newcomers), the Ashkenazim soon erected a network of philanthropic, social, cultural and educational institutions to serve their particular needs.27

The lack of a common universe of discourse between the divergent cultural camps existed not only on a communal level, but also on a personal one, in daily face to face relationships. As elsewhere, the constantly growing Ashkenazic group, increasingly strengthened by oncoming new elements, manifested intense feelings of superiority toward the Sephardim. The latter, on the other hand, looked down resentfully and mal-feelingly at the newly arriving Askenazim. Soon there was very little interaction between these Israelitas. "Even in the small cities," we are told, "where one would imagine that common sufferings and loneliness would force communion, the same spirit of aloofness, if not antagonism, exists."28

27 It is of interest to note that even the Sephardic constituents themselves could not house together adequately. Their deeply rooted social and cultural divergencies came to the fore and finally led to the creation of three separate congregations or sociedades. Of the Arabic-speaking group, the Damascus Jews (in 1952, 500 families) remained in the Alianza Monte Sinai, while their Alepo coreligionists (400 families) organized their own sociedad, Sedaqa y Marpe, and the Spanish-speaking Sephardim (690 families) established theirs, La Union Sefardi.

28 Hexter, op. cit., p. 4.
Although the gap between these estranged brothers is still far from being totally removed, a better rapport and a stronger sense of togetherness was established between the groups beginning with Hitler's massacres in Europe and was further strengthened with the proclamation of the Jewish state in Israel.

B. POPULATION FIGURES ON JEWS IN MEXICO

We do not possess accurate data pertaining to the number of Jews in the Republic of Mexico or in Mexico City, the dynamo of all phases of Jewish life and the place of residence of more than three-fourths of the entire Jewish population in the land.

According to the official census of 1940, last census published, the Jewish population in Mexico in that year was 14,167--7,189 males and 6,978 females. Of the total figure, 9,818 persons, 4,886 males and 4,932 females resided in Mexico City. While the Jews constituted only 0.69 per cent of the total population in the capital, they represented, none the less, next to the 13,316 Spaniards, the largest ethnic group.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{29}\) **Resumen General. Estados Unidos Mexicanos 6\(^{o}\) Censo de Poblacion 1940** (Mexico, 1943), pp. 14, 52. The Jewish population from the turn of the century to 1940, excluding 1921, for which there are no figures because the Israelitas and Buddhistas were included among the "other religions," was, according to the government census, as follows:
The private count conducted one year later, in Mexico City only, by the Mexican Jewish Historical Society shows 12,988 Jews, 7057 males and 5,931 females. The difference between the government census of 1940 and the private one of 1941 is 3,170, or 32 per cent. Since the difference was not due to natural increase or to immigration, it was assumed by the Mexican Jewish Historical Society that 25 per cent of the total Jewish population was not accounted for in the government census. The corrected number of Jews in Mexico, after increasing the official figures of the Jewish population in the various states outside the Distrito Federal by 32 per cent would thus be 18,476.30

The last private census, conducted in Mexico City in 1949 by the Jewish Central Committee, covered approximately 90 per cent of the Jewish population. The resultant data, hitherto unreleased and analyzed in this study for the first time, shows 14,949 Jews in the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>4,851</td>
<td>4,221</td>
<td>9,072</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

capital. Of this number, 9,069 were Ashkenazim and 5,880 Sephardim. The former thus constituted 62.6 per cent, while the latter were only 37.4 per cent. These 14,949 people represented 3,988 families, 2,697 Ashkenazic and 1,291 Sephardic. The Ashkenazic families thus comprised 67.6 per cent of the total number of Jewish persons, while the Sephardic families constituted 32.4 per cent of the total number of families and 37.4 per cent of the total Jewish population.

The Sephardic family consisted of an average of four persons and the Ashkenazic of only three. For the last decade, parenthetically, the custom to marry off daughters at an early age is also prevalent among the Ashkenazim. A girl of twenty is considered an "old maid." Of late it is also a part of the folkways to raise larger families.

The ratio of male to female population is becoming normalized. Whereas in 1925 the ratio was about nine males to one female, a shortage claimed responsible for the 10 per cent of intermarriages of the period, in 1949 there were 4,718 males to 4,351 females, a difference of 367. Among the Sephardim the difference was only 37, since there were 3,086 males to 2,749 females.

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31 Data used in this section was obtained through the courtesy of the organization. All calculations and conclusions were made by this writer.

The census also reveals the root-taking of the Jewish community in the Mexican soil. 11,726 Jews, 7,088 Ashkenazim and 4,638 Sephardim, of the total 14,949, or 78.4 per cent, were Mexican citizens, either by birth or by naturalization. Greatly significant for the future development of the Jewish community is the fact that 7,637 persons, 3,832 Ashkenazim and 3,805 Sephardim, that is, 51 per cent of the total Jewish population, were already native.

As to the place of origin of the 7,312 immigrants, the largest group of Ashkenazim came from Poland: 2,441 or 33.3 per cent. From Russia 1,189 came, or 16.2 per cent; from Lithuania, 467, or 6.3 per cent; and from Germany 327, or 4.4 per cent. From Austria, Hungary and Rumania together 425 arrived, or 5.8 per cent, while 109, or 1.4 per cent, arrived from the United States. Of the Sephardic sector, the largest group came from Syria: 963, or 13.1 per cent; 449, or 6.1 per cent, came from Turkey, and 137, or 1.8 per cent, from Greece. The remaining 11.6 per cent of the immigrants, both Ashkenazim and Sephardim, entered Mexico in numbers below 100, from 39 other places.

Of the immigrants, 465 arrived in the country prior to 1920; 4,411 between 1921-1930; 1,504 between 1931-1940, and only 840 during 1941-1949.

A breakdown of the 14,527 persons into age groups (422 did not list their age) points to the possible
growth of the community in spite of a closed immigration. Fully 73.1 per cent were below 41 years of age. The age bracket 1 - 10 comprised 3,500 (24.1 per cent); 3,101 (21.3 per cent) were between 11 - 20; 4,025 (27.7 per cent) were between 21 - 40; 3,357 (23.1 per cent) were between 41 - 60, and only 550 (3.8 per cent) were 61 or over.

As already mentioned, this private census was restricted to Mexico City. According to the government census of 1940, the last census published, there were 4,249 Jews in the various Mexican states outside the Distrito Federal. Since the tragic occurrences in Europe, there is a tendency to move away from the scattered yishuvim in the provinces to Mexico City, in order to be among Jews and to provide the children with a Jewish environment and education. This is evident from the data (as yet unpublished) pertaining to the census of 1950, which the government bureau of statistics released to the late Dr. Jose Silva, editor of Tribuna Israelita. According to these figures there

33 About the Mexican immigration quota see Jacob Lestchinsky, Di lage fun yidn in di latayn-amerikaner lider (New York, World Jewish Congress, Institute for Jewish Affairs), mimeographed, 1948, p. 6.

34 "Di meksikaner provints vert bislekhvayz yidn reyn," Der Veg, June 3, 1939, p. 4.

35 This monthly, published by the Comite Unido de Antidesfamacion in Mexico, claimed the "largest circulation of its genre in all Latin America," No. 105, Agosto 1953. No pagination; page before last.
were 17,572 Jews, 9,048 males and 8,524 females, in the republic in 1950. Of this total, 14,383 resided in the Distrito Federal, and 3,189 in the provinces.

The number of Jews dispersed in the Mexican provinces today (end of 1953) is estimated to be about the same as in 1950. The largest Jewish communities outside the capital are Guadalajara, with approximately 100 families, 60 Ashkenazi and 40 Sephardic, and Monterrey, with 110 families.
A. THE PROCESS OF JEWISH ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT

The majority of the Jewish immigrants, Sephardim and Ashkenazim alike, brought to their new habitat experiences of middle and lower middle class callings. The relatively small number of Jewish artisans soon became aware of the fact that there were not too many factories in the retarded and industrially undeveloped Mexico which could or were willing to employ them.  

Moreover, taking into consideration the incredibly low wages of Mexican labor today, we can easily imagine the dreary position and the substandard living of the workers some 40 or 30 years ago. 2 Those among the immigrants who, forced by dire necessity, would look for and succeed in obtaining work in poorly industrialized

1 Hexter, op. cit., p. 3.

2 About wages in Mexico a decade ago see John Gunther, Inside Latin America (New York, Harper Brothers, 1941), p. 91.

- 21 -
Mexico would be unable to continue in it for any considerable length of time. On the other hand, the immigrants, consisting as they did mainly of a young age group, a factor conducive to adequate adjustment, soon found in Mexico an open market for the utilization of their experiences, skills and business initiative.

The country was industrially in its stage of infancy. The greatest number of articles, from apparel to household utensils, were brought into the country by French, German and Spanish importing houses and business firms. The stores were stocked with foreign merchandise which was high-priced and therefore accessible to the upper strata of Mexican society only. The Jewish immigrants were quick to recognize that the underpaid Mexican worker and underprivileged masses, to whom the big shops signified "closed shops," could become mighty potential consumers if goods were made available to them at reasonable prices, on credit or installment plans. The Jews soon set themselves up as peddlers and puesteros (stall-

³"Perspektivn fun der yidisher imigratsie in Meksike," editorial, Unzer Vort (Mexico), March 1929, Vol. 3, no. 15., p. 1; I. Z/akhariash/. "Umfarantwortlekhkayt oder tendents, Unzer Lebn (Mexico), March-April 1929, Vol. 2. no. 8, p. 6.

⁴Of the 6,325 Ashkenazim in the Federal District in 1924, 2,450 were in the age group 18-25 and 3,250 were between the ages of 25-35.
owners), first in Mexico City and later in the provinces. The peddlers reached the remotest places in the country, carrying with them socks, ties, dry goods, clothes, hardware, mirrors, razor blades and even saints' images and crucifixes. The Mexican learned that he could dress himself, his wife and his children, furnish his tejaban-shanty, or little house—on a convenient basis. The extranjero (foreigner) sold these articles on abonos, or long term payments. Many articles which were hitherto entirely unknown or considered luxury items were slowly beginning to take their place as objects of daily use in the native's casita.

These Jewish activities were not, however, welcomed by all classes of the Mexican people. The enterprise of the Jewish merchants, importers and manufacturers quickly became sufficiently important to constitute sharp competition to native and foreign tradesmen. Many of the

older settlers had by this time established themselves in importing houses, stores and factories and were competing with large scale non-Jewish old business firms, while the newer immigrants were rivaling the small storekeepers.  

The passing of various ordinances aimed ostensibly at removing from the markets in the capital the puesteros, who represented the weakest economic target for attack, was in reality an attempt to eliminate the Jews entirely from Mexican economic life.

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6 Peysakh Lisker, "A vikhtike problem," Unzer Vort, April 1929, Vol. 3, no. 16, p. 2. A good notion of the Jewish economic activity of the period is obtained from the various advertisements published in the Jewish journals in Mexico. In 1929, for example, a Jewish factory boasted of having the greatest selection of hats, producing 3,000 daily (inside front cover, Unzer Vort, September 1929). In 1930 Warsowia, "the first and best suspenders and garters factory," announced that beginning with the new year it would also manufacture pocketbooks at very low prices. (Ibid., January 1930. Ad. column, no pagination.)

7 The law, for example, that the puestos must be closed between 1 and 3:30 P. M. ruined, we read, the peddlers. In addition to the shortened day, unpacking and re-packing the wares took away a good deal of their time. "A briv in redaktsie," Unzer Vort, May 1929, Vol. 3, no. 17, p. 12.

8 Indicative of the trend to eliminate the Jews from the economic life is the "Manifesto to the People," issued by the League against the Chinese and Jews on December 1, 1930. See Unzer Vort, January 1931, Vol. 5, no. 29, p. 17. In Mexico the Chinese are considered an "inferior stock." Actually the entire Manifesto is directed at the Jew. The Chinos were brought in to make the stigma of the Manifesto even more forceful.
The first open manifestation of this anti-Jewish movement instigated by the big businessmen took place on April 30, 1931. "On that day a squad of policemen ousted the Jewish vendors from the Lagunilla market... the Mexican market men were not molested, but showed their enthusiastic approval of the action taken by the police by having bands play and speakers harangue the crowds."\(^9\)

The decree banishing the puestos from the public markets, which at first strangled the Jewish community economically, turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It forced the Jews out of the peddling stage and accelerated the establishment of Jewish stores and factories.

In the course of their economic transformation, facilitated by the various Jewish aid, loan, and credit associations, the Jewish entrepreneurs built on the same principle that they had utilized as peddlers and puestos—the principle of manufacturing and distributing.

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\(^9\)Memorandum of Conversation between Senator D. Morrow, Dr. Cyrus Adler and Roger W. Strauss with Regard to the Jews in Mexico (Files of the American Jewish Committee, 1931, New York), p. 4. See also Dr. S. Lipschitz, The Jewish Situation in Mexico, \(1^{st}\) (typescript), p. 2.

Two months after the incident of ousting the Jewish vendors from the market, "Some 15,000 persons marched past the Municipal palace... in a Dia Comercial (Commercial Day) parade that appeared to be principally a campaign against Jewish merchants.

One banner was inscribed, "The Mexican People Will Never Be Enslaved by Voracious Jews;" another said, "Pernicious Israelitas must not remain in this land..." New York Times, June 2, 1931, p. 17.
numerous commodities in accordance with the purchasing power of the lower middle class and the large class of low-wage earners.

With social, economic and political conditions favorable towards industrial and economic expansion, and more particularly, with the absence of a native middle class, the relatively small Jewish community, guided by its accumulated experiences, skills and enterprise, can be said to have served as a catalytic agent in many branches of the Mexican economy.

The Jews pioneered and helped to develop the production of underwear, hosiery, ready made clothes, sweaters, hats, shirts and similar apparel. The Jewish immigrant played a not insignificant role in the development of industries such as paint, fur, silk, furniture, leather tanning, plastic articles, pharmaceutical supplies, building and construction, films, fishing, aviation, petroleum and metallurgy.

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World War II, with the rising war demands, a laissez-faire market and the absence of a price ceiling not only encouraged the growth of Jewish business and commerce but quickened the tempo of Jewish industrialization as well.

Jewish industry activity does not, however, seem to have kept pace with the general growth and development of industry in the country. By 1941 the percentage Jewish production of underwear was 47.38; of stockings, 35.66; of shirts, 31.04, and of ready-made clothes, 28.9.

The formerly poor Polacos and Rusos not only founded many industries in Mexico but also created jobs for thousands of Mexicans in shops, stores, schools and homes and helped indirectly to raise the standard of living of the natives. The Jewish vendor, for example, who brought to the peon's casita in rural Mexico the "dime store," introduced and popularized many "novel things" which have since become elementary standard household

12 T. Meisel, "Tsu der sotsial-ekonomisher kharakteristik fun yidishn yishuv in Meksike," Ofn Shvel, May-June 1951, No. 5 - 6, p. 4.


14 As early as 1937 the Jewish Chamber of Commerce in Mexico City stated "that it had aided Mexico by developing local industries employing 30,000 Mexicans in the capital alone." New York Times, December 24, 1937, p. 7.
articles. Likewise, the Jewish manufacturers, by producing goods domestically, stimulated a wider distribution of many commodities and enabled the worker, the servant and other members of the low-income group to put on a decent suit, dress or coat.15

B. PRESENT OCCUPATIONAL STRATIFICATION OF THE JEWS IN MEXICO

As is known, the immigrant generally tends to follow his occupational pattern and to retain his vocational skills and aptitudes, provided the conditions of the new habitat are favorable for so doing. Table I, given on page 29, shows the occupational distribution of the East European Jews in the country of origin and the occupational stratification of the Jewish community in Mexico City in 1941.

The table shows that the incoming immigrants who had been engaged in commerce in their countries of origin were still pursuing the same calling two decades after their arrival in Mexico. Thus we see that

### TABLE I

THE OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN MEXICO CITY IN 1941, AND THE OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE EAST EUROPEAN JEWS PRIOR TO THEIR ARRIVAL IN MEXICO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution Prior to Arrival in Mexico</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution in 1941</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans self-employed</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees in business and industry**</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nondescript and miscellaneous</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures from T. Meisel, op. cit., pp. 302, 303.

**In this rubric were included, in 1941: store and factory managers, bookkeepers, traveling salesmen and communal employees.
in 1941 fully 68.3 per cent of the entire Jewish population was engaged as tradesmen or merchants. The number of manufacturers, which in the country of origin was 5.5 per cent, had risen by 1941 to 11.4 per cent, an increase of one hundred per cent. Whereas in the country of origin the percentage of self-employed was 15.6 per cent, by 1941 the percentage had decreased to 4.2 per cent. These "self-employed" had either joined the ranks of the manufacturers and store owners or become managers or travel agents in the constantly growing number of commercial and industrial establishments. Emerging also from this comparative table is the fact that whereas in the country of origin the percentage of workers was 1.0, in 1941 there were no proletarians in the entire Jewish community in Mexico City. In the eight years which followed, some changes occurred in the occupational stratification of the Jewish community. The private, previously mentioned, count of 1949 shows, as seen in Table II, a 6 per cent decrease in the merchants' group and one of approximately 3 per cent in the artisans self-employed class. On the other hand, there was an increase of about 6 per cent among the professionals; of about 2 per cent each among the manufacturers and employees in business and industry; 0.3 per cent in the rubric "workers," and the
introduction of a new field of enterprise: "ranchers and cattle dealers"--0.3 per cent.

TABLE II

THE OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN MEXICO CITY IN 1949

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans self-employed</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees in business and industry</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranchers and cattle dealers</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be pointed out that of the professional group, with the exception of medical doctors, a considerable number does not practice the chosen profession. The graduates either enter their fathers and fathers-in-law establishments, or open, with the enormous dowries without which one does not marry, shops or stores of their own.

The increased per cent of professionals indicates, none the less, that a greater number of Jews, 7 per cent among the Ashkenazim and 1 per cent among the Sephardim,
send their children to the university. If the sons will not become professionals, at least they will receive a more substantial nadjan, as is befitting to a professional man. Thus, in 1952 there were 325 Jewish college students in Mexico, 250 Ashkenazim and 75 Sephardim.

C. THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS UPON THE JEWISH MODE OF LIFE

The rapid economic advancement of the Jews did not fail in Mexico, as elsewhere, to affect the total behavior pattern of the group. Pari passu the new financial position followed a change in their entire mode of life, bringing out the characteristic earmarks of the nouveau riche. First came the exodus from the former places of residence. From Jesus Maria street and its surrounding calles, with their old, dingy buildings and small, dark and stuffy rooms, the Jews moved to better and more exclusive regions of the capital. Colonia Hipodromo became the prime preferred district where the Jewish population preponderantly concentrated. In a short period, however, beautiful Hipodromo, or Tel Aviv,

16 Solomon Kahan, Briv vegn der yidisher studentenshaft (Mexico, 1953), p. 17. According to the records of the Jewish Ars Medici in Mexico City, the organization in 1952 numbered 99 active members, of whom 16 were women. Of the total group, 79 were physicians, while the others included dentists and bacteriologists. Sixty-eight members had received their training in Mexico.
as it is frequently referred to, lost its attractiveness. The still wealthier class moved away to much more exclusive areas of the city, such as Lomas de Chapultepec, Colonia Polanco and their likes. The latter section, parenthetically, has been nicknamed "Colonia Polaco," or "Polish Town," implying "Jew Town," since many Jews, as previously mentioned, identified themselves as Polacos. This became and is still a derogatory term of reference.

Whereas two decades ago it was not unusual for four or six people, or even two couples, to live in one room, at present a considerable portion of the Jewish community has already completed the phase of owning comfortable and spacious homes. Data obtained from 917 questionnaires, distributed by this writer during the summer of 1952 to the students of the last two grades of primaria (elementary school), all classes of secundaria (high school), and preparatoria (junior college) in all Jewish schools in Mexico City revealed that 63 per cent of the families were residing in houses of their own. While 37 per cent still live in rented casas, not an inconsiderable number of the Jews in Mexico City and a still greater number in the provinces have erected palaces consisting of magnificent rooms, exquisite gardens and even swimming pools said to excel in luxuriousness those of the ancient Roman patricians.

It also has become fashionable to own latest model cars. The questionnaires show that 67 per cent of the families own one car or more. Outside of the capital it is even more ubiquitous. There it is hardly a family which does not have at least one car in the garage. While transportational facilities in Mexico are not sufficiently adequate or inviting and overcrowded conveyances are a stimulus to pickpocketing, driving a car not only contributes to comfort but enhances one's prestige as well.

The acquired wealth has also enabled the Jews to become health conscious. The doctor and dentist are visited quite regularly. The local doctors are consulted ordinarily in non-serious cases. Since the Jewish community, like the other ethnics, do not usually have great faith in the local physicians, visits to the Mayo Clinic are not infrequent. "Going to Mayo" carries on with it, in addition to checking one's health, also advertising value. It displays the strength of the person's wealth and the extent of his ability to waste.

Among the many features and traits of the Jewish nouveau riche class are leisure and extravagance. The average Jewish woman in Mexico does not want the burden

of household duties. It is beneath one's social position and dignity to occupy oneself with housework, taking care of children and similar obligations. Only 2 per cent of the families studied did not have any steady maid service. Of the others, 52 per cent had at least two regular servants while 37 per cent employed three, and the remaining 9 per cent even four servants.

Incidentally, the leisure which is now at the disposal of the community allows for longer recreational periods, more frequent vacations and trips to resorts and seashores; greater participation in daily card parties, sports, dances and movies, as well as in numerous cultural and philanthropic activities.

It has also become widespread to throw sumptuous parties, sholem zohors, mazel tovs, circumcision dinners, pidion habens, birthday celebrations, bar mitzvahs, cumpleanos de quince (girls' debuts at 15), betrothals, weddings, housewarmings and other excessive fiestecitas,

20 Solomon Kahan, Meksikaner viderklangen (Mexico, Farlag Zelbstälf, 1951), p. 35. Illustrative of this attitude of the class in general is the anecdote related by L. B. Simpson: "The oldest daughter of such a household (non-Jewish old Mexican family) said to me in complete seriousness: 'Yes, I suppose Diego Rivera is a great artist . . . but his wife . . . ! Do you know, I saw her the other day in the market carrying her own basket like an Indian.'" Op. cit., p. 259.
which are given with exaggerated lavishness. It is stated that the usual cost of such a fiesta amounts to thousands of pesos.21

This ostentatious living, with its gay parties, sumptuous homes, expensive automobiles, elegant fur coats and jewelry in a country in which the majority of the people live in abject poverty,22 obviously creates feelings of great envy, animosity and anti-Semitism. These anti-Jewish feelings cannot be mitigated, we fear, by admitting a number of Mexican children gratis to the Jewish school; by aiding some native indigent families; by establishing lavaderos públicos (public washing places), or a guardería infantil (child care center) in the underprivileged areas of the city; and not even by erecting for the Mexican children a magnificent high school named for Albert Einstein and costing about two million pesos.23

21S. Kahan, "Kharakteristik fun dem meksikaner yidisheh yishuv," p. 30. In a full page wedding announcement of one of the rich Mexican Jews we are told that the canopy, made especially for this occasion, consisted of gold and flowers. Der Veg, Sept. 26, 1946, p. 9. About the attitude of some Jewish leaders toward such conspicuous waste see S. Kahan, Yidishe meksikanish, p. 296; Di Sh'time, Feb. 16, 1944, p. 1; A. Z. Berebichez, "Khasenes ba yidn in Meksike," Der Veg, Feb. 23, 1946, p. 6.

22The Mexican census of 1940 contains, for example, the rubric: "Population which . . . does and does not . . . sleep on the ground, hammocks, etc." 6o Censo de Poblacion, Distrito Federal, p. 83.

23About these benevolent acts see Di Sh'time, April 29, 1944, p. 2; June 9, 1945, p. 2; Nov. 5, 1947, p. 4; Fraiwelt, July 2, 1948, p. 1. The Jewish Central Committee also assigned five stipends to the best students at the Albert Einstein School. Di Sh'time, May 14, 1949, p. 2.
The sociological explanation that these traits are likewise found among the corresponding Mexican and other ethnic groups; that they too, ride in the latest model cars, dress in luxurious fur coats, rare diamonds and jewelry, spend exorbitant sums on parties and fiestas and reside in the most sumptuous medieval castles, gothic palaces, Hollywood bungalows, can have but little effect on the Mexicans, who recall that only several decades ago these very Jews lived in their poor casitas. The Alemanos, Rusos or Polacos are still remembered as poor peddlers who amassed riches in Mexico, while the other ethnics, having resided in the country much longer, are usually thought of as being born into wealth.

None the less, the Comite Unido de Antidefamacion in Mexico City is launching a mighty campaign to re-educate the masses through the media of the Mexican press and radio.

The rage of conspicuous wasting seems to have subsided somewhat once the big business boom of World War II was over. A considerable portion of the Jewish community suffered an economic recession and had to retrograde and modify their tone of life in order to meet the new

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24 Simpson, op. cit., p. 309.
situation. A small number was even forced to apply to Jewish institutions for loans, aid and charity. Only 30 per cent of the student body at the Colegio Israelita, the largest Jewish school in Mexico, paid the full tuition fee in 1951; 50 per cent paid a reduced price, while 10 per cent paid a negligible quota and the remaining 10 per cent did not pay at all.

On the whole, however, we may conclude that the Jewish economic position in Mexico is far from unsound. Proportionately, the number of poor Jews is by far smaller than in any other Jewish community. The contribution

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25 In 1951, 143 Ashkenazic families received from the Hilfs Farein in Mexico City 56,500 pesos in one-time aid. In the same year 37 families were permanently on the payrolls of the above institution. These people, mainly widows and divorcees, received a total of 76 thousand pesos annually (Records of the Hilfs Farein).

During the years 1949 - 1953 the Kehila Nidhe Yisrael spent 969,784 pesos for the purpose of aiding the sick and the needy, and the Froyen Farein of the same institution--386,695 pesos. The Gemilut Hesed and the Lay Kase of the same kehilla granted during the said period 420 loans totaling 461,550 pesos, and 620 loans amounting to 2,995,000 pesos respectively. "Tetikayt barikht tsu der algemeyner farzamlung fun Nidhe Yisrael. Ibergegebn durkh dem prezident, Shimshon Feldman, July 28, 1953." Typescript, Archives of Nidhe Yisrael, pp. 2-6.


27 Dr. Isaias Austri-Dunn, "Gezelschaftlekhe un dertsierishe shporzamkayt," Di Shtime, Sept. 9, 1953, p. 5.
by Mexican Jewry to Jewish institutions locally and abroad has in recent years increased rather than been reduced. The United Campaign of 1950, which in reality was a non-united one, managed to raise about four million pesos. In 1951, in addition to the campaign, one million dollars was loaned to Israel by a group of wealthy Jews.

In the post World War II period, too, the Jews of Mexico were building, in addition to private homes, magnificent and very costly communal buildings such as the Sport Center in Mexico City, the Rest House in Cuernavaca, and the Centro y Colegio Israelita "Hatikva" in Monterrey.

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Parallel with the immigrants' struggle for economic adjustment in the land, there was their strife for the perpetuation of the social, cultural and religious pattern of life. Because of the very nature of the socio-economic structure of Mexico, retarded as it has been culturally as well as industrially, the tendency of the immigrants to assimilate and to identify themselves with the prevailing culture was not a potent one.

Interaction with the natives always has been of an amicable kind. With the carving of the economic niche, and more particularly, with the advent of elders, wives and children, it was, however, reduced to the traditional form of the relationship which had existed for generations between Jews and gentiles in the small towns of their countries of origin—that is, of seller and buyer. Socially and culturally the Jews, like the other ethnics, did not, on the whole, establish a
universe of discourse with the natives. Consequently, each Jewish group created its own organizations and institutions, which in essence were replicas and recreations of those which they had known in the hometowns. These organizations, instrument of getting things accomplished, aimed both at serving the socio-economic needs of the settlers, and at the preservation in the new habitat of the habituations, traditions, values and cultural heritage of the Old World.

Of the plethora of organizations which were created in Mexico, many vanished into the limbo of forgotten things because of inner conflict, confusion and general lack of leadership. The number of existing ones, by far too numerous for the size of the small community, are in toto mal-engineered, over-lapping, duplicating and competing with one another in all areas of

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2 Other minority groups, too, maintain separate schools, social and cultural organizations and institutions and live within their self-imposed ghetto. Like the French, Americans or British, the Spaniards, too, exhibit ethnocentric feelings and set themselves apart from Mexican life. "Why do you always address me in French?" I asked a licenciado (lawyer). "Why," he answered, "because I don't want to be taken for a Mexican." Simpson, op. cit., p. 261.

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See Jacob Glantz, "20 yor gezelshaftlekh lebn in Meksike," Yubilei Numer Der Veg, pp. 151 - 172;
social, fraternal, cultural and educational activity.\(^3\)

These organizations, none the less, in one manner or another, brought the immigrants together; called for the continuation of the ethnic way of life; intensified the national consciousness, cultural specificity and well-feelings of the group, and served as powerful barriers against disintegration and assimilation.

The plexus of the various ḥessedakah, gemilut hasadim, aid and credit associations which were part of almost every social, cultural and religious organization in Mexico, as well as the Yiddishe Handels Kamer (the Jewish Chamber of Commerce) and the Jewish bank (Banco Mercantil de Mexico), did not only perform purely economic functions. In addition to offering aid to all needy in the form of charity, medical and dental treatment, cash loans and credit extensions totaling millions of pesos, helping hundreds of Jewish families to help themselves and advance economically, they indirectly were instrumental in fostering a keener sense of belonging and

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\(^3\)M. Rubinstein, "Vos tsu iz umgezunt," in Yidishe Velt (Mexico) Sept.-Nov. 1946, pp. 36 - 40;
\(^3\) Z. Berebichez, "A Trufe tsu undzer gezelschaftlekher makhle," Der Veg, Oct. 18, 1925, p. 4. "Zaynen mir take azoy gut organizirt" edit., ibid., p. 2.
stronger in-group feelings among the members of the Jewish community. 

Likewise, the synagogues, the minianim and organizations of religious character of all sectors in their way revived, maintained and labored to perpetuate numerous 

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4 About the aid and credit activities of the early period of immigration see the reports of the Y.M.H.A., Yiddishe Froyen Geselshaft and Yiddishe Yugnt Geselshaft in Unzer Vort, November 1929, pp. 10 - 11; January 1930, p. 9; April 1930, p. 9; and January 1931, pp. 16, 23. See also the Boletin Comercial (Mexico), May 1931, pp. 1 - 12; and the Almanaque de la Beneficencia Privada Israelita de Mexico (Mexico, September 1938).

The following examples will illustrate the activities of the later years. In 1937 the loan association at the synagogue Tiferes Isroel extended loans up to 200 pesos (Der Veg, January 16, 1937, p. 1). In 1941 the credit association at the synagogue Agudas Ahim issued loans up to 500 pesos (Di Shime, July 12, 1941), p. 2. In 1945 the credit association of the Yiddisher Kultur Tsentner issued loans up to 5,000 pesos (Di Shime, October 3, 1945, p. 4) and in 1952, 100,000 pesos were loaned to 14 members (Kultur Lebn, January 1952, p. 19). The activities of the Kahila Nidhe Yisreel have already been mentioned (Supra, Chapter II, footnote 25). In 1951 the Banco Mercantil had 900 shareholders, paid 15 per cent dividend and extended credit up to 5,000 pesos even to non-shareholders (Di Shime, February 28, 1951, p. 1). About the growth of this communal bank see ibid., March 5 and 8, 1952, pp. 1. It donated 25,000 pesos each to the United Campaign and to the Jewish University established at the Colegio Israelita (Ibid.).

Pertaining to the activities of the Handls Kamer (Jewish Chamber of Commerce), organized in 1931, we see that although it has outlived its initial usefulness it still fulfills limited functions. In 1948, for example, it intervened in 108 cases of arbitration dealing with over 1 1/2 million pesos (Ibid., July 31, 1948, p. 3), thus preventing the cases from coming before the Mexican courts.
religious observances, customs and traditions which otherwise might have been discarded and forgotten in the new place of settlement.\(^5\) Besides kashrut and similar religious usages that these institutions helped to preserve, they also revivified in Mexico many practices of a social service nature which existed among Jews for ages, such as ma'ot hitim, hahmasat kalah, bikur holim, matan beseyter, to mention but a few.\(^6\)

In like manner, the multiple socio-cultural and Jewish political organizations,\(^7\) more prevalent, variegated and diversified among the Ashkenazim than among the Sephardim, kept the Jews together and exercised influence through the various social, cultural and recreational programs. Through lectures, theatrical performances by local talent, guest speakers and artists; through literary evenings, recitals, musicals, kestl\(^{owntn},\) outings, dances, sports activities and, last but not least, restaurant service, these organizations discouraged seeking diversion in a non-Jewish atmosphere. In addition, they stimulated and cultivated,

\(^5\)See Di Shtime, June 7, 1941, p. 2; ibid., February 19, 1944, p. 10.

\(^6\)Der Veg, March 20, 1937, p. 8; ibid., March 18, 1952, p. 4.

to a greater or lesser degree, a favorable social climate, appreciation, interest and concern with Jewish life, Jewish values, Zionism, Jewish socialistic thought, Jewish education and the Yiddish and Hebrew languages and literatures.

These organizations, too, were instrumental in strengthening the bonds between the Jews of Mexico and world Jewry; in bolstering the cause of Zion, and in promoting campaigns, totaling many thousands of pesos, to further all phases of Jewish life and culture. 8 Particularly successful were the campaigns for Israel, for

8The fund raising ran the whole gamut, including among others, campaigns for Labor Zionism, Tsysho Schools in Poland, ORT, Joint, Vaad Hatzalah, Jewish children in Europe and Yeshivah Knesset Bet Yitzhak in Poland, to mention but some. See Der Veg, February 6, 1937, p. 8; February 25, 1937, p. 3; July 8, 1937, p. 4; August 26, 1937, p. 4; September 23, 1937, p. 4. Di Shtime, July 22, 1939, p. 2; June 1, 1940, p. 1; September 12, 1942, p. 12; October 1, 1943, p. 8; June 10, 1944, p. 4; November 1, 1944, p. 1. Der Veg, May 19, 1945, p. 3. Di Shtime, February 22, 1947, p. 2. In addition, 5,000 dollars were sent to "Yivo," 65,000 dollars to Oze, 10,00 dollars to the Histadruth. Di Shtime, April 29, 1944, p. 2; December 29, 1945, p. 3; July 27, 1946, p. 3; March 22, 1947, p. 12. The Froyen Pionern group in Mexico invested 70,000 dollars in building a home in Rehovot, Israel, and are at present engaged in another project which will cost 80,000 dollars. (Information obtained from the president of the organization.)
which the community has magnanimously contributed the sum of approximately 15,000,000 pesos.\(^9\)

And lastly, these organizations served as regulators of social conduct and behavior. They disciplined the individuals, calling for conformance to accepted norms. Members were compelled through various social pressures to subordinate their wishes and predilections to the communal do's and taboos.\(^10\)

At present, there is hardly a Jew in Mexico, whether of the immigrant group or native, who is not affiliated with one or more Jewish organizations. The partial list given below of Jewish organizations and the extent of their membership, as far as this writer managed to learn from the heads of the organizations, is but a small indication of the enrollment and involvement of the community in the whole gamut of the socio-cultural, religious, philanthropic, Jewish-political and youth organizations in Mexico.

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\(^9\) According to the data this writer received from the main offices of the Keren Kayemet Leisrael and Keren Hayesod in Jerusalem, the Jewish community in Mexico contributed to the K. K. L. during the period from 1924 - 1935, 2,507 liras, and from 1935 - 1951, 5,564,000 pesos, plus 34,164 liras through the United Campaigns.

To the K.H., the community contributed, up to the establishment of the state, 3,000,000 pesos, and from 1948-1951, $6,216,800, a total of 14,780,800 pesos.

\(^10\) See Der Veg, September 25, 1936, p. 10; Di Shtime, August 4, 1945, p. 9; June 26, 1948, p. 7.
### TABLE III

PARTIAL LIST OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS AND SIZE OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN MEXICO, 1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations and Institutions</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport Center</td>
<td>5,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wizo</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilfs Farein (charitable organization)</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niche Yisrael (Kehilah of East European Jews)</td>
<td>1,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sephardi Zionist Organization</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkenazi Zionist Organization</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Froyen Pionern</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Froyen Farein (charitable organization)</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Sefardi (Kehilah of Spanish-speaking Sephardic Jews)</td>
<td>690*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Monte Sinai (Kehilah of Damascus Jews)</td>
<td>500*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OZE</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League for Labor Zion</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magen David (Alepo Youth Organization)</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedaka y Marpe (Kehilah of Alepo Jews)</td>
<td>400*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatikvah-Menorah (Kehilah of German Jews)</td>
<td>300*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Buena Voluntad (Spanish-speaking Sephardic women's charitable organization)</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bnei Akiba</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddishe Folks Léague (left wing)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashomer Hatzair</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sephardi Zionist Youth Organization</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emunah (Kehilah of Hungarian Jews)</td>
<td>175*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanoar Hatzioni</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bialistoker Farband in Mexico</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanoar Hamizrachi (Noam)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. U. P. A. Youth Club</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geselshaft far Kultur un Hilf (Bundist Group)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ars Medici</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapam</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habonim</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poale Zion</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hug Ivri</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of families
At present, however, all organizations, and especially youth ones, suffer of a marked lack of professional, or even lay leaders and madrikhim. The Hashomer Hatzair, for example, has shrunk from 820 shomrim in 1945 to 185 in 1953. Likewise, the active Habonim organization has lost 100 members within the last two years. The youth organization Kadimah at the Colegio Israelita, which offered a very ambitious socio-cultural and recreational program for a number of years, ceased functioning primarily because of the unavailability of leadership.

The present general inactivity of all members of Jewish organizations in Mexico may be attributed to a variety of reasons. Among the immigrant group, two seem to be predominant; changed marital status, as well as changed economic position. They are no longer single people or struggling vendors in need of seeking communion

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11 Information obtained from the secretary of the organization.


12 During the year 1948, the Habonim organization arranged 75 cultural affairs and participated in 40 oneg shabats conducted by the Labor Zion League. Dos Vort, October 2, 1949, p. 7.
and diversion in the various Jewish clubs and organiza-
tions. To all age groups concerned, evenings with family
or friends, television shows, movie programs, card parties,
dinner-dances, car rides and trips to suburban areas are
no doubt more inviting than meetings of any kind. On the
other hand, the fault lies within the organizations them-
selves. They lack, as mentioned previously, leadership,
vitality, vision and planning. Consequently, they cause
confusion, duplication, monotony and general waste of
effort, time and money.

Attempts in the direction of ameliorating the various
aspects of organizational life in Mexico were made through
the establishment of the Zionist and Mizrahi Federations;
the Zionist Youth Federation, which tries to direct the
activities of 15 youth organizations; the Vaad Hahinukh,
which labored to normalize the budgetary aspect of the
Ashkenazic schools in the capital. This organization in
1952 succeeded in establishing a Central Jewish Teachers
Seminary in Mexico City. And, lastly, a great deal of
coordinated work is being accomplished by the Jewish

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13 An additional motive for visiting the club or organi-
zation in the early period of immigration was to read a
Yiddish newspaper, periodical or book. This is no longer
an added attraction since they are to be found in almost
every Yiddish-speaking home. See infra p. 53.

13A See "Buletin fun Vaad Hahinukh," Di Shtime,
March 22, 1952, p. 8, and "Der Lerer Seminar Baym Vaad
Central Committee, a body comprising, directly or indirectly, 40 organizations and institutions. This organization numbers 30 members in its farvaltung, representing all sectors and factions of the entire yishuv.¹⁴

B. CULTURAL ACTIVITY

As previously mentioned, all Ashkenazic organizations, and through their influence even the Sephardic ones, were to a certain extent engaged directly or indirectly in socio-cultural work. The excessive cultural energy and output of the early period of immigration, symptomatic of the great tensions, anxieties, insecurities and general emotional disequilibrium, expressed itself in lectures, theatrical performances, political debates, "kestl ovtn," "literary Wednesdays," "cultural Thursdays," "lebedike zeitungen," as well as frequent parties, carnivals, balls, and dances which drew large audiences.¹⁵

At present there seems to be a considerably lesser

¹⁴Pertaining to the early period of activity of the C.C., see Protokoln fun Tsentral Komitet, Typescript, Archives of the Yivo, New York. About the work of the C.C. in reference to extravagant waste of the community, refugee problem, coordination of Jewish schools, stipends to students, etc., see Der Weg, November 1, 1941, p. 2; Di Shtime, February 5, 1944, p. 3; October 27, 1945, p. 2; September 2, 1946, p. 2; March 14, 1951, p. 3.

A far-reaching project was voiced to unite the Kehila Nidhe Yisrael with the Jewish Central Committee. This project was, however, halted by many individuals and organizations because of vested interest and small politics.

¹⁵About some of the "cultural Thursdays" of the Y.M.H.A. see Buletin fun Y.M.H.A., September 1927, p. 8; Unzer
enthusiasm for such cultural affairs. This is not indicative, however, of apathy on the part of the community or of disinterest in Jewish social and cultural life. Rather, it tends to point out the effect of aging, of adequate socio-economic adjustment on one hand and improved, more discriminating taste on the other.

The Jewish community en masse, and particularly the East European sector, which still influences and dominates the entire yishuv, is conscientiously Jewish. Despite its hyper-provincialism it is whole-heartedly interested in Jewish affairs, Jewish culture and education.

In fact, the twenty thousand Jews of Mexico maintain proportionately more Jewish all-day schools than the Jewry of the United States. The eight Jewish all-day schools in the capital and the two in the provinces enjoy the largest Jewish child enrollment in the diaspora.

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Vort, January 1930, pp. 8-9. The average attendance of such evenings was 200. Ibid. For the activities of the Kultur Center see Unzer Lebn, April 1929, p. 16; January 1930, pp. 43-44. The library at the Kultur Center numbered several hundred volumes. See Unzer Lebn, June 1930, p. 6. The library at the Y.M.H.A. had 2,000 volumes, over 100 readers and a circulation of 500 per month. See Unzer Vort, January 1930, p. 9. The reading room of the Library was provided with Yiddish newspapers and periodicals from the world over. Ibid., February 1929, p. 12.

16In reality there is no shortage of cultural undertakings among the Jews in Mexico. In 1953 there were over 300 well or mal-planned social and cultural programs conducted in Mexico City, i.e. one almost every evening. On the whole, these excessive evening were
At present (1953) the ten Jewish all-day schools number 3,790 students in their various departments. Of the total, 699 are enrolled in the kindergartens; 2,323 in the elementary divisions; 641 in the high schools; 119 in the junior colleges, and 8 students attend the university at the Colegio Israelita de Mexico.

Likewise, the Jewish writer, lecturer, political leader, artist and cantor finds in Mexico a warm, receptive audience comparatively even larger than in New York. Literati and cognoscenti of the caliber of Leivick, Opatoshu, Niger, Shatzky and Greenberg; artists of the genre of Ben Ami, Grober, Schwartz, Lapson and Singerman; cantors of the class of Kwartin, Pintchuk, Vigoda and Glantz draw hundreds of people, both immigrant and native-born, to their evenings.17

rather well attended. They drew, on the average, more than 100 persons per evening. M. Rubinstein, "A yor iz avek..." Di Shtime, Sept. 9, 1953, p. 7.

17 See Der Vag, January 21, 1939, p. 8; July 21, 1942, p. 4; February 8, 1945, p. 4; May 19, 1945, p. 8; Di Shtime, March 23, 1946, p. 12. The following excerpts will illustrate the point:

"...Bay yeder lektsie fun Opatoshu ... iz der zal fun Kultur Tsenter geven ful...a simen az mir hobn an oylom vos vil hern a beser vort..." Di Shtime, Oct. 26, 1946, p. 7.

"Der kontsert fun...Kh. Grober... hot getsoygn a rizikn oylom. Nit geven genug pletser..." Fraiwelt, Jan. 24, 1947, p. 1.

"Ben Ari's oyftritn hobn bavizn az mir hobn a teater oylom... Gute forshtelungen kezen tsurik bay undz shafn
Mexico offers a good market for Yiddish and Hebrew books. Fully 680 sets of the Yiddish Encyclopedia, to cite but one example, have been sold to the approximately 2,200 Yiddish-speaking families in Mexico. Although only a limited number of the older generation and a still smaller percentage of the native-born is said to devote much time to reading of any kind, none the less Yiddish, Hebrew and Jewish-Spanish books are found in 95 per cent of Jewish front rooms. Whether these books are ever referred to, or whether they are merely placed as objects of adornment as some Jeremiahs claim, there is no feeling of shame or inferiority in connection with displaying Jewish books.

Indicative of current reading interest are the following, all of them published in Mexico: the circulation of approximately 1,000 copies of Der Veg (appears thrice weekly; established in 1930) and an equal number of Di Shtime (issued twice weekly; established 1939); several hundred copies each of the bi-monthlies Fraiwelt and Foroys, in Yiddish, and several thousand copies of each of the following Spanish - Jewish

For a partial list of writers and artists who have appeared in Mexico see Di Shtime, Jubilee Edition, April 1944, pp. 31-32. In 1951 over 50 Jewish cultural affairs were conducted in Mexico City, i.e., one each week. Di Shtime, December 29, 1951, p. 13.

18Foroys, May 15, 1953, p. 10.
publications: *La Voz Zionista*, *La Tribuna Israelita*, *La Prensa Israelita*, as well as numerous other periodicals and yearbooks, both in Yiddish and in Spanish. These thousands of copies of weeklies and other periodicals are, notwithstanding their literary shortcomings, powerful instruments in shaping public opinion, in fostering Jewish national consciousness, Jewish education and Jewish culture.

In addition to the number of local Yiddish publications, which are found in almost every Yiddish-speaking home, hundreds of copies of Yiddish dailies, weeklies and periodicals arrive in Mexico from the United States. According to the data this writer obtained from the circulation departments of the Jewish newspapers in New York, the *Jewish Morning Journal* showed for the year 1952 some 250 subscribers in Mexico; the *Forward*, 300; *The Day*, 600; the weekly, *Jewish American*, 250; and the Hebrew weekly, *Ha'aroar*, 45.

Because of its adequate economic position Mexico is able to encourage Jewish literary productivity both at home and abroad, through the Zvi Kessel foundation,

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19 *Der Veg*, March 30, 1946, p. 5.
as well as through the aid of the Kramereman and Mendelson funds. \(^{20}\) Too, Mexico is to be credited with the publication of Graetz' *History of the Jews* in Spanish and with publication of the ten volume *Enciclopedia Judaica Castellana*.

Although the East European Jewish sector is laboring zealously to perpetuate its cultural heritage and is vigilantly guarding its language, the carrier of culture, Yiddish lives only in the mouth of the immigrant group. Neither the arduous efforts of Colegio Israelita, which for three decades constantly emphasized Yiddish in its curriculum; nor the conscientious labor of twenty-six years of the Yiddish press and seventeen years of radio activity, nor the great care and public pressure exerted by all East European elements to retain Yiddish as the exclusive language governing all areas of the socio-cultural life have been successful in influencing the native progenies to speak or read Yiddish. \(^{21}\)

\(^{20}\) About the book awards by the Kessel foundation since 1947 see *Di Shtime*, December 13, 1947, p. 5; November 27, 1948, p. 7; December 24, 1949, p. 2; December 16, 1950, p. 1; December 22, 1951, p. 5; December 26, 1953, p. 10. Pertaining to the activities of the other two funds see *Vorbukh fun Meksikaner yidntum*, pp. 362 – 363. For a list of Yiddish books published in Mexico to 1946 see *Fraiwald*, September 25, 1946, p. 4.

\(^{21}\) Pressure against the native born Jews, who employ Spanish as the language of communication, has been exerted time and again. In fact, the youth has been literally put on trial by the leaders of the community. See *Der Veg*, September 22, 1945, p. 5. See also the
As to the state of Jewish culture outside the mecca, it is, with the exception of the three cities, Guadalajara, Monterrey and Puebla, one grave problem of woeful neglect and barrenness. The small communities lack any cultural resources of their own and are not even visited by the occasional guest lecturers and artists. These yeshuvim have no provisions for Jewish education of the young; neither is there any cultural activity offered to adolescents or adults. Their leisure time is generally devoted to excessive dances, fiestas, card parties and domino games. These "socials" are none the less instrumental in keeping the Jewish group together.

C. THE RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR OF THE COMMUNITY

The Jewish community in Mexico, with the exception of the Alepo group, which is ultra orthodoxyly conscious, can be said to approximate more the national type than the religious one. Although in this area, as well as in all other aspects of Jewish social life in Mexico, one encounters a great deal of ignorance, confusion, hypocrisy and astonishing contradiction, on the whole the behavior of the yishuv tends to lean towards traditionalism.

controversy about the rendition of the Hagadah into Spanish by the director of Escuela Israelita Yavne, Ibid., April 13, 1946, pp. 4, 5. The Yiddishe Folks Lige adopted a resolution to disregard communications from Jewish organizations unless addressed in Yiddish. See Fraiwejt, August 24, 1945, p. 4. The administration of Fraiwejt returned a letter to the YIVO that was not written in Yiddish. See Fraiwejt, July 12, 1946, p. 2.
rather than religionism. Indicative of this trend is the enrollment in the 10 Jewish all-day schools in the republic of Mexico. Of the 3,790 students enrolled, only 871 attend schools which stress religion in their curriculum.

The data obtained from the 117 questionnaires previously mentioned revealed that whereas 60 per cent of families bought kosher meat exclusively, only 44 per cent maintained separate dishes for the use of milk and meat foods. The kashrut observances even of this group, by the way, is not always according to the exact letter of the dietary law, since the Mexican servants employed in almost every Jewish home not infrequently exchange the dishes and the kitchen utensils. Similarly, although fully 88 per cent of the fathers worked on the Sabbath and on Jewish holidays and 59 per cent of the mothers engaged in cooking or shopping, 62 per cent of the homes had candles lit on those days. Likewise, while 89 per cent prepared a seder or attended one, 70 per cent ate only matzah at home during the Pesah week and 65 per cent kept separate dishes for the Passover holiday use. And lastly, 60 per cent had a mezuzah affixed to the door post while 62 per cent lit candles during the Hanukah feast. The lighting of candles on the Sabbath, on Jewish holidays, as well as Hanukah is, parenthetically, due in a great measure to the influence of the 8 Jewish
all-day schools in Mexico City, of which 5 stress Jewish cultural values and nationalism rather than ritualism or religion in the curriculum.

The approximately 4,000 Jewish families in Mexico City maintain a personnel of 49 directly or indirectly paid official religious functionaries. There are 12 rabbis or hahamim; 20 shohatim; 7 hazanim; 4 elders; 3 mohalim; 2 organists (non-Jews) and 1 shamash. Of these functionaries, those of the East European Jews number 2 rabbis, 8 shohatim, 1 mohel and 1 shamash. Of the Arabic-speaking group, the Damascus Jews maintain 2 hahamim, 4 hazanim and 4 elders who pray all day for the well-being of their sector. The various other religious acts are performed by the functionaries of the other groups. Their Alepo co-religionists

22All information pertaining to the religious activity of the Ashkenazim was obtained from Rabbi D. Sh. Rafalin, officiating in Mexico for the last 20 years as Chief Rabbi of the sector. The other rabbi was appointed in 1953. Of the shohatim, only 3 are shohetei gazot. Since the group does not have a yearly paid cantor, one is brought to Mexico, usually for the High Holidays, from the United States. The German and Hungarian-speaking Jews do not maintain any paid functionaries or religious institutions of their own.

23All information about the religious life of the Sephardim given in this section was obtained from the religious leaders of the groups. Haham Abraham Mizrahi, connected 26 years with the Damascus kehila, supplied the data about his group. Haham Mordochai Attie, for 30 years leader of the Alepo Jews, supplied the information about his sector, and Professor Menahem Coriat, Gran Rabino de la Union Sefardi since 1942, offered the data about his kehila.
number 5 hahamim who, like their Damascus colleagues, do not earn their livelihood from rabanut but render their services gratis; 10 shohatim, 2 hazanim and 2 mohalim.24 The Spanish-speaking Sephardim maintain 3 rabinos; 2 shohatim; 2 organists and 1 hazan. For all other religious needs they utilize the functionaries of the other sectors.

In the 13 houses of worship in the capital there are 16 minyanim at the daily services; 47 at Sabbath services and a considerably larger number on the Jewish holidays.25 almost the entire community is said to attend services during the High Holidays.

24 Of the shohatim, only three are shohetei gasot. Eight shohatim were trained by Haham Attie, in Mexico.

25 Of the 16 minyanim during the week-days, 7 are found in the Ashkenazic shuln; 4 each in the Damascus and Alepo ones, and 1 in La Union Sefardi. Of the 47 minyanim on the Sabbath, 16 are congregated in the Ashkenazic houses of prayer; 15 in the Alepo synagogue "Zedakah Umarpe;" 8 in the Damascus synagogue "Kahal Kadosh Monte Sinai," and 8 in the Sephardic one, "Temple Rabi Yehuda Halevi," at the Friday night services, when the organ plays and the school choir of Colegio Hebreo Sefardi, consisting of 50 children, sings. The Sabbath morning services of this group ordinarily draw only 3 minyanim, unless there is a bar mitzvah. In the synagogue of the Alepo Jews, too, the school choir chants prayers and Shir Hashirim on Friday nights. This choir consists of boys only. No women of this group, either in the old country or in Mexico, has previously (prior to 1953) ever been taught to read Hebrew.
The community maintains two mikvas; one is owned by the Alepo group and the other by Nidhe Yisrael. The total female attendance is estimated at 240.

The sectarianism of the Jewish groups expresses itself in all areas of life and even as concerns death. The 4,000 Jewish families in Mexico City maintain four separate cemeteries.

The total worth of the property of the kehilot of the Jews in Mexico City, excluding the school buildings, buses and equipment, which are priced at 10,000,000 pesos, is estimated at 13,000,000 pesos. Of these, the communal property of Nidhe Yisrael is valued at 7,000,000; that of the Damascus group, at 3,500,000; that of La Union Sefardi at 1,500,000, and that of the Alepo sector at 1,000,000 pesos.

26. The extent of male attendance is uncertain. Until 1953, when it built its own, Nidhe Yisrael had rented a mikva. The new one, costing more than 250,000 pesos, includes steam rooms, Russian and Turkish baths, a swimming pool and a salon for massage. See Der Veg, Jan. 5, 1954, p. 4. In former years the Jewish immigrant male population had frequented (customarily on Sundays) non-Jewish Russian and Turkish bath houses.

27. On the Ashkenazic one, owned by Nidhe Yisrael, 1274 persons rest (1932-1951), and 183 persons (1942-1953) are on the one owned by La Union Sefardi.

28. This sum excludes some houses of worship of the Ashkenazic sector in Mexico City on which this writer was unable to obtain data.

29. This includes the new synagogue constructed in 1953 and valued at about 2,000,000. Previously, the Center, or as it is commonly called, "the Club," was utilized as a house of prayer.
As to the incidence of intermarriages: During the last ten years approximately 1,265 marriages and 128 divorces were granted by the four rabbis of the four groups. Of the total 1,980 marriages recorded by these four rabbis (there is no record available of the marriages performed by the other religious functionaries of the community) 114 were cases of intermarriage. The Jewish wedding of these mixed marriages usually occurred many years later, after the civil one, on the occasion of a son's becoming bar mitzvah or of a daughter's debut (at 15) or betrothal. In 96 per cent of these intermarriages it was the immigrant male who took the Mexican girl to wife. The fact that there was a sharply felt lack of Jewish females, that the immigrants were living in the homes of the natives and, further, that there was no parental or communal pressure, together resulted in clandestine liaisons and intermarriages.

30 Of these marriages 305 were performed by the rabinos of La Union Sefardi; 260 by the hahamim of the alepo group; 150 by the hahamim of the Damascus Jews and about 550 by the rabbi of Nidhe Yisrael. The total number of marriages performed by this rabbi during the last 20 years was 1,130. Of the number of divorces, 25 were granted by the rabinos of La Union Sefardi, 15 by the hahamim of the Damascus group, 10 by the hahamim of the Alepo Jews, and about 78 by the rabbi of Nidhe Yisrael. The total number of divorces granted by this rabbi during his 20 years of officiating in Mexico was 155.

31 Of these intermarriages 60 were performed by the rabbi of Nidhe Yisrael, 40 by the rabinos of La Union Sefardi and 14 by the hahamim of the Damascus group. The total number of intermarriages is not known.
Cases in the reverse were few then and occur rather seldom now, too. The reasons seem to be as follows:
a) Women were scarce and, therefore, it was no problem to find a Jewish husband; b) then, as now, marrying a native constituted a tragedy since it ordinarily was followed, as it is even now, by a diminution in the socio-cultural status of the Jewish girl, whose position is reduced to that of the Mexican wife, with all that this implies...

Among the native-born Jews intermarriage occurs only in rather rare cases. 32 As long as the socio-cultural and economic conditions of the country remain stationary it may safely be predicted that no Jewish girl, nor will any Jewish boy, be allured to marry a native. The Jewish young man, for one thing, cannot anticipate a substantial nadan (dowry), a ready business, a beautiful home and an expensive car from the Mexican father-in-law.

As to the religious life of the Jews outside Mexico City: --

Religious activity there is either fatally neglected or simply not wanted. With the exception of the city of Monterrey, which maintains a shohet to satisfy the needs of half a minyan families, there is no religious

32 In Monterrey, for example, of the 25 per cent of mixed marriages only 2 per cent were consummated by the younger generation.
functionary in all the provinces of the republic of Mexico. Jewish stores are open on the Sabbath and on holidays; the dietary laws are not observed, traditions are not practiced; and children, excepting those in Monterrey, Guadalajara and Puebla, grow up without any kind of Jewish training and education.

The Jews in the provinces are, however, nationally conscious and, like their co-religionists in the capital, they magnanimously contribute large funds for the furthering of Jewish life and culture in Israel as well as in the diaspora. In this way, at least, they identify themselves with Am Israel and Eretz Israel.

33 Even in Monterrey, where the community erected a beautiful and spacious synagogue costing over 250,000 pesos, the shul is closed all week, and there is hardly a minyan on Sabbath. The Sabbath and holiday morning services are railroaded to end at 8 o'clock, for the worshipers hurry to open their businesses.
SUPPLEMENTARY JEWISH EDUCATION IN MEXICO

A. THE PROCESS OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Jewish education in Mexico passed through two stages. In the immigratory period, when the Jewish settlers were struggling to carve out an economic niche in the strange land, the children attended the Mexican public schools together with the native poor and the problem of Jewish education was solved either by tutorial instruction or by supplementary training. As late as 1935 there still was only one Jewish all-day school in Mexico, with an enrollment of 262 students. With the economic improvement of the Jewish community began the exodus from the public elementary schools—primarias—into the fashionable private schools—escuelas particulares—a practice quite prevalent among the other ethnics and the native middle classes. The pattern of Jewish education, however, did not undergo any change for years.

The effect of the Jewish catastrophe in Europe, which intensified the Jewish ethos and national consciousness the world over, was even much keener in
Mexico, where the Jewish community is numerically Lilliputian and socio-culturally anemic. The urge for cultural survival was expressed, above all, in the deep concern about the future of the oncoming generation. The desire to bring the children into a Jewish environment, on the one hand, and the quest for a more thorough Jewish education on the other led to the establishment of the Jewish all-day schools in the country. Thus, in 1942 the Ashkenazic Jews established two all-day schools in Mexico City, a step which was soon followed by their Sephardic coreligionists. The Damascus Jews opened their colegio in 1943 and the Spanish-speaking Sephardim, one year later.

Whereas in 1925 there was in Mexico, as seen in Table IV, given below, only one all-day school, with an enrollment of 51 children, by 1945 there were six, with an enrollment of 2,145 students, 1,128 of them males and 1,017 females. This trend continued so that in 1953 Mexican Jewry maintained ten all-day schools with a student population of 3,790, of whom 2,066 were males and 1,724 females. It is estimated that approximately 86 per cent of the Jewish children are registered in the Jewish schools in Mexico.
TABLE IV
GROWTH OF THE JEWISH ALL-DAY SCHOOLS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO
BY FIVE-YEAR PERIODS, 1925--1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BY Years</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Ashkenazic Schools</th>
<th>Sephardic Schools</th>
<th>Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ashkenazic</td>
<td>Sephardic</td>
<td>Total Male</td>
<td>Total Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>135</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1414</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>1042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2399</td>
<td>1352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second stage of Jewish education in the country will be discussed in the following chapter. Here we shall attempt to describe briefly the story of supplementary Jewish education—the first phase of the educational process in Mexico.

B. BRIEF HISTORY OF JEWISH SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION

1. Jewish Supplementary Education

Among the Sephardim in the Capital

Jewish education in the Mexican republic was initiated by the Arabic-speaking Jews, the pioneers of the communal life of the yishuv. They transplanted from their country of origin, along with the other institutions, the katab, or Talmud Torah, which they tried to adapt to Mexican reality. At first, due to the scarcity of children of school age,¹ the several families confronted with the problem of Jewish education of the young had to solve it individually by a tutorial arrangement.

¹Between 1907—1917 most of the immigrants were single men or married ones whose families followed them much later. This was also true in the case of the first arrivals, of all sectors, who came later.
The first katab in the land was established thanks to the arduous efforts of the two votaries of the Beneficiencia Monte Sinai, Srs. Marcus Zaga and Carlos Misrahi. The school was opened in Mexico City in 1917 with an enrollment of 15 educants.  

Whereas in the country of origin the katab was an institution offering Jewish education on a full day basis, in the new habitat it was adjusted to a part-time schedule. The children attended the public schools, either in the morning or in the afternoon sessions, and received their Jewish training before or after their general studies. Except for this time adjustment, the katab did not undergo any perceptible change. In Mexico, as in the native land, it was designed exclusively for boys. Girls were left, in the new world, too, without any formal Jewish training. The curriculum provided mechanical reading, prayers and cantillation. Writing was introduced at a much later period, and that only the Rashi script or, as the elders call it, ktav Zohar. The language of instruction was for many years Arabic. Ordinarily, the hahamim served as teachers.

Information about the katab was obtained from the hahamim, from the elders of the sector, as well as from the two school presidents, the haham Abraham Mizrahi and Sr. Abdo Grego.
Till 1928, when a building was purchased especially for the school by a number of shareholders, the katab went through various spacial wanderings, as did the group itself. But the school progressed.

In 1917 it employed only one teacher; in 1928, two, and by 1934 it had a staff of four teachers and a student body of about 170. Notwithstanding the steady increase in enrollment the katab suffered from chronic deficit and constant inner dissension. The frequent collections, contributions, donations and various ingenious fund-raising devices could not normalize the budget. In 1934 it seemed that the school would have to close. After long, bitter conflicts and much struggle the Beneficiencia Monte Sinai managed to convert it into a communal school under its exclusive control, and thenceforth covered all the deficits of the katab.

In 1939, under the presidency of Sr. Abdo Grego, many innovations were introduced. The Talmud Torah, as the katab was then called, renovated its school rooms and equipment, opened a kindergarten; admitted

3 From 1928 to 1939 the tuition fee averaged about 2 pesos monthly per child, covering only an infinitesimal part of the school's expenditure.

4 This included among others selling Hanukah candles, mishloah manot, and auctioning of mitzvot at weddings and circumcisions.

5 The kindergarten numbered 30 children. The total enrollment of the school was about 190.
girls to the school; introduced standard Hebrew writing, and changed the language of instruction in all classes from Arabic to Spanish.

These innovations gradually paved the way to the reorganization of the Talmud Torah, in 1943, into an all-day school: Colegio Monte Sinai.

* * *

The counterpart of the Arabic-speaking group, the Alepo Jews, solved the problem of Jewish education in the same manner as their Damascus coreligionists. After a brief period of Jewish training on a tutorial level, the boys were enrolled in the newly organized katab. The underlying socio-cultural divergencies of these compatriots eventuated in constant misunderstandings, opposition and conflict situations. After numerous attempts to establish a school of their own the Alepo Jews finally succeeded, realizing their goal in 1935. Under the leadership of Sr. Ezra Hanono and 25 co-aspirants, the Academia Hebreá Sedaka y Marpe was opened with 75 boys, divided into 3 classes. Within four months the student body reached 125 and the staff totaled 5 teachers. This school functioned on the same system as the katab. The educants attended the Academia either before or after their primaria schedule.

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Information about the educational pattern of the sector and the school was obtained from the hahamim of the group and from Sr. Ezra Hanono, secretary of the school since it was founded.
Not unlike the katab, the Academia had to resort constantly, in spite of its growth in enrollment, to all sorts of collections in order to maintain itself. The group managed, nevertheless, to purchase a building which was remodeled as a school house. This enterprise, completed in 1946, cost more than 140,000 pesos.

For several years the curriculum of the Academia was in essence quite identical with that of the katab. It consisted of mechanical reading, prayers and cantillation. Later on, however, the pedagogical committee of Academia decided to enrich the curriculum. Consequently the study of Humash and selected portions of Rashi, as well as Jewish laws and traditions were introduced in the upper grades. The curriculum also included the chanting of prayers, traditional songs and melodies of the Judeo-Arabic folk repertory. The established school choir participated in the synagogical services and also in the weddings and various fiestas of the group.

During the last four years the school sessions have been increased in length to three hours daily in the lower grades and to four in the upper. This time increment was followed by a further reconstruction of the curriculum. In 1953 the attempt was made to organize the Academia as an all-day school. While the kindergarten and the first three lower grades already are functioning on the all-day schedule, the remaining
classes of the *academia* are, as previously, conducted in the afternoon and evening hours.\(^7\)

In 1953 the afternoon department numbered 149 educants distributed in six grades. This classification was modeled after the Mexican *primaria*, which functions on a six year plan. The two lowest grades of the *academia* had parallel classes designed especially for the girls. The training of girls—parenthetically, another Ashkenazic influence—points to changed attitudes of the group pertaining to the formal Jewish education of women. The Alepo Jews, like their Damascus coreligionists, hitherto have held pronounced prejudices against such practices. Due to the religious conceptions of the sector the 47 girls not only studied in separate classrooms but even took their recess at other periods than the male students.

The school days of the *academia* were from Monday through Saturday, with the exception of Friday, when the afternoon and evening divisions, scheduled from 3 to 7 and from 7 to 9 respectively, were closed. The evening session was intended for boys who attended the regular classes of the Sephardic all-day school, where religious education was not offered, or for those who were engaged in their parents' business during the daytime hours.

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\(^7\)The directorship of the *academia*, an honorary post, is at present held by a young Ashkenazic business man, Sr. Maurice Brachfeld, who was raised and trained in the Yeshivah Torah Vdaat of New York.
In 1953 the Academia had three groups totaling 32 students.

As seen in Table V below, grades I to IV of the afternoon school devoted 15 hours weekly to Jewish studies. The stress was laid on mechanical reading and daily prayers. Three hours of the total time was utilized for the explanation of customs and rites and for the practicing of prayers and benedictions, in grades I to III. Humash was introduced in grade II, and Cantillation, a subject deemed vitally important by the group, in the next grade. In grade IV fully seven hours were devoted to Humash, two and a half hours to Cantillation and one hour each to the new subjects: Hebrew writing and Mūsar. Of the the 20 weekly hours in grades V and VI, eight and a half and six hours respectively were given to the study of Humash and Rashi. In these two last grades Mishna and Gemara were introduced. Like all the other subjects, these were explained in Spanish.

The curriculum of the first two grades of the evening classes accentuated the study of Humash and Rashi, to which five and a half and six and a half hours, respectively, were allotted out of the total of eight hours weekly. The sole study of grade III was Gemara.

In addition to the afternoon and evening classes the Academia maintained a seminary for advanced learning. In this mesivta, designed for boys who
TABLE V

PROGRAM OF STUDIES OF THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING
CLASSES OF ACADEMIA HEBREA SEDAKA Y MARPE, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>AFTERNOON</th>
<th></th>
<th>EVENING</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>Allotment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEBREW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFILAH</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMASH</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMASH AND RASHI</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISHNA</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEMARA</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUSTOMS AND RITES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSAR</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANTILLATION</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL HOURS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
wished to continue their Jewish studies, there were 15 boys in 1953. Of the 35 weekly study hours, 2 were devoted to Shulhan Arukh, 8 to Bible and Commentary and 25 to Gemara and Tosfot. Of these, 6 hours were assigned for independent study.

The maintenance of these departments amounted in 1953 to 60,000 pesos. With an income of only 26,000 pesos from tuition, the Academia faced a deficit of 34,000 pesos.

From 1935 to 1953 approximately 850 students attended the Academia. In 1953 monthly and special quarterly report cards were introduced. That year also witnessed the first graduation ceremony.

* * *

Jewish education among the Spanish-speaking Sephardim can be said to have started in 1923, when the group brought to Mexico its rabino, Abraham Levy. 8 Previously, the children of the poorer families had attended the public primarias and the wealthier ones—the French or American private schools. The Jewish aspect of education was neglected. Only a small per-

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8 The information about the Jewish education of this sector was obtained from the rabino; from Sr. Miguel Palacci, President of the Comité Ritual and a resident of Mexico since 1911, and from Sr. José Benbassat, who has resided in Mexico since 1924 and is Vice President of La Union Sefardí and President of the Comité Escolar (School Committee).
centage of the children were exposed to any kind of Jewish training, either tutorially or in the katab of the Damascus Jews.

For a time, when the intellectuals of the sector, Siman Tov Babani, Nisan Hayim Katalan and the rabino, joined the staff of the katab it seemed that a greater number of parents would gain confidence in the school. However, the feelings of socio-cultural and economic superiority, the prejudices against intermingling with the Arabic-speaking children, added to dissatisfaction with the curriculum and general environment of the katab, continued to make the school undesirable. The movement among these Sephardim to establish a school of their own offering a diametrically different program of education brought results in 1930, when the group founded its Union y Progreso, a club for social, recreational and cultural activities.

Under the directorship of Sr. José Benbassat, Union y Progreso offered courses in Jewish education on a supplementary level to both boys and girls. These courses, sponsored by the club and financed by the society La Fraternidad, were given four times a week, from 4 to 6 in the afternoon. The curriculum included modern Hebrew, Jewish history, Palestinian songs and dances, and celebration of Jewish holidays.9

9The first instructor at the school was an Ashkenazi Jew, Sr. José Tchornicki, at that time a teacher in
The average yearly attendance was over 50. This after­noon school existed until 1944, when it was reorganized as the all-day Colegio Hebreo Sefardi.\textsuperscript{10}

* * *

Similar to the Academia Hebrea Sedaka y Marpe, both in its religious outlook and its educational phi­losophy, is the Colegio Primera Sabiduria. This school was organized by the disciples of the Grand Rabbi Yekutiel Y. Halbershtam of Kloisenberg, who is zealously laboring to transplant to the new world Jewish edu­cation of the Hasidic tradition. The school, the first experiment in Latin America, was opened in March 1952 under the directorship of Rabbi M. Krassner.\textsuperscript{11}

With only 3 children at its genesis, the school, towards the end of its first month, showed an enroll­ment of 50 boys. Thirty-five were Sephardic, from all groups, and 15 were Ashkenazic. Because of the hetero­geneous cultural and educational concepts of the sectors the educants were divided into 5 classes. They received their Jewish instruction after their \textit{primaria} schedule.

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the Colegio Israelita de Mexico, the Jewish all-day school of the Ashkenazic sector.

\textsuperscript{10}This sector also maintained from 1935 to 1939 an orphanage for 25 boys and girls. The children received their general education in the Mexican public schools and their Jewish training in the afternoon hours.

\textsuperscript{11}Rabbi Krassner, an Ashkenazic young man, was born
For the first nine months the classes were held in the house of the director. In November of the same year the school committee rented a building which was remodeled as a school house. The problem of transportation of children residing in the various colonias of the city was solved by providing bus service to and from school.

During the vacation period—in Mexico City it is December and January—the school arranged special preparatory courses in Jewish education. These drew over 100 new students. Reorganized as an all-day school, Colegio Primera Sabiduría was opened in February 1953 with 120 educants,12 of whom 85 per cent were Sephardim. However, the supplementary classes were not discontinued. In 1955 this department had an enrollment of 128 boys, divided into 6 classes which met 8 hours weekly, from Monday to Friday.13 About 80 per cent of these students, too, were Sephardim. As seen in Table VI, below, the classes were parallel ones. while those designed for the Ashkenazic children were conducted in Yiddish, the language of instruction of the others was Spanish.

and raised in the United States. He is a college graduate who majored in Education. The information about the school was obtained from the rabbi.

12 The school year in Mexico City begins in February.

13 Many children of the neighborhood come to school
TABLE VI

PROGRAM OF STUDIES OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY CLASSES
OF COLEGIO PRIMERA SABIDURIA, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>Ashkenazic Division</th>
<th>Sephardic Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G R A D E S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>T I M E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEBREW ............</td>
<td>2 .. ..</td>
<td>2 .. ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFILAH ............</td>
<td>3 2 2</td>
<td>3 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMASH ............</td>
<td>.. 3 4</td>
<td>.. 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISHNA ............</td>
<td>.. .. 2</td>
<td>.. .. ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEWISH STORIES ...</td>
<td>1 1 ..</td>
<td>.. .. ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUSTOMS AND RITES</td>
<td>2 2 ..</td>
<td>2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANTILLATION ......</td>
<td>.. .. ..</td>
<td>1 2 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL HOURS        | 8 8 8 8             | 8 8 8              |
The curriculum of both first grades stressed Jewish Customs and Rites as well as Daily Prayer and Benedic­tions, to which 2 and 3 hours, respectively, were assigned. While the Ashkenazic children enjoyed one hour of Jewish stories, their Sephardic coreligionists utilized this time to learn the elements of Cantilla­tion, a study deemed important by their parents. In the upper grades, Cantillation was taught two hours.

Humash was introduced in the second grade. The Sephardic children studied it 2 hours weekly and the Ashkenazic ones, 3. Humash was further accentuated in the next Ashkenazic class, where an extra hour was given to the study of selected portions of Rashi. In addition, these pupils were exposed to a new subject, Mishna, to which 2 hours were designated.

Like the Academia, this Colegio also maintained a seminary for advanced Jewish learning. The curriculum of this group, which consisted in 1956 of 14 boys, included Musar, Shulhan Arukh, and Humash and Rashi, to which 2, 4 and 5 hours respectively were devoted. Out of the total of 34 hours weekly, fully 23 were assigned to Gemara and Tosfot. Of these 5 were for independent study.

on Saturdays and Sundays for a minian. They spend a good part of these days reviewing their studies of the week.
The budget of the supplementary division was 46,000 pesos. The deficit, approximately 30,000 pesos, was covered by the main organization in New York and by the devotees in Mexico.

2. Jewish Supplementary Education
Among the Ashkenazim in the Capital

As we have seen, the Ashkenazic immigrants did not intend at first to remain in Mexico. Hoping to enter the United States, their stay in the land was only a pro tem arrangement. This marking time idea as well as the difficult economic conditions did not, however, result in neglect of the Jewish training of their children.

At the time, it did not even occur to the Ashkenazic parents to send their children to the katab, for the estrangement between the groups and the differences in their cultural and educational habituations were age-old and vast. Individually, religious-minded families hired a melamed, who peddled Ivri and Siddur, while others, apparently dissatisfied with that type of education, were instrumental in establishing a kindergarten.15

14Supra, p. 9.

15Very little is known about this kindergarten. The records of Nidhe Yisrael tell us only that a claim was made against the secretary of this institution, Sr. Ferski, who was accused of destroying a "reformed kindergarten,"
In 1924 the religious group of Nidhe Yisrael made an attempt to transplant the East European heder, or Talmud Torah, on Mexican soil. In an effort to solicit the cooperation of the more liberal constituents of the sector, it was agreed to give the child a better-sounding name: Bet Sefer Ivri. Another compromise was to make the school co-educational, open only from 9 until 2 in the afternoon. In addition to its traditional religious subjects the school was also to include a minimum program of general studies, it was agreed. Two teachers, at a monthly salary of 100 pesos each, were to be employed, and a mashgiah, at a salary of 75. The total monthly budget was fixed at 388 pesos. Pertaining to tuition fees, it was decided that well-to-do parents were to pay 4 pesos per month, and poorer ones, only half as much. Newly arriving families were to be exempted from paying any tuition the first month. In order that "the Torah shall not be forgotten . . . and the Jewish flame not extinguished," every member of Nidhe Yisrael was to contribute fifty cents monthly

and trying to organize instead "an Orthodox Talmud Torah." The members of Nidhe Yisrael expressed the opinion that there is no crime in destroying an "anti-religious kindergarten." See Protokoln fun Nidhe Yisrael, B' Parashat Shmot, Tro'g, and I. Kavelolom, Dos religieze yidishe lebn in Meksike, p. 5.
towards the maintenance of the Bet Sefer Ivri. 16

The day school was opened in Mexico City on December 28, 1924 at 39 Columbia Street, in the heart of the Jewish ghetto. Both in its educational orientation and its physical aspect Bet Sefer Ivri closely resembled the heder. The school furniture was cracked; the floor broken; the ceiling black; the walls gloomy, and the surrounding atmosphere noisy and depressing. 17 Since the teaching of Ivri, Siddur, Prayers and Humash, "as taught in the old world," 18 pleased neither the teachers nor the parents the committee guiding the school was forced to introduce changes in the Jewish part of the curriculum. The revised one finally included, in addition to the general subjects and daily morning prayers (which had been left in order to pacify the feelings of the religious parents), fully four languages: Yiddish, Hebrew, Spanish and English. 19 The latter was introduced for "export purposes," in case the children would eventually enter the United States.


18Advice to the teachers by the President of Nidke Yisrael. See M. Berger, "Momentn in der geshikhte fun der Shul," ibid., pp. 120-121.

19L. Bayon, loc. cit.
Displeased with the secularized Bet Sefer Ivri, the religious group of Nidhe Yisrael left the school after the fourth month of its existence. The Bet Sefer Ivri, as we shall see in the next chapter, was reorganized in 1927 as the Colegio Israelita de Mexico, the first secular Jewish all-day school in the Mexican republic, and the religious parents returned once more to the melamed and his type of education.

In 1928, Nidhe Yisrael again ventured to open a heder, offering Jewish education before or after the primaria schedule. The subjects of study of both divisions, from 9 to 12 and from 3 to 6, were: Ivri, Prayers, Humash, Customs and Traditions and some Yiddish and Hebrew writing. The heder, which started with ten children, showed an enrollment of over 100 boys and girls during the year.

Notwithstanding its comparative success, the school was closed at the end of the second year. Thenceforth the heder, or Talmud Torah, as it was later called, went through a chronic cycle of closures and reopenings due to dissension, lack of permanent school boards, shortage of resources, inefficiency of teachers and a variety of other reasons.

Information was obtained from Rabbi Jacob Goldberg, then teacher of the school, at present a grocer, and from Sr. Isaac Rosowski, secretary of Nidhe Yisrael for more than 25 years. Both reside in Mexico City.
In 1936 the school was reorganized and given a new name: Talmud Torah Yavne at Nidhe Yisrael.\(^{21}\) However, neither the reorganization nor the new name assured the life of the school . . . Two years later the Talmud Torah was closed once more.\(^{22}\) The school was opened anew in 1938 but found itself, only four months later, once again at the verge of closure.\(^{23}\) The newly elected school committee seemed to fulfill its duties more thoroughly and energetically. Its daily observing and inspecting the Talmud Torah brought improvements in many aspects of the school. The enrollment increased from 22 to 40, within a short period.\(^{24}\) In 1940, however, the school suffered again from teachers' insouciance and ineffectiveness. Time and again the children showed very poor achievement, it was claimed.\(^{25}\)

Weary of the age-long quantitative and qualitative immobility of the afternoon school, the committee

\(^{21}\)Protokoll fun Nidhe Yisrael, July 30, 1936, p. 52.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., May 29, 1938, p. 65.

\(^{23}\)Ibid., November 30, 1938, p. 66, and Feb. 19, 1939, p. 69.

\(^{24}\)Ibid., May 2, 1939, p. 71; Sept. 3, 1939, p. 73.

\(^{25}\)Minutes of the School Board, May 26, 1940, p. 124 (Archive of Nidhe Yisrael, Mexico, D. F.)
ventured a very drastic move. On November 28, 1941 it was unanimously decided to reorganize the supplementary Talmud Torah as an institution for Jewish and general learning. After 13 years of trial and error the old-time heder finally was reincarnated into a religious all-day school called Escuela Israelita Yavne.

Jewish supplementary education on the elementary plane no longer functions among the Ashkenazim in the capital. The only kind of supplementary education which still is in existence is religious, and that, too, is on a post-elementary level. This post-elementary and advanced type of Jewish education was initiated in Mexico with the establishment of the Yeshivah Etz Hayim in 1942. The Yeshivah was inaugurated with 8 students, claimed to be the first progenies of the yishuv to have studied Gemara and Tosfot in Mexico.

The Yeshivah showed considerable progress despite changes in personnel and school organization. In 1944 its enrollment was 85. Of these, 50 were registered in the regular Talmud classes and 35 in the preparatory ones, where Humash and Rashi was studied.

26 Protokoln fun Nidhe Yisrael, p. 105.

27 Colegio Primera Sabiduría, with its preponderant percentage of Sephardic students is by no means considered an Ashkenazic institution.


29 Elimelekh Dlugatsch, "In der yeshivah Etz Hayim," Der Veg, Jan. 22, 1944, p. 5.
classes were held four times a week, from 4 to 9 in the evenings and on Sunday mornings from 10 to 12.

In 1945 the study of Prophets, Customs and Rites, as well as Jewish History and Yiddish were introduced in the preparatory grades. In addition, the students were trained in synagogical services such as leading in prayer and reading the Torah. 30

Because of lack of leadership, personnel and financial means the Yeshivah was closed for several years. 31

Etz Hayim was reopened in 1949, thanks to the initiative and financial support of the Mizrahi organization in Mexico. A considerable percentage of the 50 students enrolled were Alepo Jews. 32 The latter, however, left the Yeshivah when the Academia Hebrea Sedaka y Marpe opened its own seminary for advanced Jewish learning.

In spite of the lack of leadership, adequate teachers and regular supporters, the Yeshivah managed to function. In 1953 it had 29 students in two classes. Of the weekly total of 16 hours, both classes spent one hour in Prayer and two hours each in the study of Shulhan Arukh and Musar. While Class I devoted 5 and 6 hours respectively.

30Di Shtime, Jan. 13, 1945, p. 3.

31The Yeshivah did not charge any tuition fees. It depended on donations and contributions.

32Mizrachi Lebn (Mexico), March 1, 1949, p. 8, and June 1, 1949, p. 10.
ly to Humash and Rashi and Gemara, Class II utilized these hours for the study of Gemara and Tosfot.

In 1953 the Yeshivah was open from Monday to Friday, from 4 to 8 in the evening. Its yearly expenditure, including bus service, was 30,000 pesos.

In addition to, or in competition with, the Yeshivah Etz Hayim there is the Yeshivah Or Yisrael at Yavne. This organization was organized in 1948 through the initiative of Rabbi Rafaelin of Mexico. 33

In 1953 the Yeshivah numbered 28 students, divided into two classes which met four evenings a week, from Monday to Friday. Except for the time allotment, the curriculum of Or Yisrael was identical with that of Etz Hayim. The total weekly hours of Or Yisrael were 8 in Class I and 6 in Class II.

Of this time, one hour each was allotted in Class I for Tfilah, Musar, and Shulhan Arukh. Two and three hours, respectively, were spent in the study of Humash and Rashi and Gemara. Class II devoted one hour each to Shulhan Arukh and Musar, and the remaining four hours to Gemara and Tosfot.

Like Etz Hayim, this Yeshivah does not charge any tuition. The yearly expenditures, 20,000 pesos in 1953, were covered by the Kehilah Niche Yisrael.

33 The information about the Yeshivah, was obtained from the director, Sr. David Krishtal, and the Rabbi.
3. Supplementary Jewish Education in the Mexican Provinces

Outside Mexico City Jewish education had always been left to chance and good luck. With the exception of Monterrey and Guadalajara, cities with over 100 Jewish families each, the Jewish communities in the Mexican provinces, being numerically small, had never, to begin with, planned to maintain a full-time teacher. On the other hand, no competent man had ever wanted to settle in dismal San Luis Potosi or Puebla, for example, or in the two port cities of Veracruz and Tampico, where the climatic conditions are difficult and the cultural and spiritual barrenness unbearable. 34

The Jewish communities in the provinces generally attracted a much poorer calibre of teacher than the supplementary schools of Mexico City, where most of the educators also possessed a "taytl" (pointer) rather than a "titl" (degree). . . This was especially true in the case of the smaller yishuvim. The teachers happened to come there accidentally or for quite other missions than teaching. The old man, the itinerary religious functionary, the

34 Outside the cities mentioned there did not exist, as far as we know, any Jewish schools in the provinces.
unsuccessful vendor gave lessons or kept class ad interim. Ivri, prayers and some Yiddish letter writing started with their arrival and terminated with their departure or with their abandoning teaching for a more lucrative business.

Jewish education of a more permanent and systematic nature was conducted in the two largest Jewish centers of the Mexican provinces. In Guadalajara, due to the heterogeneous composition of the community, both the Ashkenazic and the Sephardic sectors cared separately for the Jewish training of their children. Education was provided either on a tutorial basis or on a communal level—in a school house. Occasionally both groups would unite in order to maintain an afternoon school. The compromise curriculum of 1946, for example, included Yiddish, Hebrew, Jewish History, celebration of Jewish Holidays and Singing. The Sephardic children were exempt from the Yiddish class but attended all others, where the language of instruction was Spanish. The enrollment of the afternoon school fluctuated between 40 and 50 students. Its monthly budget, approximately 1,000 pesos, constituted the teachers' salary. The other expenditures were minor, since the school was housed in the Jewish center, or, as the Jewish inhabitants call it, "the club."35

35Information obtained from the school committee and
Supplementary Jewish education, in one form or another, lasted in Guadalajara until 1951, when the community established its day school: Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara.

In Monterrey, too, Jewish education was initiated through private lessons. The character of instruction, as elsewhere, depended on the Anschauung and knowledge of the teacher. As it happened the lessons were first of a cultural national type and were later changed, with the arrival of the shohet, to Ivri and prayers.36

In 1930, under the influence of Sr. Meyer Rapaport, one of the pioneers of the community, a Sunday class was organized. This session, which he conducted voluntarily, included Yiddish, Jewish stories and singing.37

In spite of the bitter economic conditions, plans were made to open a Jewish afternoon school. The organizers purchased a Torah and with the profit money of the siyum hasefer they bought the necessary school equipment. The school was opened on February 18, 1932 with 48

from Sr. A. Hazanowski, who formerly taught in Veracruz, Tampico and Guadalajara. He is at present a business man in Mexico City.

36M. Rapaport, A pekele zekhroynes, pp. 5-7. (Manuscript, Arkhiv fun der yidisher shul in Monterrey).

37J. Winiecki, Di yidishe shul in Monterrey, p. 4, Sourasky Collection.
children, divided into two afternoon classes and one kindergarten group. The curriculum of the afternoon school included Yiddish, Hebrew, Jewish History, Singing and the meaning and celebration of Jewish Holidays.\textsuperscript{38} Since the yishuv consisted of Ashkenazim only, the language of instruction was Yiddish.

While Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara did not become a day-school until 1951, the first day-school class in Monterrey was opened in\textsuperscript{1953} at the Colegio Israelita Hatikva.\textsuperscript{39} However, afternoon groups at the latter school were also continued, until 1937. In that year 28 children attended these supplementary classes.

Besides these two provincial cities which maintain all-day schools there is, at present, only one other in all the country where Jewish education of any sort is offered. The small community of Puebla, consisting of twenty families, provided Jewish training sporadically in the past and in 1953 managed to supply it once more.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38}M. Rapaport, pp. 15-18, and J. Winiecki, pp. 6-8.

\textsuperscript{39}This corrects Dr. J. Shatzky's statement in his \textit{Yidishe yishuvim in Latayn-Amerike} (Buenos Aires, American Jewish Committee, 1952), p. 152, "Oykh af der provints zaynen faran yidishe shuln, ober fun gor a kleynem farnem. Kayn tog shuln far yidishe kinder zaynen biklal af der provints nishto."

\textsuperscript{40}About the previous activities of this school see \textit{Der Veg}, Jan. 9, 1938, p. 1, and \textit{Di Shtime}, Jan. 20, 1940, p. 2. In 1953 the community consisted of 20 Jewish families.
As a modus vivendi, the school provided Jewish education on a week-end basis. This two-days-a-week school was the only alternative for the miniature Jewish community. Because of the prevailing teacher shortage in the country, no Jewish teacher was available on any other days. The present teacher commutes from Mexico City to Puebla, a trip of at least three hours each way.

The school has 15 children, divided into two groups. The curriculum of Grade I consists of Yiddish, Jewish Stories, and celebration of Jewish Holidays. The other graders have, in addition, Hebrew and Jewish History. The annual budget of the school is 20,000 pesos.

**In Summary**

The first phase of Jewish education, the supplementary one, which began as a communal enterprise in a class situation in 1917, is reaching its end.

With the exception of the small week-end school in the city of Puebla, supplementary Jewish education on the elementary level no longer exists among the Ashkenazim in Mexico. Among the Sephardim, too, the several existing supplementary classes are gradually being replaced by the all-day type.

While 3,022 Jewish children, of all sectors, attended the kindergartens and primarias of the all-day Jewish schools in Mexico in 1953, only 292 were registered
### TABLE VII

NUMBER OF STUDENTS, BUDGET, TUITION FEE AND DEFICIT

OF SUPPLEMENTARY JEWISH SCHOOLS IN MEXICO, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>TUITION FEE</th>
<th>DEFICIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elem.</td>
<td>Post Elem.</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Israelita de Puebla</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Primera Sabiduría</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia Hebrea Sedaka y Marpe</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeshivah Or Israel</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeshivah Etz Hayim</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the elementary supplementary classes. Excepting for Colegia Israeliita de Puebla, these classes are gradually being discontinued and incorporated into the all-day school departments.

Supplementary Jewish education still functions in Mexico, and will continue to do so; on the post elementary and advanced level, which is of a religious character only. This type of education is not offered in the Jewish all-day high schools or in the junior colleges.

Of the total of 118 students, 32 were registered in the post elementary classes of Academia Hebrea Sedaka y Marpe and 86 in the Ashkenazic and Sephardic yeshivoth and Talmudic seminaries in the capital. Approximately 40 per cent attended the regular classes of the Jewish all-day schools in the city.

In sum: In 1953 there were 3,790 Jewish students registered in the Jewish all-day schools and only 381 in the supplementary classes, and 29 in the seminaries; the latter devoted 34 and 35 hours a week to advanced Jewish religious learning. The annual cost of the supplementary and the full time religious education in that year was, as seen in Table VII above, 178,000 pesos.
CHAPTER V

THE JEWISH ALL-DAY SCHOOLS IN MEXICO

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Jewish all-day schools in Mexico, the second educational stage, came into existence after many years of experimentation with supplementary training. An exception to the case was Colegio Israelita de Mexico, organized by the Ashkenazic sector in Mexico City in 1924. The Bet Sefer Ivri, which the religious group of Nidhe Yisrael intended to model after the East European heder, became, contrary to the wishes of its founders, from its very inception the embryo of the first Jewish all-day school in the country.

The various experiments with supplementary education continuously failed to elicit the desired results. Sooner or later it was realized by all sectors that if Jewish learning is to mean anything at all in a country where the Jews constitute such an infinitesimal percentage, it must be offered on the all-day basis.

Like Colegio Israelita de Mexico, the second all-day school in the country, Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey, also was organized by the Ashkenazic Jews. 2

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1See supra, pp. 81 - 84.

The small Jewish community of Monterrey opened its Colegio in 1935, ten years after the Ashkenazim in the capital founded their all-day school.

These two colegios were the forerunners of the other eight all-day schools in the country. Of these, as seen in Table VIII, four were established in the forties and the remaining four in the fifties.

Regardless of their ideological differences the all-day schools in Mexico aimed, first of all, to keep the Jewish child in a Jewish environment and to protect him from assimilation and disintegration. Secondly, they tried to provide the learner with a better-organized, more efficient and effective Jewish education offered in the same school where he receives his general training.

Ideologically and educo-philosophically the all-day schools can be divided into two main types: 1) national secular and 2) national religious. To the first type, which is secular as contrasted with the other one that maintains an orthodox frame of reference and stresses religion and ritual in the curriculum, belong Colegio Israelita de Mexico; Colegio Hebreo Tarbut; Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz; Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara; Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey—all of the Ashkenazic sector, and Colegio Hebreo Sefardi and Colegio Monte Sinai of the Sephardic groups. The second
## TABLE VIII

THE JEWISH ALL-DAY SCHOOLS IN MEXICO

AND

THE YEAR OF THEIR ESTABLISHMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>Year of Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Israelita de Mexico</td>
<td>1924*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escuela Israelita Yavne</td>
<td>1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Hebreo Tarbut</td>
<td>1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuevo Colegio Israelita J.L. Peretz</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Monte Sinai</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Hebreo Sefardi</td>
<td>1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Primera Sabiduria</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia Hebrean Sedaka y Marpe</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The school was opened in December of that year.
type includes the Ashkenazic school, Escuela Israelita Yavne, and the two Sephardic ones, Colegio Primera Sabiduria and Academia Hebraea Sedaka y Marpe. In consonance with the religious convictions and behavior of the Jewish community,* the secular all-day schools in 1953 enjoyed a registration of 2,919 students, 77 per cent of all, and the religious ones only 871, or 23 per cent.

All existing schools combined, i.e., the all-day schools, the supplementary classes, the rabbinical seminaries and the Central Jewish Teachers Seminary, totaled 4,217 registrants. Of these only 1,266 (871 registrants of the all-day schools, 395 registrants of the supplementary classes of the elementary, post-elementary and advanced classes of the rabbinical seminaries) or 30 per cent, were attending religious schools, while fully 2,951 (2,919 registrants of the all-day schools, 15 students of the supplementary Colegio Israelita de Puebla and 17 of the Central Jewish Teachers Seminary) or 70 per cent, attended the national-secular institutions.

The above two types of all-day schools are further subdivided into mono-lingual and bilingual ones, i.e., those which included both Hebrew and

*See above, pp. 56 - 64.
Yiddish in the Jewish part of the curriculum and those which excluded Yiddish. The medium of instruction of all general studies in the all-day schools was Spanish.

Of the secular type, Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, Colegio Hebreo Sefardi and Colegio Monte Sinai were mono-lingual schools. The others included Yiddish in the curriculum. Of the religious type, all were mono-lingual except Escuela Israelita Yavne. The four secular bilingual schools showed an enrollment of 1,483 students, while the three mono-lingual ones numbered 47 fewer, that is, 1,436. As to the religious schools, the two mono-lingual ones had a total registration of 245 and the bilingual Escuela Israelita Yavne, 626 students.

The all-day schools, it should be noted, were all completely independent of each other. Even the colegios which shared common orientations, aspirations and goals were not united or co-ordinated. This decentralization spelled duplication of effort and needless heavy expenditures which burdened the Jewish community of Mexico City.

In the following pages the attempt is made to relate briefly the story of the Jewish all-day schools in Mexico, in the sequence of the two main types and subdivisions previously stated.
A. THE NATIONAL SECULAR SCHOOLS

1. Colegio Israelita de Mexico

This colegio was, as we have seen, the first all-day Jewish school established in the Mexican Republic. As a pristine institution it went through the trials and errors of the neophyte. From the very beginning it was faced with numerous educational, organizational and economic problems. The school building and equipment were inadequate; the teaching staff was professionally mal-prepared and the financial resources were constantly drained.3

The school was at first quite unpopular, to say the least. Time and again complaints were raised against the inappropriate school activity, inhuman treatment of children, corporal punishment and similar maladies.4 In addition, the colegio was exposed to ideological attack. On the one hand, the religious groups branded


Colegio Israelita de Mexico progressed. In 1930 it enjoyed an enrollment of 135 students. Soon it became necessary for the school to find larger quarters. When in June of that year Colegio Israelita moved away from the old section of the city, the problem of transportation became more acute. The school-bus drive brought in over 7,000 pesos, and in August of the same year a camion (bus) with the inscription Colegio Israelita de Mexico was seen for the first time on Mexican streets.  

The economic depression of the country in general in 1931 and the aggravated condition of the Jewish community because of the removal of the puestos (stands) from the public markets hit the school severely. But the instituting of a lottery, a theater benefit and a school-rescue fund-drive again normalized the budget.  

By 1932 the colegio had 223 students and it became necessary to procure another school bus. In the following year, Colegio Israelita de Mexico opened its sixth grade, thus completing the primary layer of its educational structure—the primaria.  


10 Shul-almanakh, op. cit., p. 31.  

11 See Yidishe Shul in Meksiko. Album Oysgabe likovod
In August 1935 the Jewish community of Mexico City witnessed the ceremonies at the laying of the cornerstone of the plant of the first Jewish all-day school in the country. The impressive inauguration of the first Ashkenazic communal building in Mexico, consisting of 12 classrooms and a spacious auditorium, took place in December of that year in the presence of about 2,000 persons.12

During the next year the colegio expanded its educational activity in two directions. The base of the school—the kindergarten—and its upper layer—the first class of the secundaria (high school)—were established in 1936. Two years later the school celebrated the inauguration of the secundaria section, consisting of five rooms, and the opening of the third and last class of this educational department.13

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12 This school building was constructed with funds donated by Srs. S. Rosen, M. Katz and H. Barru. A description of the "greatest peoples' yom tov in the history of the yishuv" is given in Der Vag for Dec. 24, 1935, p. 1.

13 Unzer Shul (Mexico), Sept. 1938, pp. 25 - 27. About the pressing financial and educational problems of the secundaria at that time see M. E(rgers), "A yor fun shvere nisloynes," ibid., pp. 5 - 7; and L. Bayon, "Di problem sekundarie," ibid., pp. 7 - 12.
The proclamation of a Jewish Education Month, a nouveauté in Mexico, in 1939 brought 111 new students to the colegio, as shown in Table XIV. The school population increased steadily and by 1941 Colegio Israelita had an enrollment of 641. Of these, 78 were registered in the kindergarten, 435 in the primaria, 90 in the secundaria and 38 in the newly organized comercio (commercial school). The commercial department was intended for students who wished to pursue a business career after graduation from the elementary school.

The uproar against the school in connection with the just or unjust dismissal of Avner Aliphas, a teacher and Palestinian youth leader, from the staff of the colegio in 1941, allegedly for insubordination, did not ruin the school as had been feared. This conflict, which split the Jewish community into two camps, broke the 17-year hegemony of Colegio Israelita and proved that additional


school with different educational ideologies could exist in Mexico.\(^{16}\) The establishment of Colegio Hebreo Tarbut and Escuela Israelita Yavne in 1942 did not, however, spell a diminution in the enrollment at Colegio Israelita. Contrariwise, as seen in Table XIV, this school showed an increase in 1942 of fully 110 students as compared with the year before.

With the growth of enrollment in Colegio Israelita came the expansion of its physical structure. In the troublesome year of 1941 five new classrooms were added, and two years later eleven additional ones were constructed.\(^{17}\) Since the twenty-five classrooms, exclusive of the kindergarten and workshops, proved insufficient for the 893 students in 1945, the school had to enlarge its plant once more.\(^{18}\) In order to facilitate

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\(^{16}\) About the pro and cons of the conflict see "An inisident in der Yidishe Shul ... vos darf nicht farshinef vern," (edit.), Di Shitime, May 21, 1941, p. 4; "Derklerung fun di yidische lerer," ibid., May 31, 1941, p. 2; "Derklerung fun der yidischer efntlekhkayt: Derklerung fun eltern un mitgliider komitet l'toyves der tsu." (edit.), June 4, 1941, p. 3; S. Rosen, "Der emes vegn dem sikhshukh tsvishn der Shul un dem Lerer Avner Aliphas," ibid., June 7, 1941, p. 2; "Tsu der yidisher efntlekhkayt: Derklerung fun der yidischer efntlekhkayt," Der Veg, June 10, 1941, pp. 2-3; "Shturmihe farzamlung fun der Yidishe Shul," ibid., June 14, 1941, p. 2; "Di yidische lerer tsu der yidisher zezelefschaft," Der Veg, Nov. 29, 1941, p. 5; M. Berger, "Ikh ken mer nit shvaygn," ibid., Nov. 29, 1941, pp. 5-6.


transportation, a new school bus, the eighth one, was purchased. The next year the colegio observed the inauguration of the physics, chemistry and biology laboratories, claimed to be the "best and largest in the country." In addition, the dining room, 400 square meters large, was in the process of construction.

In the same year Colegio Israelita ventured to organize a Jewish Teachers Seminary in Mexico. This educational project had a dual purpose: to solve, partially at least, the acute teacher-shortage in the country and to equip those not aspiring to enter the profession with advanced Jewish learning. The Jewish Teachers Seminary was opened in 1946 with 10 registrants, all female. The second class, added in 1947, consisted of 13 students, of whom 3 were males.

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20 Ibid., April 24, 1946, p. 4. These laboratories, accommodating 48 students at a time, were donated by Sr. P. Zeidman. The initial investment for this project amounted to 40,000 pesos. Di Shtime, Jan. 26, 1946, p. 7.

21 The dining room was built through the efforts of the Mutter Farband (Mothers Association). Undzer Shul (1947), pp. 16, 53.

22 Di Shtime, Jan. 5, 1946, p. 16.

23 Undzer Shul (1947), p. 52. The budget of this department in 1946 was 17,000 pesos and in 1947, 37,000. Since tuition fees brought in 6,000, the deficit of the Seminary was 31,000 pesos. Ibid., p. 53. In the years which followed, the students attending the
In 1948 the school celebrated the graduation of the first Teachers Seminary class, the majority of whom joined the staff of their Alma Mater as teachers in the kindergarten and in the lower classes of the primaria. In the same year another educational department, the preparatoria (junior college) was opened.

In 1949 Colegio Israelita once again found itself on the verge of ruination. This time the culprit was not a teacher but the director, A. Golomb, who had been brought down from Canada in 1944 to replace the director of the school since its establishment, Sr. M. Berger.

The new director, whose ideals coincided with the ideals of the colegio, was received enthusiastically by the Jewish community in Mexico. As a man of broad knowledge, vast experience and original ideas he soon "stimulated the Yiddish-speaking elements of the yishuv to the highest degree." His vision and initiative were largely responsible for providing the school with the Jewish Teachers Seminary and the preparatoria;


24 Pi Shtime, Nov. 24, 1948, p. 3; ibid., March 19, 1949, p. 5.


large laboratories; the spacious auditorium; over 1,200 square meters of new school buildings; the expansion of the library; the school museum; the Kremerman Fund for the publication of educational materials; the Mutefarband (Mothers Association) and the Eltern Tribune, a periodical devoted to the problems of school and home. In accordance with his educational credos: "not language but content; not about literature but literature itself; not about yidishkayt but yidishkayt proper," he initiated the extra-curricular activities such as Friday evenings, Saturday matinees, dance groups, string and drum orchestras, all aimed to activize in life that which was learned in the classroom.

Soon, however, complaints were heard that the director's program of education was rooted in the romanticism of the past, completely ignoring present-day Jewish life, its realism and actualities. Simultaneously, objections were raised about the methodology of teaching Hebrew, Bible and Jewish Literature. The susurrous charges against the director and some of the teachers became vociferous. Mr. Golomb was accused of introducing

29Ibid., p. 25.
30Protokol bukh 3 fun di pedrat-zitsungen fun der
anti-Zionist activity into the colegio; his critics said that Hebrew was not sufficiently or properly taught there; that the students were infected with exaggerated ethnocentricity, chauvinism and an "unnatural attitude to worldly culture and to the land where we reside." These ideological misunderstandings, aggravated by rumors, gossip, poor staff interrelationship, unsatisfactory interaction of personnel and school board, various acts of favoritism, quarrels among teachers, scandals and strikes were leading Colegio Israelita de Mexico to the stage of demoralization and certain collapse.
Upon the intervention of the Jewish Central Committee of Mexico, the highest representative body of the yishuv, a general parents' meeting was called and a new school board was nominated to reinstate the colegio and to guide its welfare. The newly elected board dismissed Mr. Golomb from his post and engaged Dr. B. Shulgasser to be director of the school. This action slowly brought an end to the second educational battle in Mexico.

Colegio Israelita de Mexico, of which the base—the kindergarten, primaria and secundaria—was laid under the directorship of Sr. Berger, and the top layers—preparatoria and Jewish Teachers Seminary—under the leadership of Mr. Golomb, reached its zenith under the present director, Dr. Shulgasser. In 1952 the colegio established the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature, "a branch of the National Autonomous University of Mexico with fully recognized credits for Yiddish and Hebrew studies. Thus a student can obtain his Master of Arts and Ph. D. degrees when majoring in Judaica."

34 See "Eftlekhe dërklérung fun Yidisn Tsentral Komitet in Meksike," Di Shtime, April 29, 1950, p. 3.

35 Dr. B. Shulgasser, op. cit., p. 53. This faculty was opened with 5 matriculated and 12 non-matriculated students. See S. Kahan, "Der univerzitez-fakultet bay der Yidisher Shul," Di Shtime, Aug. 2, 1952, p. 5.
Colegio Israelita de Mexico, which started out in 1925 with 51 pupils, in 1953 enjoyed a student body of 1,045. Of this total 186 were registered in the 5 kindergarten groups; 524 in the 17 classes of the primaria; 229 in the 7 classes of the secundaria; 98 were in the various divisions of the preparatoria and 8 in the graduate school.\textsuperscript{36}

The school maintained a staff of 144 persons, used 92 classrooms and miscellaneous accommodations, and had a yearly budget of 1,170,000 pesos. The total worth of the colegio was estimated at 4,000,000 pesos.

2. Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz

The conflict within Colegio Israelita de Mexico in 1949, precipitated by ideological differences and continuous personal attacks and intrigues, culminated in the creation of Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{36}The primaria had 3 parallel classes each from grades 1 to 6; grade 6 had only 2 parallel ones. The secundaria had 3 parallel classes for the third year and 2 parallel ones for the first and second years. The preparatoria consisted of the following 6 groups: Philosophy, Economics, Engineering, Architecture, Chemistry and Medicine. The students in the graduate faculty were all majoring in Architecture.

\textsuperscript{37}At first the school was named Nuevo Colegio Israelita (in Yiddish: Di Naye Yidishe Shul). However, at a meeting held by the school board on October 21, 1952 it was decided to call it Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz in connection with the 100th anniversary of the great Jewish writer whose works are extensively studied in the school. See Foroys (Mexico), Nov. 1, 1952, pp. 15 - 16.
At the meetings held in December 1949, when it became evident that there was no hope of establishing peace between the factions, it was decided to open a non-partisan school based on the same educational credos which had guided the Colegio Israelita de Mexico before the break. The new school was organized by a group of parents—of varying ideological leanings—joined with teachers who had left Colegio Israelita de Mexico or had not been re-engaged there.

Notwithstanding the various public attacks and other obstacles, the group of parents and teachers set about determinedly to execute their project. Pro tempore it was decided to open a kindergarten, 6 grades of the primaria and the first class of the secundaria:

38 J. Shaptshik, "Farvos hobn mir, eltern, geboyt a naye shul?" in Naye Yidishe Shul Yorbukh, Sept. 1950, p. 17. Point I of the statement of principles, declared at the meeting of June 23, 1953, on the occasion of the purchase of a lot for the construction of a school plant, reads:


The group had to work energetically, since the decision was made just a few weeks before the start of the new school year. The various committees went diligently about their assigned tasks. A beautiful building was rented in Colonia Lomas, one of the nicest sections of the city, and remodeled to make it suitable for use as a school house. Proper school equipment and two busses were purchased, a complete staff engaged, and by the 20th of January 1950 the new colegio was already incorporated in the Mexican educational network. The inauguration of the Nuevo Colegio took place on Sunday, February 5, and on the following day this school, like all the other colegios in the capital, was in session. Opened with an enrollment of 107 students, the school had 153 later in the year. The number of pupils increased steadily. In 1951 there were 187; in 1952 there were 261, and in 1953 the school population was 287. Of these, 73 pupils were listed in the kindergarten department; 174 in the

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41 Di Naye Yidishe Shul, Buletin no. 5, Jan 13, 1950, p. 1; ibid., Buletin no. 7, Jan. 27, 1950, p. 4.

42 A description of the hanukat habait of the colegio is given in Di Naye Yidishe Shul, Buletin no. 9, Feb. 15, 1950, pp. 1 - 3.

primaria, and 40 in the secundaria. In that year the school maintained a staff of 39 people, including 2 directors, 26 teachers, 6 general employees, 3 chauffeurs, a doctor and a secretary.

With the growth of the student body, the school building, which consisted of 16 rooms, became too small. In 1953 the school board therefore purchased a lot in exclusive Colonia Lomas for 200,000 pesos upon which to construct a school plant of their own. This project will cost about a million pesos. In the same year the budget of the Nuevo Colegio was 400,000 pesos, and its deficit was 88,000. The average annual cost of student training was 1,393.72, while income from tuition fees was 1,087.10 pesos. The average loss per student was therefore 306.62 pesos.

3. Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey

The two Jewish all-day schools outside the capital were established not as a consequence of storms and conflicts, but out of awareness of the need to keep the children in a Jewish milieu.

As already mentioned, Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey is chronologically the second Jewish all-day

44 The second class of the secundaria was opened in 1951 and the third in the following year.

45 School minutes of June 23, 1953, p. 24 (Archives of the school in Mexico, D. F.).
school established in the Mexican republic. It was organized in 1935, with 38 pupils registered in the kindergarten and first class of the primaria. Every year an additional grade was opened and in 1941 the Jewish community in Monterrey celebrated the first graduation of its all-day school.

Ten years later, in 1951, the yishuv observed the inauguration of its commodious school plant, the first Jewish communal building in the city. The value of this modern school building is estimated at 210,000 pesos.

In 1953 Colegio Israelita Hatikva had a student body of 73. Of this number, 17 were registered in the kindergarten and 56 in the six grades of the primaria. The school staff consisted of 15. The annual budget of the colegio was 100,000 pesos, and since the tuition fees amounted to only 40,000, the Jewish community had to cover a deficit of fully 60,000 pesos. However, the major problem before the school board was not how to cope with the deficit but where to procure Jewish teachers for the colegio, since the general director was leaving and the other teacher was untrained and incompetent.

46 The synagogue and the Jewish Center were built later. The Centro Israelita was inaugurated on December 13, 1953.

47 For the past year and a half the general director was this writer, who came to Monterrey in connection with this study and was persuaded to accept the post.
4. Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara

Attempts to reorganize the supplementary Jewish school in Guadalajara as an all-day colegio were made as far back as 1939. In 1945, as a result of a talk by Mr. Golomb, who visited the city in connection with the summer camp organized by Colegio Israelita de Mexico in Guadalajara, over twenty thousand pesos were raised for the purpose of establishing a day school. For various reasons, however, it was some years before the plans were carried through.

Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara was finally organized in 1951. It was opened with 72 pupils distributed in the kindergarten and four grades of primaria. The fifth grade was opened in 1952 and the last grade in the following year. In 1953 the colegio totaled 78 pupils, 21 registered in the kindergarten and 57 attending the primaria. There was a staff of 14 persons. The annual budget that year was 96,000 pesos; the annual deficit of 71,000 pesos was covered by a special school campaign and by funds from the General Campaign in the city.

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49 A. Golomb, "Guadalajarer yidn boyen a yidishe shul," Der Veg, Jan. 6, 1945, p. 7.

50 The General Campaign is Mexican Jewry's "United Jewish Appeal." The information about the day school was supplied by the general director, Sr. K. Cohen.
B. THE NATIONAL SECULAR HEBREW ALL-DAY SCHOOLS

1. Colegio Hebreo Tarbut

This colegio, mother of the Hebrew secular schools in Mexico, was established in February 1942. Colegio Hebreo Tarbut was organized by Sr. A. Aliphas, a Palestinian youth leader who was dismissed from the staff of Colegio Israelita de Mexico, allegedly on grounds of insubordination. The colegio had the cooperation of many members of all sectors, including the Zionist Organization and the Hebraist group in Mexico.

Opened with capital invested by the family of Sr. Aliphas, the school started out with 100 pupils from all sectors, divided into two kindergarten groups and four grades of primaria. While all the children attended their respective grades in the general studies, it was necessary to group the Sephardic students into special classes in the Jewish subjects, since their language of instruction had to be Spanish. Parenthetically, this was the first time in the lives of these students that they shared a bench with their estranged

51 The sum invested in this project was about 50,000 pesos. See "Grendieze fayerung fun der derefenung fun Tarbut shul," Di Shtime, Jan. 24, 1942, p. 8.

52 Ibid., April 11, 1942, p. 2.
co-religionists. It was also the first time most of these Sephardic children were exposed to Jewish secular learning.

Various attacks were made upon the school, such as that the entire project was a Don Quixotic fantasy; that the newly established colegio had no claim to calling itself "Tarbut;" that its curriculum would necessarily have to be identical with that of Colegio Israelita de Mexico, and that the specific conditions of the Jewish community in Mexico were against the Tarbut ideology. Notwithstanding these arguments, it soon became evident that the school was destined to exist. Towards the end of the first year Colegio Hebreo Tarbut had an enrollment of 178 students, a personnel of 17, a School Board and a Mothers Association which, with Friends of Tarbut, helped to maintain the colegio.

In 1953 the school enjoyed a student body of 200, in spite of the fact that a number of Sephardic children were transferred to the new Colegio Monte Sinai, founded by the Arabic-speaking Jews. In the same year the fifth grade was added and in the following one the school had a complete primaria department. With the opening

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54 Tarbut (Mexico, Rosh Hashana, R'Tash"G), pp. 13-19.

55 Der Veg, Feb. 6, 1943, p. 2. Colegio Monte Sinai was originally called "Monte Sinai Tarbut." Tarbut 1943, p. 105.
opening of the third Tarbut school, Colegio Hebreo Sefardi, in 1944, about 60 Sephardic children were transferred there and Colegio Hebreo Tarbut was finally freed of the necessity to maintain special Hebrew classes conducted in Spanish.

In 1945 Colegio Hebreo Tarbut opened the first class of its secundaria and two years later the yishuv witnessed the first graduation ceremony of a Hebrew high school in Mexico.

The school did not progress numerically, however. Its rather slow growth, 112 students in 11 years, was due to a complex of reasons. The most important ones were: lack of trained personnel for Hebrew; constant turnover of teachers; change of directors, and last but not least--the limited role of Yiddish to begin with and, even worse, its final exclusion from the curriculum in an Ashkenazic community which regards Yiddish as an integral part of yidishkayt.

56 Di Shtime, Jan. 29, 1944, p. 3. Colegio Hebreo Sefardi, too, was originally named "Colegio Hebreo Sefardi Tarbut." Tarbut 1943, p. 104. These three Tarbut schools were at first all directed by Sr. Alphæas. Plans were even made to coordinate all Tarbut schools curricularly. Di Shtime, Sept. 7, 1944, p. 1. For various reasons, this project did not eventuate. The Sephardic schools later dropped the name "Tarbut."

57 There were arduous disputations within the school board itself about the pro and con of teaching Yiddish in the colegio. See, for example, Dr. L. Brill, "Zav Hashaa," Tarbut, Sept. 1949, p. 9, and Naftali Rubinshtein, "Reshbon Hanefesh," ibid., pp. 10 - 11.
In 1953 Colegio Hebreo Tarbut had an enrollment of 290 students. Of this number 55 were registered in the kindergarten; 161 in the primaria and 74 in the secundaria. The school staff consisted of 62 persons including 2 directors, 45 teachers, 2 secretaries, 4 chauffeurs, 7 miscellaneous employees, a doctor and a nurse.

The school was housed in its own commodious two-story modern building consisting of 15 class rooms, 19 additional ones, and a large patio. The total worth of the colegio was estimated at 1,000,000 pesos. 58

The annual budget of Colegio Hebreo Tarbut was 389,900 pesos, its deficit, 165,000. The average cost of pupil training amounted to 1,344.48 pesos and the average yearly tuition fee income was 775.51. The deficit was covered by the usual school fund-raising devices, by an allotment from the General Campaign and by a subvention of the Zionist Organization, which even in 1943 considered the colegio a branch of its regular activities. 59


59 Tarbut protokol bukh 1943 (Archives of the school in Mexico, D. F.), minutes of March 13, 1943. See
2. Colegio Monte Sinai

The improved economic condition of the Arabic-speaking Jew—like that of the other coreligionists of the yishuv, due to the war situation—on the one hand, and the effect of the Jewish catastrophe in Europe on the other, were significant factors in the establishment of the Colegio Monte Sinai. The fact that a number of children from this group had already attended Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, facilitated the acceptance of the proposal made by Director Aliphas that the sector establish its own all-day school based on an ideology identical with that of the Ashkenazic Tarbut.

In December 1942 the school board acquired a large building and had it appropriately remodeled, and early in 1943 the first Sephardic all-day school in Mexico was in session. Colegio Monte Sinai was an instantaneous success. It opened with 425 students registered in the kindergarten department and in the six grades of the primaria.

Three years later the colegio ventured to extend its educational activity beyond the elementary level. A suitable building was constructed and the necessary

also Di Shitme, March 27, 1943, p. 2.

60 For a description of the official opening of the Colegio Monte Sinai see Der Verk, Feb. 13, 1943, p. 7.
equipment purchased for the establishment of a commercial high school. The comercio, which was opened in 1946, had a dual purpose. It aimed to provide the students with the skills and training needed in the field of business, and simultaneously to expose them for a period of three years more to a post elementary level of Jewish learning. For economic reasons as well as because of the lamentable shortage of Jewish teachers, the Hebrew section of the curriculum was eliminated after a year's experimentation. Jewish studies were once more introduced in the comercio in 1951 but were dropped again in the following year.

In 1953 Colegio Monte Sinai showed an enrollment of 493 students. Of this number 60 were attending the two groups of the kindergarten department; 350 were in the six parallel grades of the primaria and 83 in the three classes of the comercio. The school maintained a staff of 41 persons: 2 directors, 27 teachers, 1 secretary, 2 chauffeurs, 8 general employees and a doctor. Because of the very low salary offered, the colegio, with rare exceptions, always functioned with non-professional Jewish personnel.

The yearly budget of the school in 1953 was 222,000 pesos, and the annual deficit, 114,000 pesos. This

61 The special building and the equipment amounted to more than 30,000 pesos.
was covered by the traditional school undertakings and incomes and by a subvention from the Alianza Monte Sinai. The average annual cost of pupil training at this colegio was 450.30 pesos, the lowest cost, incidentally, for any of the Jewish all-day schools in Mexico.

Colegio Monte Sinai possessed its own spacious school plant, consisting of 20 class rooms, 5 additional ones and a large playground. The total value of the school was estimated at 700,000 pesos.

3. Colegio Hebreo Sefardi

The same factors which stimulated the establishment of Colegio Monte Sinai were also instrumental in the founding of Colegio Hebreo Sefardi by the Spanish-speaking Sephardim of the capital. Realizing that only a small percentage of the parents in this group, like the other Sephardic Jews, were willing to enroll their children in the Ashkenazic Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, both because of the social and cultural differences mentioned and because of the special classes to which non-Yiddish-speaking pupils were assigned, the sector decided to open its own school.

Inspired by--or envious of--their Arabic-speaking coreligionists, who had founded their all-day school in 1943, this group proceeded, under the leadership of Sr. Victor Babani, towards establishing a colegio.
The committee purchased a convent building, remodeled it into a school house, obtained the required furniture and equipment, engaged a staff of Jewish and Mexican teachers, and the colegio was ready for registration.

Colegio Hebreo Sefardi opened in February 1944 with 139 students distributed in kindergarten and six grades of primaria. The school, under the directorship of Sr. Aliphas, the prime mover of this colegio as well as of Coelgio Hebreo Tarbut and Colegio Monte Sinai, more than doubled its registration in the following year. The school grew steadily, both in popularity and enrollment.

In 1950 Union Sefardi celebrated the hanukat habait of a new school plant, architecturally the most modern and functional of all the Jewish day-schools in the country. In the same year the colegio made provision for extending its program of Jewish and general education. Class I of the high school was opened in 1950 and two years later this Sephardic sector witnessed the first graduation vom tov of its secundaria.

In 1953 Colegio Hebreo Sefardi enjoyed an enrollment of 653 students. Of this total 112 were registered in the three groups of the kindergarten department, 454 in the six parallel grades of the primaria and 87 in the

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three classes of the secundaria. The school, which began in 1944 with a teaching personnel of 13, in 1953 maintained 99 people: 2 directors, 67 teachers, 3 secretaries, 8 chauffeurs, 16 general employees, a physician, a dentist and a nurse. The annual school budget, which was 36,000 pesos in 1944, rose in 1953 to 624,000. The deficit of 204,000 pesos was partially covered by the various school fund-raising projects and by the subsidy of La Union Sefardi, the kehila of the sector.

As already mentioned, the colegio owned its school plant, which consisted of 22 class rooms and laboratories, 10 additional rooms, such as an auditorium, a library, a clinic, workshops, halls for dancing and fencing. The total worth of Colegio Hebreo Sefardi was estimated at 2,000,000 pesos.

C. THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS ALL-DAY SCHOOLS

1. Escuela Israelita Yavne

This escuela, the only Ashkenazic religious all-day school in the country, was established, as we have seen, after many years of fruitless experimentation with supplementary education. ⑥

⑥For a general description of the school see Colegio Hebreo Sefardi, January 1953. This pamphlet also contains a section in Hebrew.

④Escuela Israelita Yavne was organized 13 years
In spite of the warnings of the Jeremiahs and the cynics that the project was destined to failure because the Jewish community in Mexico has no need for religious education, the school committee, under the leadership of Rabbi Rafalin, Sr. Krochmalnick and Sr. Katz, proceeded determinedly with its plans.65

The old synagogue of Nidhe Yisrael on Jesus Maria Street was reconstructed and remodeled, school furniture was acquired, incorporation obtained, a staff of teachers engaged, and the school board members went to work to recruit learners for the newly organized kindergarten and four grades of primaria.66

Opened in 1942 with 56 children, the school more than doubled its enrollment within a period of one year. The unexpected growth of the student body necessitated larger quarters. In 1943 a bus to take the children to and from school was purchased and Yavne moved to its new home in Colonia Hipodromo.67 In the same year the

65 About the negative attitude of the yishuv towards the establishment of this religious school see Yitshak Krochmalnik, "Tsvey yor Yavne," Yavne (Mexico), January 1944, pp. 25 - 27.


67 Ibid., Jan. 9, 1943, p. 6.
fifth grade was added and in 1944 the school celebrated the simkha of the first graduation of its primaria. 68

The following year, notwithstanding the enormous expenditures involved, the school opened the first class of its secundaria, which was completed two years later. In 1946 Yavne, enjoying an enrollment of 322 students, was once again faced with the problem of an inadequate school building.

In July 1946 the Jewish community participated in the festive inauguration of the new, spacious school plant, erected through the generous contributions of Nidhe Yisrael and the Moshinski family. 69 In the following year the school celebrated the first commencement ceremony of its secundaria department.

The tenth anniversary of Yavne was celebrated with the establishment of the preparatoria. This costly project aimed at providing Yavne's high school graduates with a two year program of additional Jewish and general learning given in a Jewish religious atmosphere. 70


69 The late Reb Eliezer Moshinski was one of the energetic devotees of Yavne. For a description of the hanukat habait celebration see Der Veg, July 15, 1946, p. 1, and I. Fraynd, "Di sheynie fayerung in Yavne shule," Di Shtime, July 20, 1946, p. 7. The text of the cornerstone-laying ceremony is given in the appendix.

In 1953 the school showed an enrollment of 626 students. The distribution was as follows: 100 were registered in the 3 groups of the kindergarten department; 377 in the six parallel grades of the primaria; 128 in the five classes of the secundaria (the first two classes were parallel ones), and 21 in the two classes of the preparatoria.

The school, which began in 1942 with a personnel of 13, in 1953 maintained a staff of 86 people: 2 directors, 60 teachers, 4 secretaries, 6 chauffeurs, 12 general employees and a physician. The annual budget of the school, which in 1942 was 24,000 pesos, amounted in 1953 to 726,000. The deficit in the latter year—186,000 pesos—was cover by the usual fund-raisings, by the General Campaign allotment and by the subsidy of the Kehilah Nidhe Yisrael.

As previously mentioned, the school possessed its own plant, which consisted of 27 classrooms and laboratories and 14 additional facilities including an auditorium, a library, workshops, a lunchroom and a clinic. The total worth of Escuela Israelita Yavne was estimated at 2,000,000 pesos.

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71Di Shtime, June 23, 1945, p. 4.
2. Colegio Primera Sabiduría

This colegio, like Academia Hebreá Sedaka y Marpe of the Aleppo Jews, is a fledgling institution having to its credit only one year of all-day education.

As stated previously, the school organized its all-day department in the academic year 1953. Colegio Primera Sabiduría began to impart its First Wisdom to 160 learners, 106 males and 54 females. Of these children, 40 were registered in the two groups of the kindergarten and 120 in the six grades of the primaria, of which the first three were parallel ones.

While the school provided a full primaria program of general education, the Jewish part of the curriculum at pro tem paralleled only the four lower grades. Because of lack of preparation, students attending grades 5 and 6 in general studies had to be placed in beginners' classes for their general learning.

The colegio maintained a personnel of 26, namely: 2 directors, 16 teachers, 2 secretaries, 3 general employees, 1 chauffeur, a doctor and a nurse.

Colegio Primera Sabiduría was housed in two separate rented buildings, one designed for boys and the other for girls. These plants contained eleven

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72 This is the literal translation of "Primera Sabiduría," derived from the Hebrew "reshit daat." This school is also known as the "Yeshiva Chayim Tzvi." See Boletín de la Yeshiva Jayim Tzvi, Mexico, August 1953.
classrooms, and, in addition, a synagogue, offices, a clinic and two utility rooms.

The annual budget of the all-day department of this school was 126,000 pesos. The deficit, amounting to fully 90,000 pesos, was covered, as in the case of the supplementary division, by the devotees in Mexico and by the mother organization in New York.

3. Academia Hebrea Sedaka y Marpe

The Academia, as already stated, was reorganized as an all-day school after 18 years of experimentation with supplementary training. This move was brought about by the pressure of a group of parents who wanted their children to receive their general education also in a Jewish environment. Fearing that these parents might withdraw their children from the Academia and register them in the all-day classes of the newly-organized Colegio Primera Sabiduria, the school board was obliged to satisfy the wish of the group.

Over 80,000 pesos were invested in the partial realization of the project. The old school building was reconstructed and enlarged, a staff of Mexican teachers was engaged, incorporation obtained, a school bus purchased, and the Academia was open for registration.

The all-day department of Academia Hebrea attracted 85 educants, 70 males and 15 females. Of this number,
35 were attending the two groups of the kindergarten, and 50 the three grades of the primaria. The school will gradually add the three remaining grades needed to complete the elementary department.

In 1953 the Academia maintained a staff of 20 people, including 2 directors, 12 teachers, 2 secretaries, 2 general workers, a chauffeur and a doctor. The school building consisted of 15 assorted rooms and a patio. The total worth of the Academia Hebra Sedaka y Marpe was estimated at 265,000 pesos.

The annual budget of the all-day department of the Academia amounted to 50,000 pesos. Since the yearly income from tuition fees was 15,000, the school board and the kehilah were struggling to cover the deficit of 35,000 pesos.

* * *

The ten Jewish all-day schools, like the numerous incorporated private schools of the other ethnics and of native groups, come under the control and supervision of the Secretaria de Educacion, the Ministry of Educacion. Although they did not receive any subsidy or subvention from the government, they

73"... statistics on private schools are scant and untrustworthy. ... There is hardly a main thoroughfare in any sizable Mexican community without a quota of private schools, gaily advertised and on the whole well patronized." George F. Kneller, The Education of the Mexican Nation (New York, Columbia University Press, 1951), p. 89.
enjoyed all the other rights and privileges on a par with the escuelas oficiales, the public schools.

In common with the other schools of the country, the primaria, the elementary department of the Jewish all-day schools, provided six years of study; the secundaria, high school, three years; and the preparatoria, junior college, two years. While the primarias and secundarias are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, the upper divisions are controlled by the National Autonomous University of Mexico.74

The eight Jewish all-day schools in the capital, like the other colegios of the Distrito Federal, operated on the "Tipo A" system, namely, their school year began in February and terminated in November. The "long vacation" took place in December and January. The two Jewish all-day schools outside the capital functioned as "Tipo B." Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara, in the state of Jalisco, and Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey, in the state of Nuevo Leon, were open from September through June and were closed for vacation during the months of July and August.75

74 About the Mexican system of education see G. F. Kneller, op. cit., p. 93 ff.

75 See Calendario Escolar Tipo "A," 1952 and Calendario Escolar Tipo "B," 1952 - 1953 (Mexico, Secretaria de Educacion Publica, Departamento de Estadistica Escolar. 1951; 1952), pp. 3 - 5; 4 - 6. This corrects
Of the ten Jewish all-day schools, only four maintained kindergarten and primaria departments solely. Six extended their educational programs to include the secundaria level; two had, in addition, preparatorias departments, and one offered Jewish and general learning from kindergarten through university.

In 1953 there were 3,790 students registered in the all-day schools. As seen in Table IX, given below, 2,399 of this total, 1,352 males and 1,047 females, were registered in the six Ashkenazic colegios while 1,391, 734 males and 657 females, were enrolled in the four Sephardic ones. Of the total 3,790, there were 699 attending the kindergarten departments of the Ashkenazic and Sephardic schools. 452 were enrolled in the former and 247 in the latter.

The primarias showed an enrollment of 2,323 students. Of this number, 1,349 were registered in the Ashkenazic schools and 974 in the Sephardic. In the secundarias 641 educants were enrolled; 471 in the Ashkenazic and only 170 in the Sephardic. It should be pointed out that of the 170 only 87 received Jewish training, since Colegio Monte Sinai offered only a commercial course with no provision for Jewish education.

Dr. E. Shulgasser's statement in "Colegio Israelita de Mexico," published in Jewish Education, Spring 1953, vol. 24, No. 1, p. 55, that the school which he directs, "Colegio Israelita in Mexico belongs to Type B."
| SCHOOLS                                    | JARDIN DE NIÑOS (Kindergarten) | PRIMAR (Elem. Scho | S |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                           | MALE  | FEMALE  | TOTAL | MALE  | FEMALE |
| COLEGIO ISRAELITA - DE MEXICO             | 91    | 95      | 186   | 283   | 24    |
| ESCUELA ISRAELITA - YAVNE                 | 58    | 42      | 100   | 202   | 17    |
| COLEGIO HEBREO TARBUT                    | 32    | 23      | 55    | 98    | 6     |
| NUEVO COLEGIO ISRAELITA - J.L.PERETZ     | 43    | 30      | 73    | 99    | 7     |
| COLEGIO ISRAELITA - DE GUADALAJARA       | 15    | 6       | 21    | 32    | 2     |
| COLEGIO ISRAELITA - HATIKVA DE MONTERREY | 9     | 8       | 17    | 27    | 2     |
| ASHKENAZIC TOTAL:                        | 248   | 204     | 452   | 741   | 608   |
| COLEGIO HEBREO SEFARDI                   | 55    | 57      | 112   | 231   | 223   |
| COLEGIO MONTE SINAI                      | 25    | 35      | 60    | 176   | 174   |
| COLEGIO PRIMERA SABILURIA                | 18    | 22      | 40    | 88    | 32    |
| ACADEMIA HEBREA SEDA Y MARPE              | 20    | 15      | 35    | 50    | ...   |
| SEPHARDIC TOTAL:                         | 118   | 129     | 247   | 545   | 429   |
| TOTAL ALL-DAY SCHOOLS:                   | 366   | 333     | 699   | 1286  | 1037  |

* This was a commercial school. It did not have any
The preparatorias and universidad of the Ashkenazic sector had 119 and 8 students respectively. The Sephardic schools did not offer any education beyond the secundaria level. They too did not function, as did the Ashkenazic, on the horas corridas, straight through schedule, from 8 to 2:30, but on the "old time" system, from 8 to 12 and from 3 to 5 in the afternoon.  

As seen in Table X below, the Jewish all-day schools employed a total staff of 546 persons, 115 Jews and 431 Mexicans. These included 10 general and 12 technical directors. The latter were technically responsible for the general studies. The general directors were Jews and the technical directors were all Mexicans. Of the 371 teachers, only 79 were Jews, all of whom taught Jewish subjects.

76 The two all-day schools outside the capital also follow the old time schedule.

77 Two secundarias and preparatorias had special directors, ergo 12. The technical directors in the capital ordinarily did not teach class. All Jewish directors, however, served as teachers. In the larger schools they taught part time, in the smaller, full time.

78 With rare exceptions, Jews did not teach general subjects. The remuneration of the teacher of general studies as compared with the Jewish one was very low indeed. In 1948 the ratio was claimed to be 1 to 5. See Fraiwelt, "Der sikhsukh in der Yidisher Shul," "edit., April 2, 1948, p. 2."
### SHAIL-DAY SCHOOLS IN MEXICO, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLEGIO HEBRENO SEFARDI</th>
<th>COLEGIO PRIMERA SABIDURIA</th>
<th>COLEGIO ISREALITA HA TIKVA DE MONTESSY</th>
<th>COLEGIO ISREALITA DE GUADALAJARA</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexican Together</td>
<td>Jewish Mexican Together</td>
<td>Jewish Mexican Together</td>
<td>Jewish Mexican Together</td>
<td>Jewish Mexican Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COLEGIO ISRAELITA DE MEXICO</td>
<td>ESCUELA ISRAELITA YAVNE</td>
<td>COLEGIO HERREO TARBUT</td>
<td>NUEVO COLEGIO ISRAELITA J.L. PEREZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish Mexican</td>
<td>Togethher</td>
<td>Jewish Mexican</td>
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<tr>
<td>GENERAL DIRECTOR</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>TECHNICAL DIRECTOR</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TEACHERS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>ADMINISTRATION</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAUFFEURS AND HELPERS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The general directors also taught classes.

* The seccundaria and preparatoria had a special director.

* The school maintained one medical doctor and one dentist.
Due to the teacher shortage in the country, some were working as much as 10 or 12 hours a day. In addition to their given load in their respective colegios these teachers in the capital taught in the supplementary schools, in the Jewish Teachers Seminary or in the Sephardic day-schools.

The all-day schools also engaged 11 doctors and 4 nurses. The former were employed on a part-time basis and the latter served the entire school day. In addition, 35 chauffeurs and helpers and 78 general workers, all Mexicans, were on the pay rolls of the all-day schools.

Of the ten Jewish all-day schools, only three, namely, Nueva Colegio Israelita, J. L. Peretz; Colegio Primera Sabiduría and Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara, did not possess their own plants. During the time of the study, however, two of the above schools were already making plans to construct school buildings. The other colegios were very adequately housed, even according to American standards. As seen in Table XI, the schools used a total of 180 class rooms and 110

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79. The helpers guarded the lower-graders in the busses and helped them cross streets. The 35 chauffeurs and helpers were all employed in the 3 schools of the capital. The two schools in the provinces did not need any bus service.

80. The only exception was the Academia Hebreá Sedaka.
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80 The only exception was the Academia Hebræa Sedaka
### TABLE XI

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS, TEACHING PERSONNEL, CLASS-ROOMS AND TOTAL WORTH OF THE 10 JEWISH ALL-DAY SCHOOLS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO, 1953**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPTS</th>
<th>COLEGIO ISRAELITA DE MEXICO</th>
<th>ESCUELA ISRAELITA</th>
<th>COLEGIO HEBREO TARBUT</th>
<th>NUEVOColegio ISRAELITA - HEBREO-J. L. PEREZ</th>
<th>COLEGIO MONTE SINAI</th>
<th>COLEGIO HEBREO SEPARDI</th>
<th>COLEGIO PRIMERA SABIDURIA</th>
<th>ACADEMIA HEBRETA DE HATIKVA</th>
<th>COLEGIO ISRAELITA DE GUADALAJARA</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHING PERSONNEL</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS ROOMS</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER SCHOOL ROOMS</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL WORTH OF SCHOOL</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>210,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The school did not have its own building.*

**XX This included the class rooms of the afternoon department.**

**XXX This included the 22 technical and general directors.**
additional accommodations including laboratories, auditoriums, libraries, lunchrooms and the like. Most schools had spacious playgrounds and facilities for sports and recreation. The Colegio Israelita de Mexico even owned an excellent outdoor swimming pool. The total value of the ten colegios was estimated at 10,420,000 pesos.

All schools were headed by pedagogical committees which sought to ameliorate the educational aspect of the colegios. The School Boards, Mothers Associations and various other school organizations labored to guard the general welfare of their particular institutions as well as to help cover deficits.

The total budget of the schools in 1953 was 3,903,900 pesos, with a deficit of 1,213,000 pesos. As seen below in Table XII, the annual budget of the Ashkenazic schools was 2,881,900 pesos and of the Sephardic, 1,022,000. The annual deficit of the former was 770,000 and of the latter, 443,000 pesos. The average tuition fee per student amounted to 416.25 pesos among the Sephardim and more than double, 880.32, among the Ashkenazim. Similarly, the average cost of training a student was 1,201.29 pesos among the Ashkenazim and y Marpe. This rather poorly housed school was, however, renovating its building at the time this study was in progress.

The largest school libraries were owned by Colegio Israelita de Mexico; Nuevo Colegio Israelita J.L. Peretz, and Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, which had 5,500; 3,000 and 2,500 books respectively.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
<th>TUITION FEE</th>
<th>DEFICIT</th>
<th>COST TO TRAIN STUDENT</th>
<th>TUITION FEE OF STUDENT</th>
<th>SCHOOLS LOSS TO STUDENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLEGIO ISRAELITA DE MEXICO</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>1,170,000</td>
<td>970,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>1,119.61</td>
<td>928.22</td>
<td>191.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESCUELA ISRAELITA YAVNE</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>726,000</td>
<td>560,000</td>
<td>186,000</td>
<td>1,159.74</td>
<td>862.61</td>
<td>297.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLEGIO HEbreO TARBut</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>389,900</td>
<td>224,900</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>1,344.48</td>
<td>775.51</td>
<td>568.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUEVO COLEGIO ISRAELITA J.L. PEREZ</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>312,000</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>1,393.72</td>
<td>1,087.10</td>
<td>306.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLEGIO ISRAELITA DE GUADALAJARA</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>96,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>71,000</td>
<td>1,230.76</td>
<td>320.51</td>
<td>910.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLEGIO ISRAELITA HATIKVA DE MONTE -- REY</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>1,369.86</td>
<td>547.94</td>
<td>821.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,399</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,881,900</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,111,900</strong></td>
<td><strong>770,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,201.29</strong></td>
<td><strong>880.32</strong></td>
<td><strong>320.96</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLEGIO HEBREO SEPARDI</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>624,000</td>
<td>420,000</td>
<td>204,000</td>
<td>955.58</td>
<td>643.18</td>
<td>312.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLEGIO MONTE SINAI</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>222,000</td>
<td>108,000</td>
<td>114,000</td>
<td>450.30</td>
<td>219.06</td>
<td>231.23</td>
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<td>COLEGIO PRIMERA SABIDURIA</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>126,000</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>787.50</td>
<td>225.00</td>
<td>562.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIA HEBREO SEDAKA Y MARPE</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>588.23</td>
<td>176.47</td>
<td>411.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,391</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,022,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>579,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>443,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>734.72</strong></td>
<td><strong>416.25</strong></td>
<td><strong>318.47</strong></td>
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<td>TOGETHER</td>
<td><strong>3,790</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,903,900</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,690,900</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,213,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,030.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>709.76</strong></td>
<td><strong>320.05</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
only 734.72 among the Sephardim. The total average of all schools combined set the annual cost of pupil training at 1,030.05 pesos. Since the per capita tuition fee averaged 709.76 pesos, the schools were losing over 320 pesos on each educant.

During the years 1933-35 (see Table XIII) 2,392 students graduated from the different Jewish all-day primarias; 975 from the securdarias and 150 from the preparatorias. In other words: 2,392 students were exposed for 8 years (in most cases) to Jewish learning; 975 for 11 years (usually), and 150 to a total of 13 years (usually). 82 1,724 students graduated from the elementary divisions of the Ashkenazic schools; 852 completed the high school and 150 the junior college courses provided by the sector. The respective Sephardic totals were 668 and 123, for elementary and high school graduations. There was no provision by this sector for education beyond the securdaria.

82 These numbers include two years of kindergarten attendance. Regarding the percentage of those attending kindergarten, this writer obtained the following data from the administration of Colegio Israelita de Mexico:

Of the 101 first-graders of 1952, only 79 (78.2 per cent) had come up from the colegio's kindergarten. Of the 54 primaria graduates that year 41 (64 per cent) had been kindergarten pupils at the school; of the 61 graduating from the securdaria 31 (50 per cent) had attended the kindergarten of the colegio; and 33 (54 per cent) of the 61 preparatoria graduates had done so.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AÑOS</th>
<th>ASKENAZIC</th>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>ISRAELITA J.L. PERETZ</th>
<th>SEFARDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COLEGIO ISRAELITA DE MEXICO</td>
<td>ESCUELA ISRAELITA TAYNE</td>
<td>COLEGIO HEBREO TARBU</td>
<td>NUEVO COLEGIO ISRAELITA J.L. PERETZ</td>
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<td>ELEM., 'HIGH'</td>
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<td>ELEM., 'HIGH'</td>
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<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>'JUNIOR'</td>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
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<td>1935</td>
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<td>1936</td>
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<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
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<td>1942</td>
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<td>1943</td>
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<td>1944</td>
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<td>1945</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>62</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>1950</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>1951</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The first graduation of the elementary school of the Colegio Israelita de México, was in 1933, there is no record available.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICQ,</th>
<th>D. F.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEPHARDIC SCHOOLS</strong></td>
<td><strong>ASHERAZIC SCHOOLS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEHIO IS. J.L. PEREZ</strong></td>
<td><strong>COLEGIOS BIBLICOS SEFARDI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lgh 'Junior' school</td>
<td>Ele 'High' Junior school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior</strong> 'Elem.'</td>
<td><strong>High</strong> 'Elem.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>324</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** There is no record available of the number of graduates of this school for the years, 1934-1936. **Commercial School.**
CHAPTER VI

THE CURRICULA OF THE JEWISH ALL-DAY SCHOOLS

IN MEXICO

A. THE GENERAL PART OF THE CURRICULUM

As stated previously, the 10 Jewish all-day schools are incorporated in the network of the Mexican national school system. As such they necessarily are obliged to follow the program of education prescribed by the respective governing institution.

An exception in the case are the kindergarten departments of the all-day schools. Since education in Mexico is compulsory from the sixth to the fifteenth birthday, most of the kindergartens of the Jewish colegios are not incorporated. The schools utilize the two years from four to six for the purpose of exposing the child to an intensive schedule of Jewish living and learning. The kindergartner has thus been provided with a sound preparation for his Jewish studies in the grades by the time he is ready to enter them.

1"... the enforcement of this regulation is possible only where enough schools and teachers exist. ... At least 50 per cent of those entering elementary schools never complete the sixth grade.... Departments of truancy do not exist." George F. Kneller, op. cit., pp. 85 -86.

About the general organization and instruction in the incorporated kindergartens see ibid., pp. 92 - 97.

- 141 -
The general part of the primaria curriculum, which is obligatory for all incorporated schools, is as shown in Table XV below.

**TABLE XV**

PROGRAM OF GENERAL STUDIES OF THE PRIMARIA DEPARTMENTS OF THE JEWISH ALL-DAY SCHOOLS IN MEXICO, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Weekly Time Allotment (in Hours &amp; Minutes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish - - -</td>
<td>6 40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 20</td>
<td>5 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics -</td>
<td>2 20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 30</td>
<td>4 30</td>
<td>5 20</td>
<td>4 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>40 1</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography - -</td>
<td>20 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History - -</td>
<td>20 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 20</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics - - -</td>
<td>20 40</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>1 20</td>
<td>1 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Work -</td>
<td>20 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing - -</td>
<td>20 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Ed.</td>
<td>20 20</td>
<td>3 0</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music - -</td>
<td>40 40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Hours               | 1220| 12  | 19 30| 19 30| 20 30| 20 30|

As seen in Table XV, the general subjects required 12.5 and 12 weekly hours for grades 1 and 2, 19.5 for grades 3 and 4 and 20.5 for the two upper grades of the primaria.
The general part of the curriculum of the secundaria departments of the Jewish all-day schools consisted of the studies enumerated in Table XVI.

**TABLE XVI**

**PROGRAM OF GENERAL STUDIES OF THE SECUNDARIA DEPARTMENTS OF THE JEWISH ALL-DAY SCHOOLS, Mexico, 1953**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSES</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Weekly Time Allotment (in Hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography of Mexico</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Mexico</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>- - - - - - -</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The general subjects of the three classes of the secundaria necessitated 34, 35 and 38 weekly hours respectively. As we shall see, this heavy schedule crowded the Jewish counterpart of the curriculum, both in the secundaria and in the preparatoria, reducing it to 10 hours a week.

While the program of the general studies of the given departments of the Jewish colegios is prescribed for all the schools, the Jewish counterpart of the curriculum differed in accordance with the ideological background of each institution.

B. THE JEWISH COUNTERPART OF THE CURRICULUM

1. The Curriculum of the Secular Hebrew All-Day Schools

The seven all-day schools: Colegio Israelita de Mexico, Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz, Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara and Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey of the Ashkenazi; Colegio Hebreo Sefardi, and Colegio Monte Sinai of the Sephardic sectors are Jewish national worldly colegios. In contradistinction to the remaining schools, which share a religious Weltanschauung, the aforementioned ones maintain a secular frame of reference.

These contrasting conceptions and orientations found their expression in the curricula of the colegios, as well as in the general educational climate of the classrooms.
To begin with, one does not encounter in the curriculum of the secular colegios the study of prayers and rituals. Too, the students were not required to put on skull caps during the Jewish studies. The Bible, for example, was not viewed so much as a divine book given by the Almighty, but rather as a sublime literary work, the product of men, saturated with deep moral and ethical teachings, attributes which the schools wanted their educants to acquire.

Likewise, the prophets were not looked upon as godly beings, but as poets and social reformers whose great sense of ethics and justice shaped the Jewish character and ethos. Similarly, the meaningful Jewish customs and ways of life were studied not so much as a part of religious law and ritual commanded by God, but as significant elements of the Jewish cultural pattern, integral traits of the particular ethnic culture, which are deemed potent barriers against the threats of assimilation and disintegration.

While all secular schools hold these conceptions of worldliness in common, there is no consensus of opinion pertaining to the Sprachenfrage, --the question of language.

The two Sephardic secular schools, Colegio Hebreo Sefardi and Colegio Monte Sinai, consider Hebrew the sole national Jewish language. Not only is Yiddish completely foreign to these groups, but they have never
developed the slightest appreciation or regard for it. Consequently, Yiddish is not included in the curriculum.

The Ashkenazic Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, on the other hand, at first considered Yiddish "as a mighty shield against the tendencies of assimilation." In addition to Yiddish, which was included in the program of studies, a course on the History of the Yiddish Language and Literature was to have been offered in the secundaria department. Gradually, however, Yiddish was eliminated from the curriculum. Yiddish, it was argued, fulfilled a national function in the past, but has outlived its usefulness. The great bulk of the Jews in the Diaspora no longer employ it as a medium of intercommunication. As far as Yiddish literature, which reached great heights within the past half century, is concerned, its representative literati have already been, or are gradually being, translated into Hebrew.

Hebrew, the language in which is written the greatest portion of our cultural heritage from the Bible down to Yitzkhak Lamdan; Hebrew, the official language of Israel, our re-instated homeland, must become the language of the on-

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2Dr. Isaiss Austriak, "Tsilln un lern-program fun di Tarbut-shules in Meksike," Tarbut 1943, pp. 71 - 72.

3Ibid., p. 65.

coming Jewish generation. On this premise Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, like the two Sephardic schools, no longer includes Yiddish in its curriculum.

The Jewish curriculum of the primaria departments of the two Hebraic-concentrated schools was as shown in Table XVII, below.

**TABLE XVII**

**PROGRAM OF JEWISH STUDIES OF THE PRIMARIA DEPARTMENTS OF COLEGIO HEBREO TARBut AND COLEGIO HEBREO SEFARDI, 1953**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Time Allotment (in Hours)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish History</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Stories</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs and Festivals</td>
<td></td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing and Dramatics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

After the kindergarten pupil was initiated, through various media of joyful activity, into the sphere of Jewish living and behaving and had acquired a minimum working vocabulary of Hebrew, he was trained, as a first grader, in the techniques of reading and writing, better comprehension and expression. Eight hours of work and play were devoted to the acquisition of these skills. In addition, singing and story-telling, major activities of the kindergarten program, were continued in the first grade of the primaria. While one and two hours respectively were assigned these subjects at Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, the first graders of Colegio Hebreo Sefardi enjoyed only one hour of story-telling; the other was used instead for Jewish-content arts and crafts experiences.

Excepting Grade I, all classes of the primaria were engaged in singing and dramatics on an average of half an hour weekly. Before a school performance the students of these colegios, as well as of all others, devoted a goodly number of extra free hours to both materias (subjects).

Beginning with Grade II, four and a half hours a week were allotted to Hebrew language, grammar and literature. Bible, an abridged version of H'mash in the original, was introduced in Grade II and was continued in all the subsequent grades, for two and a half hours weekly.

6 The texts used were Anakhnu Lomdim (Sefer Mikra), and Bamaale (Sefer Limud Ukriah), compiled by the
From this same grade on, the students were also exposed to another new subject, Jewish history, for which two and a half hours were designated weekly. In addition, approximately thirty minutes each were given to the explanation of Jewish customs and festival practices and to the process of getting acquainted with personages of the Zionist movement as well as with Israel today.

These colegios, like all the other Jewish schools in Mexico, celebrated and observed oneg shabats and the Jewish holidays and memorial days with appropriate programs and ceremonies. Especially festive were the Sukot, Purim, Seder and Bikurim simhot. Likewise, the students of these Hebrew schools, and of all the others, contributed every Friday to the Keren Kayemet, the haraka* taking place ceremoniously each Rosh Hodesh.

The Jewish studies of these two colegios totaled eleven weekly hours. This constituted about 1/2 of the entire school schedule in Grades I and II, and about 1/3 in the subsequent grades.

Colegio Monte Sinai followed, in essence, the curriculum of the two afore-mentioned colegios. For reasons of economy and the unavailability of teachers, the schedule of the Jewish studies was reduced, as shown in Table XVIII, to one hour daily per grade.

*Emptying of the collection box.
TABLE XVII

PROGRAM OF JEWISH STUDIES OF THE PRIMARIA DEPARTMENT
OF COLEGIO MONTE SINAÏ, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish History</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Stories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing and Dramatics</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these five weekly hours, three and a half were assigned for the study of Hebrew in the two lower grades; two and a half hours in Grade III, and two hours each in the three upper grades. One-fifth of the schedule was devoted to Jewish History. Before the Jewish holidays, however, this time was utilized for learning the meaning of the holiday at hand and the customs connected with it.

Singing and Dramatics occupied an average of half an hour a week.
The educational goals and actual achievements of this colegio were far beneath those of its two sister schools.

While Colegio Monte Sinai terminated its program of Jewish studies with the primaria, Colegio Hebreo Tarbut and Colegio Hebreo Sefardi extended their Jewish educational activity to include the secundaria level.

As seen in Table XIX, four hours a week were allotted for the further acquisition of Hebrew composition and literature, and two for the study of the Prophets in the original. One hour each, on the average, was designated for Singing, Dramatics and Palestinography. The latter subject was omitted in Class III of the secundaria of Colegio Hebreo Sefardi. This hour was applied instead to the study of Pirke Avot.  

Because the curriculum contained only one language, the majority of the students of these two colegios exhibited a fairly good knowledge of Hebrew. The havarah was Sefardit.

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7 About the general philosophy, methodology and achievements of these schools see Dr. I. Austriak, "Di tsiln un lern-program fun di Tarbut-shules in Meksike," Di Shtime, Jan. 9; Jan. 26, and Feb. 2, 1943; pp. 3, 5 and 4; Avner Alpahs, "Hebreish un natsionale dertsiuung," and "Dertzuiung l'shem mah," Der Veg, Nov. 16, 1944, p. 2; March 15, 1945, p. 4; Dr. L. Brill, "Di aktivitehn fun 'Tarbut' Shule," Di Shtime, Jan. 11, 1949, p. 2.
TABLE XIX
PROGAM OF JEWISH STUDIES OF THE SECUNDARIA DEPARTMENTS
OF COLEGIO HEBREO TARBut & COLEGIO HEBREO SEFARDI, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>CLASSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish History</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophets</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing and Dramatics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since these two schools were unable to maintain a preparatoria of their own, the students had to leave their Alma Mater upon graduation from the secundaria. While some attended the preparatoria of Colegio Israelita de Mexico, the majority, partially because of the language barrier (Yiddish), entered non-Jewish schools, completely neglecting their Jewish studies.

8 It is interesting to note that in 1948, before Yiddish was dropped completely from the curriculum, Colegio Hebreo Tarbut contemplated opening a joint preparatoria with Escuela Israelita Yavne. For various reasons, however, this project was never realized. See Shul Protokol numer 25, Aug. 31, 1948 (Archives of the school in Mexico, D. F.).
2. The Curriculum of the Secular Yiddish-Hebrew All-Day Schools

Colegio Israelita de Mexico, Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz, Colegio Israelita de Guadalajara and Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterey are secular all-day schools which stress both Yiddish and Hebrew in their curriculum.

Like the schools discussed previously, these colegios strive to shape a well-integrated personality adequately prepared to participate as a useful and intelligent citizen in the socio-cultural and economic life of the native land; to share meaningfully in and to identify consciously with Jewish life and problems in the Diaspora and in the Medinah; to understand and appreciate the Jewish cake of custom and the Jewish cultural heritage both in Hebrew and in Yiddish.

The supporters of these schools are fully aware of the important role Hebrew continuously played and now plays in Jewish religious and cultural life and believe that Yiddish still fulfills a national function culturally and is a vital constituent of yidishkayt, at least in the Latin-American social climate. Therefore both
languages, expressions of and keys to the treasures of the Jewish heritage, are included in the curriculum of the schools.

As in the other institutions, the kindergarten pupil of these colegios, too, is exposed, during his two-year pre-primaria period, to an ample dose of meaningful Jewish joyous experiences; he is equipped with the educational prerequisites necessary to facilitate and accelerate his Jewish studies in the grades.9

Great emphasis is laid on the growth and development of the child's Jewishness as well as on his acquiring the rudiments of Yiddish—the language of instruction of all Jewish studies. This preparatory work is particularly important for the learner's success in the primaria. Due to the socio-economic reasons explained previously, approximately 99 per cent of the ashkenazic offspring are not raised by their mamá but by their non-Jewish nana—nurse maids—and arrive in the kindergartens with a zero knowledge of Yiddish and yidishkayt.

9 This holds true only in the case of the kindergartens in Mexico City. The two kindergartens outside the capital have neither the trained personnel nor the appropriate equipment to work with. They do, however, fulfill a limited function—that of keeping the child in a Jewish atmosphere.

10 Supra, pp. 32 - 33.
Because of the intensive preparation in the kindergarten, 96 per cent of the graduates of this department, it is said, encountered no difficulties in their primaria studies.\footnote{11}

The Jewish counterpart of the curriculum of the primarias of the Yiddish-Hebrew colegios was, in 1953, as shown below in Table XX.

As seen in this table, nine hours per week were assigned in Grade I for mastering the elements of reading and writing Yiddish and for acquiring correct usage of the language through the medium of stimulating work and play. In addition, the first graders enjoyed two hours of Bible stories and appropriate folk tales as well as an hour of singing.\footnote{12} The story period was continued through Grade III and Singing and Dramatics through all grades of the primaria.


\footnote{12} About the curriculum, methodology and actual achievements of this grade see E. Kovalsky, "Der ershtar klas bey undz in shul," Unzer Shul, Sept. 1937, pp. 42-44;
### TABLE XX

**PROGRAM OF JEWISH STUDIES OF THE PRIMARIA DEPARTMENTS OF COLEGIO ISRAELITA DE MEXICO AND NUEVO COLEGIO ISRAELITA J. L. PERETZ, 1953**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>GRADES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Time Allotment (in Hours)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yiddish</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hebrew</strong></td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bible</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jewish History</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jewish Stories</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singing and Dramatics</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commencing with Grade II, five hours were designated for Yiddish language, grammar and literature. Upon graduation from the primaria the students were quite familiar with the characteristic short stories and poems of the representative Yiddish literati.

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13 About this *limud* see I. Rotenberg, "Arum dem Yidish-
Hebrew was introduced in Grade II and was continued through all the grades of the primaria. Four and a half hours were assigned for this study. In Colegio Israelita de Mexico more emphasis was laid on the acquisition of language, while at the Nuevo Colegio Jewish content was stressed. This limud was supplemented by Bible, to which two hours were devoted. While the children of Colegio Israelita were bent, beginning with Grade III, over the abridged Humash in the original, their co-students at Nuevo Colegio mastered it in the Yiddish translation, learning only selected psukim in Hebrew. The actual result of the Hebrew limud, whether acquired through the medium of a modern crestopathy and


For the general philosophy of Jewish education of this school as well as for an outlined program from kindergarten through preparatoria see Program fun der Yidisher Shul in Meksike, May 1949. This program was prepared by A. Golomb, then director of Colegio Israelita de Mexico.

in the havarah Sefardit as at Colegio Israelita, or through the medium of Humash and Agadah in the havarah Ashkenazit, as at the Nuevo Colegio, ranked rather low in comparison with the achievements in Yiddish.

The materials Customs and Traditions and Israel, not enumerated in Table XX, were acquired indirectly in connection with the study of Literature, Bible and History. Two hours were allotted to the latter subject in the lower grades and three in the upper ones.  

The two colegios outside the capital, Colegio Israeli-ta de Guadalajara and Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey, basically followed the curriculum of their kindred institutions in Mexico City. The schedules of their Jewish studies were curtailed, however, to eight hours a week, due to reasons of economy and shortage of teachers.

(In view of this situation, the planning of some parents to provide general and Jewish education on the post-primaria level in Monterrey seems quite unrealistic.)

While in these two colegios Jewish training terminates with the primaria, their sister schools in the capital extended a full program of Jewish education beyond the boundaries of the elementary niveau.

The curriculum of the secundarias, it will be seen in Table XXI, embraced three hours of Yiddish, which included composition and literature. In the literature period the students were made acquainted not only with short stories and poems but also with sforim, whole works, of the representative Yiddish writers such as Sholem Aleichem, Asch, Singer, Leivick and others.

The mastered novelles, poems, dramas and novels served as the motif for the year-end grandiose performances which have become traditional in all Jewish colegios in Mexico.

The compositions were, on the whole, very impressive. See especially the Talmidim Shrift, Yidishe Shul in Meksiko, August 1946; Talmidim Shrift, Naye Yidishe Shul, Dec. 1950 and Dec. 1951, which contain a collection of interesting compositions on literary, Biblical and historical themes, from Grade I primaria through Class III of secundaria.


At one of the major school-end performances of Colegio Israelita de Mexico in 1953, for example (the
TABLE XXI

PROGRAM OF JEWISH STUDIES OF

THE SECUNDARIA DEPARTMENTS OF COLEGIO ISRAELITA

DE MEXICO AND NUEVO COLEGIO ISRAELITA J. L. PERETZ, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>CLASSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophets</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish History</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Time Alloted (in Hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three hours were designated for the further learning of Hebrew, and two hours each for the study of Jewish History and Prophets. In the Nuevo Colegio Israelita the Prophets Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah were studied in Classes I to III respectively. As in the case of Humash, the Prophets, too, were mastered in Yiddish. Only characteristic passages were studied in the makor and committed to memory.

With the secundaria training Nuevo Colegio Israelita terminated its general and Jewish educational activity. Some of the graduates entered the preparatoria of Colegio Israelita de Mexico. The majority, however, were

school had more than one siyun performance), note the participation of 240 students outfitted with special costumes and paraphernalia. The ballets of the show were under the direction of the maestro of La Scala Opera of Milan. Der Veg, Nov. 14, 1953, p. 6.

19 Talmidim Sh rift, Naye Yidishe Shul, Dec. 1953, p. 46.
dispersed among the various non-Jewish institutions of higher learning.

The Jewish program of the preparatoria of Colegio Israelita de Mexico directly continued the work of the secundaria. Of the ten hours allotted weekly to Jewish learning, two and a half hours each were designated for Yiddish and for Hebrew Language and Literature. In this department, too, the level of the Hebrew studies was far below the Yiddish. While the translation of simple stories constituted the content of Hebrew Literature, Leivick's "A Khasune in Ferenwald" and the "Maram fun Rutenberg" were discussed and analyzed in the study of Yiddish Literature.

In addition, two hours were given to Jewish History, two to Minor Prophets and one to the Development of the Yishuv in Israel.20

Colegio Israelita de Mexico is the only Jewish institution in the country or on the entire Latin American continent to offer general and Jewish education on the university level. Whether it is practical or even desirable to maintain a graduate faculty for eight

20 As far as textbooks for all the departments are concerned, the school previously used texts published in Europe. With the destruction of the Jewish centers there, the Colegio began compiling or republishing these Yiddish and Hebrew editions. To date Colegio Israelita de Mexico has published 23 texts. The present tendency for all the schools is to use textbooks issued in the States and Israel.
students, particularly when there is no discrimination in the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and where there is a Catedra for Hebrew Culture, instituted and supported with Jewish funds, is debatable.

While some consider the establishment of this universidad an unmistakable example of the extravagant waste pattern of the yishuv, others go even further and see this act as a conscious attempt at cultural isolation which may bring forth unpleasant consequences. The patronato of the University at Colegio Israelita de México is convinced, however, that this faculty will give great prestige to the Jewish community at large and will serve as a mighty stimulant to the development of Jewish education in the country.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that Colegio Israelita maintained this graduate department and in 1953 offered a complete curriculum in Architecture with a

21 The Faculty of Philosophy and Literature did not attract any aspirants in its second academic year. Girls in Mexico, as already mentioned, usually marry at the age of 18, and boys are too practical to engage in studies which don't yield good incomes. The 8 students registered in 1953 were majoring in Architecture, a good field in an expanding economy.

22 The Catedra, established in 1947, accredits doctorates. The first Ph. D. degree was given in 1952 to an American Jewish student. The thesis dealt with Hebrew Literature in the Golden Epoch in Spain.
program of Jewish training of seven hours a week. The Jewish studies included two courses: The Jews in the World of Literature, Music and Art, and Jewish Social, Cultural and Economic Problems.

3. The Curriculum of the Religious All-Day Schools

a. The Curriculum of the Sephardic Schools

The two ultra religious all-day schools, Colegio Primera Sabiduría and Academia Sedaka y Marpe are young institutions, both established in the academic year of 1953. As stated previously, Academia Sedaka y Marpe maintained a kindergarten and three grades of primaria, and Colegio Primera Sabiduría—a complete primaria department for general learning along with four corresponding grades for Jewish education.

The process of imbuing the learner with and initiating him in the strict tradition of Jewish living and behaving started in the kindergartens of these schools. Although the physical surroundings of these institutions were inadequate and rather gloomy, the youngsters seemed quite elated listening to stories of the Creation of the first Senor and Senora; reciting little rezos* and benedictions; playing games or coloring the angels watching over the Garden of Eden, and the like.

*Prayers

23 The time alloted for Jewish activities was from 9 - 12 A. M. Unlike the Ashkenazic children, these returned to school at 2 and spent 3 additional hours with the Spanish teachers.
The Jewish curriculum of the primaria grades of these fledgling schools was as seen in Table XXII below.

TABLE XXII

PROGRAM OF JEWISH STUDIES OF THE
PRIMARIA DEPARTMENTS OF COLEGIO PRIMERA SABIDURIA
AND ACADEMIA SEDAKA Y MARPE, 1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Time Allotment (in Hours)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tfilah</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humash</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shulhan Arukh</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemara</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantillation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs and Rites</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Stories</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table XXII the first graders spent three hours in acquiring the techniques of Hebrew reading, writing and some translation, and seven hours in mechanical reading of the Siddur. Three hours were allotted to Customs and Rites and two hours to the telling of Biblical and Jewish religious and Hasidic stories.
Cantillation, and Humash in the original were introduced in Grade II.\textsuperscript{24} The former subject was studied two hours, the latter—four. The language of instruction was Spanish. In addition the children devoted six hours to Siddur, two hours to Customs and Rites, and enjoyed one hour of Jewish stories weekly.

Humash study was intensified in Grade III. Fully seven hours were devoted to this limud. Tfilah required four hours and Cantillation two. One hour each was assigned for Customs and Rites and for Jewish Stories.

The fourth graders of Colegio Primera Sabiduría were initiated carefully into the Yam Hatalmud. Five hours were designated to the study of Gemara. Another new subject introduced in this grade was Shulhan Arukh, which was assigned the hour previously devoted to Customs and Rites. The previous materials Humash (in this grade with selections from Rashi), Tfilah and Cantillation were continued for a period of five, three and one hour respectively.

In contrast to the other all-day schools, these institutions were not closed on Saturdays and Sundays. The upper graders, as well as the students of the supplementary divisions, devoted the weekend to prayer, to review of Jewish learning and to the celebration of...

\textsuperscript{24}The students of this grade, as well as of the following ones, had previously attended the afternoon classes of these schools.
Shalosh Sëudot. The Jewish departments of these schools were also in session during the official vacation periods, when the general studies were interrupted.

b. The Curriculum of the Ashkenazic Religious All-Day School, Escuela Israelita Yavne

Escuela Israelita Yavne is the only religious Yiddish-Hebrew all-day school in the country. It aims to provide the learner with the ample general knowledge necessary in the world of affairs and with a thorough Jewish training rooted in traditional Torah Yidishkayt.

The process of shaping a Jewish national and religious personality imbued with proper understanding and appreciation of the Sefer, identification with Am Israel and Eretz Israel, and with positive attitudes and the inclination to live in accordance with the unshakable principles of the Jewish law and traditions, begins in the kindergarten department of this escuela.

Through the media of songs, stories, games and various activities the children are gradually initiated and involved in Jewish religious living and acting. The kindergarten pupil learns, for example, to wear a skull cap, to put on tzitzith, to recite short daily prayers, the necessary brahot before partaking of food, and the customs and meaning of Jewish holidays presented on a level appropriate to the child's developmental stage. Simultaneously, the child acquires, during the two year period of play and work, a minimum functional Yiddish vocabulary.
The activities of the kindergarten were continued and, as expected, greatly intensified in Grade I of the primaria. As seen in Table XXIII, below, four hours were allotted equally to Jewish Stories, Customs and Traditions, Short Prayers and Singing. The remaining six hours of the Jewish program of studies were assigned to the acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and speaking Yiddish, the language of instruction of the Jewish studies.

TABLE XXIII

PROGRAM OF JEWISH STUDIES OF THE PRIMARIA DEPARTMENT
OF ESCUELA ISRAELITA YAVNE, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tfilah</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs and Traditions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Stories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Jewish History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing and Dramatics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hebrew was introduced in Grade II. Three hours were given to this subject in all succeeding grades excluding the last one, where it was studied one hour more. The study of Customs and Traditions was continued in this and all other grades of the department. One hour was assigned to Tfilah and half an hour each to Jewish Stories and to Singing.

Beginning with this grade (II), Yiddish was drastically curtailed. Only three and a half hours were allotted to the subject in grades II and III. The time for Yiddish was further reduced in the three upper grades of the primaria. Two and a half hours each were allowed for this materia in grades IV and V, and only two in Grade VI. In comparison with Colegio Israelita de Mexico and with Nuevo Colegio Israelita, the study of Yiddish and Yiddish literature was on quite a low level in this school.

From Grade III on, the schedule for Jewish studies was increased to 15 hours a week. The additional time was utilized for the limud of the Bible in the original, which was viewed as Torah m'Sinai. Humash was introduced in Grade III, and was studied in all the subsequent grades, with short selections from Rashi, four hours a week. The three upper grades were, in addition, engaged in learning the Early Prophets, to which two hours more were devoted per grade.
Jewish History and knowledge of Israel were acquired in conjunction with Bible. As a separate materia it was initiated in the last grade of the primaria. Beginning with this grade, too, the students were required to keep a double set of Hebrew pronunciations. While Bible and Prayers were continued as before, in the havarah Ashkenazit, the subject Hebrew was pronounced in the havarah Sephardit. This double system of pronunciation, it was claimed, would enable the student to participate in the synagogical services, yet not estrange him from the language of the Medinah.

While in the two lower grades Tfilah consisted of or reciting mechanical reading, in the upper ones it was briefly explained or translated in toto. Two hours was assigned to this limud in each of grades III to VI. In this last grade it was a part of homework, which was but controlled in class, on the average of a half hour per week. All upper grade pupils were expected to recite morning prayers before partaking of food, as well as evening prayers, at home.

The Jewish curriculum of the secundaria department of this escuela was, as seen in Table XXIV, a direct continuation of the primaria work.

25 This innovation was introduced in 1948. See Di Shtime, Dec. 18, 1948, p. 7.
TABLE XXIV

PROGRAM OF JEWISH STUDIES OF THE SECUNDARIA DEPARTMENT
OF ESCUELA ISRAELITA YAVNE, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
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<td>Bible</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish History</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Ethics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs and Traditions</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in the above Table, the only new subject introduced in the curriculum was Musar Hayahaduth—Jewish ethics. This study, based on selected passages of the sages, rabbis and religious thinkers through the ages, dealt with the problems of man's proper conduct on earth; his rightful duties to his fellow man and to his Creator. One hour a week was assigned for this limud per class.26

26 The material was selected by Sr. Zelig Shifmanowich, general director of the school since 1944, and distributed to the students on mimeographed sheets.

Sr. Shifmanowich was the first professor of the Catedra for Hebrew Culture at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Di Shtime, March 22, 1947, p. 8.
Two hours each were designated in all classes of the department to Yiddish and Hebrew, which included: Grammar, Composition and Literature. As in the primaria, in the secundaria, too, literature was not the tour de force of the school.

Jewish History, which in essence accentuated God's omnipotence and sovereignty in the world and His particular Hashgaha and relationship with the children of Israel, was studied one hour and a half weekly in each class.

To Bible, which consisted of a rapid review of the Sidra, selected chapters of the Minor and Major Prophets and the Megilloth, was allotted three hours per class. The texts were translated into Yiddish and characteristic Psukim were committed to memory.

An average of half an hour a week was assigned to the further study of Customs and Tradition. On the secundaria level this included, among others, the dinim relating to the feast and fast days, as well as the meaning and order of the prayers recited on those days.

While Cantillation is not listed in Table XXIV, the escuela maintained a special class where each student is adequately prepared for Bar Mitzvah. 27

27 This special class was established in 1949 in order that the student, upon reaching 12½, would not need to look for a "Haftirologist." Di Shtime, July 30, 1949, p. 2.
The Jewish studies of the secundaria were continued and intensified in the two classes of the preparatoria. The ten weekly hours assigned for Jewish learning followed the same distribution as in the secundaria department. Two hours each week were designated for Yiddish and Hebrew, Language and Literature, three hours to Bible, and one and a half hours to Jewish History. The new subject, Introduction to Jewish Religious Philosophy, was basically a melange of Jewish Ethics and Customs and Traditions, studied in the secundaria. This limud, to which an hour and a half were devoted, was, however, extended, reviewed and new-viewed in the preparatoria.

28 About the Youth organizations at Escuela Israelita Yavne see Mizraki Lebn, Mexico, Jan. 25, 1949, p. 10; ibid., March 13, 1950, pp. 7, 10; Yavne Journal (aroysegebn fun der Shule Yavne), April 1950, pp. 9-12; ibid., May and June 1950, pp. 9-10, 13-14.
CHAPTER VII.

THE STATUS OF JEWISH TEACHERS IN MEXICO

A. IN ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

Qualified Jewish teachers are in great demand and are not easily obtainable even in the United States, the largest Jewish concentration, which does have teachers colleges and seminaries.¹ To the small Jewish community in Mexico the problem of teacher shortage was chronic. Before Hitler's massacres, however, both Colegio Israelita de Mexico and Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey, the two all-day schools then in existence, relied on the East European teachers seminaries to supply them with the needed personnel.²

The destruction of the Jewish centers in Europe on one hand and the pari passu growth of Jewish all-day schools in the country on the other made the problem of teacher exigency more acute. As a modus vivendi the local potentials were sought out and drafted to fill the


vacancies. Most of the neophites, however, brought to their posts good intentions and willingness to work instead of organized Jewish learning and general pedagogical preparation.

The experimental practice of engaging teachers from the United States or, lately, from Israel, was not and still seems not to be the optimum solution either. Not an inconsiderable number of the imports did not, for various reasons, acculturate at all in the socio-cultural milieu of the Jewish community. Of those who attempted to remain in the country for a year or so the majority adjusted themselves somehow to the upper grades of the colegios but not to the lower ones, because of the impediment of the Spanish language. Importing teachers and securing permission for them to work in the land was a very costly and difficult undertaking which brought little profit, for the educational accomplishments of the educator-on-the-go were quite minimal.

The idea to establish a Jewish teachers seminary in Mexico, which at first seemed very illusory, found realization in 1946. Established largely thanks to the insight and the foresight of Director Golomb, the Seminary was opened at the Colegio Israelita de Mexico with ten female students. In the following year the enrollment
rose to twenty-one, and in 1948 the Jewish community witnessed the graduation of the first Jewish teachers born and raised in Mexico. During the years 1948-1951, twenty-three students, all females, completed the three year course at this Seminary. Fifteen of the graduates joined the staff of their Alma Mater.

In 1952, the Vaad Hahinuh, consisting of the representatives of Colegio Israelita de Mexico, Escuela

3"Vos azoyns iz der Yidisher Lerer-Seminar bay der Yidisher Shul in Meksike?" Undzer Shul, 1947, pp. 51-52. The annual budget of the Seminary was 17,000 pesos in 1946 and 37,000 in 1947. Since only 6,000 pesos came in from tuition fees, the Seminary faced a deficit of 31,000 pesos. This was partially covered by contributions. Ibid., p. 53.


5Dr. Bernard Shulgasser, op. cit., p. 58.

6The Vaad Hahinuh was organized in 1951 for the purpose of attempting to coordinate the budgetary aspect of the 4 Ashkenazic colegios in Mexico City. Since, for various reasons, the General Campaign (from which the Ashkenazic schools receive percentages) was not conducted that year, the Vaad Hahinuh launched a special campaign for Jewish education. The leader of this campaign was Rabbi Raffalir. The Vaad Hahinuh is no longer in existence.
Israelita Yavne and Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, established a Central Jewish Teachers Seminary.\(^7\) This Seminary, which opened with nine students, totaled seventeen in 1953. It is significant to note that of the above number only one, a refugee, was a male. Native males, like their fathers, prefer to be in business for themselves. They also aspire to more lucrative fields than teaching. The annual budget of the Seminary, about 60,000 pesos, had to be covered by the farvaltung, since the institution did not charge any tuition fee.\(^8\)

\(^7\)Colegio Hebreo Sefardi did not participate in the project largely because the language of instruction of the Seminary is Yiddish. This colegio contemplates sending 2 outstanding graduates of its secundaria each year to Israel to study in a seminary there. After graduation the students would join the staff of their school. \textit{Di Shtime}, June 7, 1952, p. 2.

Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz did not join the farvaltung of the Seminary because it did not want to have anything to do with the representatives of Colegio Israelita de Mexico. The latter reciprocated the identical feelings.

The remaining colegios were not considered since they maintain only primarias.

Colegio Israelita de Mexico gave up its Seminary in 1953, after it was certain that the Central one would continue to function.

\(^8\)The deficit was partially covered by subsidy from the General Campaign and by private contributions.
The Central Jewish Teachers Seminary was planned to provide all colegios of the yishuv with teachers, at least for the lower grades of their primarias.

As seen in Table XXV below, exactly half of the 24 hours of study a week were devoted to Bible and Hebrew. Six hours were assigned for Humash and Nevi'im and six for Hebrew language and literature.

TABLE XXV

PROGRAM OF STUDIES OF THE CENTRAL JEWISH TEACHERS SEMINARY IN MEXICO CITY, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Weekly Time Allotted (in Hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish History</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Crafts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(includes Theatre Arts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Hours: 24

Yiddish Language and Literature and Jewish History were studied three and two hours respectively. Of the remaining seven hours, four were allotted for Psychology and
History of Education, and one each to Arts and Crafts, Singing and School Theatre Arts, and Palestinography.

The projected four year course, the last year being devoted to supervised teaching in the colegios, will possibly be supplemented by a six months stay and study period in Israel. Such a plan has already been tried, by the earlier Seminary of Colegio Israelita de Mexico. 9

Although the actual Jewish and general knowledge of these new teachers is rather limited as compared with the better-trained older maestros, it is claimed that they do quite well in the kindergartens and in the lower grades of the primarias. 10

While the Seminary has been instrumental in alleviating the teacher shortage in the country, the problem is still far from being solved.

9 In 1951 Colegio Israelita de Mexico sent three of its Seminary graduates for a six months stay in Israel. The project, which eventuated through the cooperation of the Jewish Agency and the Keren Kayemeth Bureau in Mexico, aimed to improve the students' knowledge of Hebrew as well as to acquaint them with Israel in general. About the results of this study trip see their "Ayndrukn fun a shtudium-rayze kayn Yisroel," Undzer Shul, 1952, pp. 18 ff.

B. SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE JEWISH TEACHERS

During the summer of 1952 this writer conducted a survey of the Jewish educators in Mexico, using the questionnaire method. Of the 83 questionnaires distributed, to all directors and teachers of the colegios, 74 responded—34 male practitioners and 40 female. This constituted approximately 89 per cent of the total number of people in the profession.

Pertaining to the country of origin of the group, it was revealed, as shown in Table XXVI below, that 28 originated in Poland, 19 were from Mexico, and 10 from Lithuania. Twelve persons stemmed from Aleppo, Israel and Russia (four from each). Two came from Damascus and one each from the Argentine, England and the United States. It is significant that 28 of the 74, or 31.5 per cent, received their training in Mexico.

The age distribution of the practitioners (see Table XXVII) was as follows: More than half (39) were below the age of 30; sixteen were between 31 and 42; eleven were between 43 and 48, and eight between 52 and 60.

As to their civil and marital status, it was learned that 31, about 42 per cent, enjoyed Mexican citizenship. Sixty persons, approximately 81 per cent, were married.
TABLE XXVI
CLASSIFICATION OF 74 JEWISH TEACHERS IN THE
REPUBLIC OF MEXICO IN 1952 ACCORDING TO
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleppo</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 74

Forty-six schoolmen, it was further revealed (see Table XXVIII below), were working on the same position from 1 to 6 years. Twenty had held their present post from 7 to 10 years, and eight, from 11 to 16. The fact that the teachers remained in the same schools does not at all imply that they were happy on their jobs. This was due rather to the fact that there are so few colegios to turn to. Moreover, such a move would be misinterpreted by the small Jewish community, which breeds rumor and gossip.
TABLE XXVII

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF 74 JEWISH TEACHERS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO, 1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 - 20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 25</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 37</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 - 42</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 - 48</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 - 60</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pertaining to the educational status of the group, it was revealed, as seen in Table XXIX, that 9 of the teachers had completed high school. Of these, 7 were graduates of a Hebrew gimnazia abroad and 2 of the local Colegio Hebreo Tarbut. Twenty-six held diplomas from teachers seminaries: 16 from Colegio Israelita de Mexico, and 5 and 4 respectively from Hebrew and Yiddish institutions in Europe. Seven were college graduates and 2 were ordained rabbis. The remaining 31 had received training in yeshivoth, in Jewish secular institutions, or privately.
TABLE XXVIII
CLASSIFICATION OF 74 JEWISH TEACHERS IN THE
REPUBLIC OF MEXICO IN 1952 ACCORDING TO
NUMBER OF YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE XXIX
EDUCATIONAL TRAINING OF 74 JEWISH TEACHERS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO IN 1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number Graduated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Hebreo Tarbut</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Seminary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Israelita de Mexico</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeshiva</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only three of the seventy-four practitioners have endeavored to gain additional Jewish or general knowledge related to their métier. This professional indifference is explained by the fact that more than half of the group, twenty-one males and twenty-six females, intend to give up teaching within the next three years and go into business.11

To turn to the socio-economic status: While the salaries of the Jewish teachers varied from one colegio to another, the pro rata remuneration of the Jewish maestro was on the whole three or four times as high as that of his Mexican co-practitioner. The variant salary scales of the groups must be viewed, first, by the divergent standards of living of the schoolmen and, secondly, by the existing shortage of Jewish teachers, who are thus put at a premium. The Mexican teachers, it should be noted, receive a higher wage in Jewish colegios as compared with the wages paid in the government schools.

Notwithstanding his comparatively high salary, the Jewish teacher’s economic position is far from enviable.

11 Some of the best teachers in Mexico had given up their jobs in the colegios and opened shops and stores. This practice is also not uncommon among the directors. The previous directors of both Colegio Monte Sinai and Colegio Israelita de Mexico exchanged their posts for stores and shops. The latter, as previously mentioned, founded the school and directed it for a period of 20 years. The director of Colegio Hebreo Sefardi and the present director of Colegio Monte Sinai maintain business establishments and plan soon to leave their positions in the schools.
Approximately 39 per cent had to seek all kinds of extra work, not to keep up with the neighboring Jewish parvenu but simply to keep the family budget straight.

As far as economic security is concerned, the Jewish teacher does not enjoy any tenure of office. Neither has he any economic protection in case of sickness, nor can he dream of retirement with a pension. He is only secure in that he has his "daily bread" all year round, since the colegiatura (tuition fee) in all private schools of the country is payable for the full twelve months. He generally gets his check before the colegio closes for vacation.

The social position of the Jewish teacher in Mexico is quite low. It is claimed to be even lower than the status of his coreligionist in the States. This is attributed to the nouveau riche psychology of the yishuv, which evaluates a person in accordance with his ability to waste. Since the Jewish teacher did not amass any riches during the war period, he is ipso facto considered a shlimazl, a batlen and a nonentity.

12 The question of sick benefit and old-age pension, which the Mexican teachers enjoy, has never even been discussed in the Jewish community. See Solomon Kahan, Meksikaner Viderklangen, op. cit., pp. 36 - 37.

13 Ibid., pp. 84; 86.
In addition, the Jewish teacher, the proletarian of the yishuv who, in contradistinction to his fellow Jews, earns his livelihood directly from Israelitas, is the target of all sorts of rumors, gossip, intrigues and discourtesies.\textsuperscript{14} This writer was not at all surprised to learn that fully 69 practitioners in the field of Jewish education, approximately 93 per cent, declared that they would not counsel their children to become Jewish teachers anywhere, and especially in Mexico.

\textsuperscript{14} A. G/olomb/, "Vos men zeyt un vifl men shnaydt," Naye Yidishe Shul, 1952, p. 30, and A. Lerer, "Der yidishen leren iz shuldik," Undzer Shul, 1945, pp. 59-61. At the graduation ceremonies of Colegio Israelita de Mexico the Farvaltung, the representatives of the Mothers Association and the delegates from the important local organizations are seated on the stage, but not the teachers. See Dr. Isaías Austri-Dan, "Dos meg oykh farikht vern!" Di Shtime, December 3, 1952, p. 3.
CHAPTER VIII

A CONCLUDING CHAPTER

A. SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

The Jewish community in Mexico is a relatively young one. The nuclei of its communal life started in the first decade of this century among the Sephardic immigrants and a decade later among the Ashkenazic group. The total Jewish population in the Republic of Mexico is estimated at about 20,000 people. Of this number, approximately 17,000 are concentrated in Mexico City and the remainder are dispersed in the various cities of the country. The largest concentrations outside the capital are Monterrey and Guadalajara, with over 100 Jewish families each.

The age composition of the community points to its possible growth in spite of closed immigration. Only 30 per cent have passed the age of forty-six. Approximately 52 per cent of the total Jewish population are Mexican-born.

After a period of hardship and struggle the immigrants carved out for themselves a quite comfortable niche, economically speaking, in the new land. A
characteristically disproportionate number of the Jewish population in the country, about 80 per cent, is engaged in middle class callings, in trade, commerce and industry, a role which they performed in their country of origin. With social, economic and political conditions favorable toward industrial and economic expansion, and more particularly, with the absence of a native middle class, the relatively small Jewish community, guided by its accumulated experiences, skills and enterprise, can be said to have served as a catalytic agent in many branches of the Mexican economy. They opened shops, developed industries, introduced and popularized, through producing goods domestically, many commodities previously inaccessible to the Mexican sub-marginal strata.

The economic advancement of the Jews affected their entire pattern of behavior. As a nouveau riche group they exhibit the characteristic traits of the class: hedonism and extravagant waste. Not an inconsiderable per cent reached the stage of erecting palaces which have magnificent rooms and furniture, exquisite gardens and, in a limited number of cases, even swimming pools. Like the corresponding Mexican and other ethnic groups, the wealthy Jews ride in the latest model cars, dress in luxurious furs and diamonds and spend exorbitant sums on parties and fiestas. While a small number were forced by the economic recession after World War II to apply to
Jewish aid, loan and charity institutions, the percentage of poor Jews is claimed to be proportionately far smaller in Mexico than in any other Jewish community. Its adequate economic position enabled the small yishuv magnanimously to contribute millions of pesos for the furthering of Jewish life and culture, both in the tfutzoth and in the Medinah.

Concomitant with the winning of economic security, and with the advent of elders, wives and children, Jewish group life began to strengthen. This marked the establishment and the development of the socio-cultural, educational and economic institutions and organizations. Not unlike those in the native lands, these were designed to preserve in the new habitat the cultural traits, traditions, values and pattern of life which the Jews have cherished for ages. Together, these organizations intensified the national consciousness, cultural specificity and we-feeling of the group and served as powerful barriers against assimilation and disintegration. These organizations, too, were instrumental in regulating the social, moral and religious conduct of the individuals. Members were compelled through the various social pressures to subordinate their wishes to the communal do's and taboos. In addition, these organizations stimulated and cultivated a favorable social climate, a sense of appreciation of, interest in,
and concern with Jewish life, Jewish education and Jewish culture in general. As a result of this influence Mexico offers a receptive audience to Jewish cognoscenti and literati and a relatively good market for the Yiddish and Hebrew book. About 700 sets of the Yiddish Encyclopaedia have been bought by the Yiddish-speaking sector. Likewise, Professor Graetz's Jewish History in Spanish, and the ten-volume Enciclopedia Judaica Castellana, both published in Mexico, are found in most Jewish homes. In addition, thousands of copies of various Jewish dailies, bi-weeklies, weeklies, monthlies and other periodicals, both in Yiddish and in Spanish, have found their way into the Jewish home. This printed matter, which, it is claimed, is referred to only sporadically and cursorily, is none the less displayed freely in the home without any feelings of shame or inferiority.

Although the community tends to approximate more the national type than the religious one, the yishuv maintains a personnel of about fifty functionaries to perform the traditional religious acts and rites. While most of the Jewish-owned stores and shops are open on Saturdays and feast days there were in 1953 forty-seven minyanim at the Sabbath services and a considerably larger number on Jewish holidays in the various synagogues in the capital.

1All dailies arrived from the States.
The social, cultural, religious and philanthropic organizations and institutions are in great disproportion, however, to the size of the Jewish population in the country. Created largely as a result of caprice, conflict and sectarianism, these "Liliputian kingdoms" continue to overlap, duplicate and compete with one another, irrespective of the grave harm they thus cause the community.  

The uncoordinated, disorganized communal activity allows, to cite but a few examples: the existence of four cemeteries in a community of about 17,000 persons; the functioning of a dozen or more aid, loan and charitable organizations; the launching of several campaigns simultaneously or consecutively, so that they interfere one with the other; the arranging of four or more socio-cultural affairs in one evening, with the result that there is poor attendance at all of them; the maintaining of separate secundaria and preparatoria departments with full staffs of instructors and costly laboratories for only forty and twenty-one students respectively, when the general curriculum is one and


3Pertaining to the campaign plague see Kh. Belkind, "Kampeynen muzn zikh gefinen unter a gezelschaftlekhn kontrol," Forcys, Jan. 1, 1954, p. 60.
the same for all schools; the operating of four separate yeshivoth with a total student body of eighty-six when in essence all four share the same ideologies and have similar programs of study; and lastly, the maintenance of an expensive university department for eight registrants when there is no discrimination at the National Mexican University, at which there also exists the Catedra for the Hebrew Language and Culture, supported by Jews.

The upkeep of the unnecessary "cultural embassies," offices, personnel, equipment et al results in extravagant communal waste. Moreover, this pitiful and futile squandering of human energies at a time when there is a critical lack of tuer and educators may eventually undermine the communal welfare of the yishuv.\(^4\)

To turn to the educational pattern: The process of Jewish education was closely related to the economic achievement of the yishuv. In the immigratory period, when the settlers struggled to eke out a livelihood in the strange land, the children attended the Mexican public schools and the problem of Jewish education was solved either by tutorial instruction in the home or by supplementary training in a school situation. The

Oriental katab or the East European Talmud Torah, which were transplanted from the countries of origin along with the other institutions, were adapted to the Mexican reality. Whereas in the native lands both the katab and the Talmud Torah offered Jewish education on a full day basis, in the new habitat they were adjusted to a part time schedule. The children attended the government escuelas either in the morning or in the afternoon session and received their Jewish schooling before or after their general studies. Except for the time adjustment these educational institutions did not undergo any perceptible change. The curriculum included the traditional subjects which constituted the core of religious education in the Old World.

Outside the capital, Jewish education was, on the whole, left to chance and to mazal. Ivri prayers and some Yiddish letter writing was generally initiated with the arrival of the itinerary meshulaḥ, shohet or unsuccessful vendor, and terminated with their departure, or with their exchanging teaching for a more lucrative business.

The first phase of Jewish education, the supplementary one, which started as a communal enterprise in 1917, was gradually coming to an end, by 1953. With the exception of one small week-end school outside the capital, Colegio Israelita de Puebla, consisting of 15 children,
supplementary Jewish education on the elementary level no longer exists among the Ashkenazim in the country. Among the Sephardim, too, the several functioning supplementary classes in Mexico City were slowly being liquidated. The total enrollment of the still-existing supplementary classes was 277.

Supplementary Jewish education still functioned and will most likely continue to exist provisionally in the capital on the post-elementary level, and permanently on the advanced one. This type of education, which was of a religious character only, served a total of 118 students. Of this number, thirty-two were registered in the post-elementary classes and eighty-six in the advanced departments. Of the latter figure, twenty-nine attended rabbinical seminaries, where thirty-four and thirty-five hours a week were devoted to Jewish religious studies, exclusively.

The total annual budget of these schools amounted to 176,000 pesos. Since only 54,000 came in from tuition, the respective school boards faced a deficit of fully 122,000 pesos.

The second educational stage, the all-day schools, came into existence after many years of experimentation with supplementary training. An exception in the case

Approximately 45 of these 118 students attended the regular classes of the Jewish all-day schools in the city.
was the Colegio Israelita de Mexico, which was established by the Ashkenazic sector in Mexico City as early as 1924. Until 1942 there were only two day-schools in the country, both Ashkenazic, with 689 students.

The effect of Hitler's massacre, which intensified the Jewish ethos and national consciousness the world over, on one hand, and the adequate Jewish economic position in Mexico, on the other, were responsible for the growth and development of the Jewish all-day schools in the country. Four all-day schools were established during the years 1942 - 1944 and four more between 1950 and 1953. In 1953 the ten Jewish all-day enjoyed a registration of 3,790 students, 2,086 males and 1,704 females. This total constituted an increase of 550 per cent since 1941.

These all-day schools were intended, first of all, to keep the Jewish child in a Jewish atmosphere and, secondly, to provide him with a better organized and more effective Jewish education along with the general studies given under Jewish auspices. Just as the katab and the Talmud Torah were a transplant the immigrants brought from the old world along with other institutions and patterns of life which they tried to adapt to the reality of life in Mexico, so the core subjects of the Ashkenazic Yiddish-Hebrew and Hebrew day schools, both secular and religious were brought from the countries of origin and adapted.
During the first years of immigration the religious element was small in numbers and unable to take a dominant position. The immigrants were young and generally uninclined towards the religious life, particularly in a distant, unfamiliar land. Therefore, the small group, which in 1924 tried to found a heder in the new land, failed. For the heder soon gave rise to Colegio Israelita de Mexico, a national-secular school which included Yiddish and Hebrew in its curriculum.

For 17 whole years, from 1925 to 1942 the school enjoyed hegemony in the Ashkenazic yishuv. Religious education lagged behind, remaining on a supplementary basis both in the Ashkenazic sector and among the Sephardim. Most of the latter, incidentally, had not known any other type of education in their former homes.

By and large, among the Ashkenazic Jews supplementary religious education was, and still is, born of nostalgia for the heder and the yeshiva in which the parents had studied. Among the Arabic Jews, however, it was, and on the whole still is, consonant with their actual way of life. They are pious and want their children to have religious upbringing.

Not until 1942, when, as a result of the Hitler slaughter, there began among the Jews of the Diaspora a trend toward conservatism and religiousness, did the Ashkenazic religious group attempt to transform its
supplementary classes, which had failed to accomplish anything educationally during the course of their existence, into the religious day-school, Yavne.

At first this action appeared quixotic to most Ashkenazim. It seemed unlikely that the school would draw pupils from a yishuv which was of national rather than religious inclination; a yishuv in which places of business were kept open on the Sabbath and on holidays, where people are not too meticulous about kashruth or about other precepts.

However, the Yavne school grew. In the first place, there are some Jews who really want that kind of education for their children, being themselves of more or less religious inclination. Secondly, children of parents who are not at all religious attend Yavne, some because the neighbors' children go there, some because the parents believe that it cannot hurt a boy—or even a girl—to be able to ask a blessing over food, recite from Humash and Rashi, repeat the prayers correctly and light the candles, even though they may not practice religion in later life.

Although the Ashkenazim established the all-day school, Yavne, in 1942, the idea of setting up a similar school did not arise among the Arabic Jews until 1953, eleven years later. Just as, earlier, the Ashkenazim influenced the Sephardim as regards secular
day-schools (Colegio Monte Sinai and Colegio Hebreo Sefardi were established as the result of the efforts of their Ashkenazic director, Avner Aliphas), so they also influenced them in the establishment of the two religious day-schools, Academia Hebra Sedaka y Marpe and Colegio Primera Sabiduria. Both these religious day-schools, as well as their post-elementary and Talmudic Seminary departments, were planned and are directed by Ashkenazim.

Of the ten colegios, seven belonged to the national secular type, i.e., they maintained a cultural-traditional frame of reference instead of a religious one. Four of these schools included both Yiddish and Hebrew in the curriculum and three, only Hebrew. In consonance with the religious convictions and behavior of the Jewish community, the seven secular all-day schools enjoyed in 1953 a registration of 2,919 students, or 77 per cent of all. The three religious colegios had only 871, or 23 per cent of the students.

Congruent with the cultural ideas and credos of the Ashkenazic sector, that Yiddish is an integral constituent of yidishkayt, fully 2,109 students, about 88 per cent of its total all-day school population of 2,399 in 1953 attended colegios which included both Yiddish and Hebrew in the curriculum. Only 290 educants, or 12 per cent, were at Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, which did not teach Yiddish.
The Jewish colegios, like the numerous incorporated private schools of the other ethnic and native groups, come under the control, as far as general subjects are concerned, of the respective government offices of education. They enjoy the same rights as the escuelas oficiales (government schools).

Only four of the ten all-day schools maintained kindergartens and primaria departments solely. Six extended their educational program to include the secundaria level; two had, in addition, preparatoria departments, and one offered Jewish and general education from kindergarten through university.

Of the total of 3,790 students attending the ten colegios in the country, 699 were registered in the kindergarten departments; 2,323 were in the primarias; 641 in the secundarias; 119 in the preparatorias and 8 in the universidad.

The ten colegios maintained a personnel of 546 persons, 431 of whom were Mexicans and 115, Jews. The total worth of the schools—plants, busses and equipment—was estimated at 10,420,000 pesos. The total annual budget of the schools was 3,903,900 pesos in 1953. Since tuition fees brought in 2,690,000, the colegios had to cover, in one way or another, a deficit of 1,213,000 pesos.
The combined annual budget of the all-day schools, supplementary education classes and the Central Teachers Seminary amounted to 4,139,900 pesos, and the deficit to 1,395,900.

During the period 1933 - 1953, 2,392 students graduated from the primaria departments of the Jewish all-day schools; 975, from the secundarias and 150 from the preparatorias.

To turn to the educational accomplishments of the colegios:

The all-day schools occupied themselves, during the span of their functioning, largely with the problem of excelling externally, i.e., to surpass each other structurally and numerically. This race for supersedure resulted in the establishment of magnificent plants on one hand and in the record enrollment in the entire Diaspora on the other.

As far as the intrinsic business of education is concerned, even the apologists of the yishuv, including the teachers themselves, bemoan the fact that the colegios can point to only limited results.

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6There is no record available of the number of graduates of Colegio Israelita de Mexico for the years 1934-37.

The preponderate majority of the graduates, the product of the colegios, are being accused of speaking neither Yiddish nor Hebrew; of not reading the Yiddish or the Hebrew press and literature; of not participating actively in the social and cultural life of the community; of seemingly showing no interest in world Jewish problems; of not attending services or observing kashrut, and of a multitude of other sins.

The responsibility for these phenomena is attributed, one way or another, to the Jewish home; the general Mexican environment; the nouveau riche philosophy of life; the inadequate teacher training and the lack of teacher-attention in crowded classes; antediluvian methodology and faulty approach to the learner; the inclusion of two foreign languages—Yiddish and Hebrew—in the curriculum; acceptance in the upper classes of students from non-Jewish schools who are poorly prepared in Jewish subjects or not at all prepared.8

There is, no doubt, a great deal of truth in both the accusations and in the underlying causes. The all-day

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schools, however, with the exception of Colegio Israelita de México and the miniature Colegio Israelita Hatikva de Monterrey, are still too young for one to judge their fruits. As for Colegio Israelita de México, mother of Jewish all-day schools in the country, it must be stated that as a novice it went through a long period of curricular trial and error. It also suffered for a considerable length of time of an acute shortage of professional or even non-professional teachers. In addition, for reasons of economy and public pressure, the colegio admitted students from non-Jewish schools to the upper grades of its primaria and even to its secundaria. These students not only carried away with them a mere spoonful of Jewish training and experience, but interfered, to say the least, with the normal functioning of the colegio.

As for the present: Notwithstanding their limited educational backgrounds, their antedated techniques, skills and approach, most of the Jewish maestros managed to instill in the hearts of the learners a respect and a regard for Yiddish and Hebrew language and literature, a positive attitude towards Jewish values, customs and traditions, and last but by no means least, a sincere sense of identification with the people of Israel and a feeling of warmth for the land of Israel.

As revealed by the survey conducted by this writer, 82 per cent of the Ashkenazic students questioned liked to study the Yiddish language for the partial list of reasons given below:

"I am a Jew;" "It is the language of my parents;" "It is the language of millions of Jews;" "In order to be able to converse with Jewish people the world over."

Of the total number of students questioned, 87 per cent desired to study Hebrew for "It is the language of my country;" "It is our national language;" "It is a holy language;" "In order to speak Hebrew;" "I want to understand the prayers."

Eighty per cent of the total wanted to learn the Jewish code of custom because "I am a Jew;" "They are our traditions;" "Our traditions are a part of our culture;" "... a part of our religion;" "I want to know how to lead a Jewish home life in the future;" "I like to know how my forefathers used to live;" "In order to know how to be a good Jew."

Ninety per cent of the students included "Israel" in their reply to the question: "If you had the opportunity to visit three countries, which would you like to visit?" Seventy-nine per cent placed "Israel" first on their lists.

10See supra, p. 33. Reasons which occurred in a frequency of less than 50 are not listed in this section.
And, lastly, 92 per cent liked to attend their respective colegios because "I want to be with Jewish children;" "Here I feel myself very much at home;" "For it is a Jewish school;" "Here I learn all about my people and my culture;" "The Jewish education I receive in the school will serve me well in my entire later life;" "...when I will have a family."

B. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

This writer by no means wants to assume the role of the Nestor. Neither does he believe himself to have the panacea for all the problems of the Jewish community in Mexico. The ten general recommendations offered below are nowise viewed as divine imperatives which may not be transgressed or altered. In the case of this yishuv especially, the writer believes, it is more important to indicate the need for change and coordination than to provide the actual blueprinting of the change and the coordination needed.

It is hoped that the following recommendations, either in their present form or modified in accordance with the dictates of time and circumstance, may prove beneficial to the welfare of the community.
Recommendations in the socio-cultural and the philanthropic fields of activity:

1. The coordination and centralization of all the functioning organizations and institutions either into a democratic quasi kehilah or under the supervision, guidance and control of the existing Central Committee, which would have to be re-energized and regalvanized, for the purpose of eliminating all aspects of duplicative effort and economic waste, since these tend to disorganize the yishuv. This would also include the unification of the separate philanthropic endeavors and the cessation of all unauthorized campaigns and other fund-raising.

2. The revivifying of the Kultur Komisie—the Cultural Commission—at the Central Committee, or the establishing of a new over-all cultural organization to guide, direct and regulate the socio-cultural activities of the yishuv.

This organization would, in addition to its adult and youth work in the capital, necessarily extend its program to provide socio-cultural activity centrifugally. The dispersed communities, which hitherto have

11 See above, p. 50.

been used only as feeders and donors to the yishuv in the Mecca, would, through the efforts of the Cultural Commission, enjoy a lecture, a theatre performance in Yiddish or in Spanish, or a Jewish film at least once a month.

The Cultural Commission, too, would have to establish and supervise in Mexico City a dormitory safely to house children from the scattered communities which cannot provide any Jewish education locally.

Recommendations in the field of education:

3. The unification of the supplementary classes and the seminaries for advanced Jewish religious learning maintained by Academia Hebreo Sedaka y Marpe and Colegio Primera Sabiduría, on one hand, as well as the fusion of the all-day departments of these institutions.

4. The combining of the two yeshivot, Or Israel and Etz Hayim, into one school of religious education. The joining of these Ashkenazic yeshivoth with the Sephardic ones does not seem feasible as yet, for the socio-cultural differentiations previously mentioned.

13Recently an experimental dramatic group, composed of native Jewish youth, was formed in Mexico. However, they are censured for performing in the Spanish language. See M. Rubinstein, "Es helft nisht kayn reyd—men negirt Yidish!" in Di Shtime, Jan. 30, 1954, p. 3.
5. The re-unification of the Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz with Colegio Israelita de Mexico.

6. The merging of the Ashkenazic secundarias and preparatorias into one communal department. While all students would attend the same respective classes in general education, careful provisions would be made in the Jewish counterpart of the curriculum in order to respect and to accommodate the religious and cultural differences of the given colegios. In addition to the enormous sums which will be saved by this unification, the project would also offer the advantages of better organization and management of the department in general; a more adequate distribution of students and teachers, and, consequently, the promotion of efficient teaching and effective learning. In addition, the students would learn to tolerate, understand and accept their coreligionists regardless of different cultural and religious habituations and practices.

7. The expansion and enrichment of the curriculum of the Central Jewish Teachers Seminary. This institute, in addition to preparing teachers, should also become a training school for youth leaders and group workers, urgently needed by the yishuv.

14The secundaria of Colegio Hebreo Sefardi is here omitted for the identical reasons mentioned in point 4.
5. The re-unification of the Nuevo Colegio Israelita J. L. Peretz with Colegio Israelita de Mexico.

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14 The secundaria of Colegio Hebreo Sefardi is here omitted for the identical reasons mentioned in point 4.
8. The discontinuance of functioning of the costly Universidad at Colegio Israelita de Mexico. The handful of students would have to attend equivalent classes at the National University of Mexico for their general education, and the Catedra at the same university, or the enriched classes of the Central Jewish Teachers Seminary, for their Jewish training.

9. The initiation of salary scales based on educational background and experience; tenure of office; sick benefits and provision for retirement benefits for teachers and leaders, in order to encourage young and able persons to enter the profession.

10. And, last but not least: the establishment of a Bureau of Jewish Education which, together with the Cultural Commission, would labor to further, organize, guide, supervise and finance the various cultural and educational activities so as to insure the kiyum and the hemsheh of the Jewish community in Mexico.
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GLOSSARY
of
Hebrew, Spanish and Yiddish
Words and Phrases

abonos - S., installments

Agadah - H., legendary part of the Talmud

alemanos - S., Germans

Am Israel - H., the people of Israel

batlen - Y. (H.-batlan)- recluse, unworldly person

bar mitzvah - H., 1. literally, son of duty; 2. celebration of a boy's becoming 13 years old

bikur holim - H., visiting the sick; extending financial and moral aid to needy sick

brahot - H., prayers; blessings

calle(s) - S., street(s)

camion - S., bus

casita - S., small house

catedra - S., chair or department of a university

colegiatura - S., tuition fee

collegio - S., school

colonia - S., section; district

comercio - S., commercial school

conquistadores - S., conquerors

cumpleaños de quince- S., girl's debut at age 15

dinim - H., religious laws

Distrito Federal - S., federal district

Eretz Israel - H., the Land of Israel

escuela - S., school
escuelas oficiales - S., public schools
escuelas particulares - private schools
extranjer(os) - S., foreigner
farvaltung - Y., board; committee
fiesta, fiestecita - S., small party
Gemara - H., Talmud
gemilut hasadim - H., acts of charity
guardería infantil - S., child care center
haham, hahamim - H., rabbi, rabbis
hahnasat kalah - H., financial aid to a poor bride to facilitate her marriage
Hanukkah - Feast of Light (H.)
hanukat habait - H., opening the new building
harakah - H., the emptying of
hasgaha - H., supervision;
Hasgaha - Providential supervision
havarah - H., pronunciation
hazan (im) - H., cantor (s)
heder - H., religious elementary school
hemshekh - H., continuation
horas corridas - S., schedule of consecutive periods without a mid-day interruption
(lit., running hours)
Humash - H., Pentateuch
Israelititas - S., Jews
Ivri - H., mechanical reading of Hebrew
kashrut - H., pertaining to Jewish dietary law
katab - (Arabic), religious elementary school (Sephardic)
kehilah - H., community; representative body of
kiyum - H., existence
kultur komisie - Y., cultural commission
lavaderos publicos - S., public washing places
limud - H., subject
maestro - S., teacher
makor - H., origin; original
mama(s) - S., mother(s)
maot hitim - H., financial aid extended to the poor before Passover
mashgiah - H.,
supervisor

matan beseyter - H.,
financial aid
extended in a secret
manner

materia - S., subject

mazal tov - H.,
good luck

medina - H., country
Medina - the country of
Israel

Megilloth - the Five
Scrolls of the
Hagiographa, viz.:
Song of Songs, Ruth,
Lamentations, Esther,
Ecclesiastes

melamed - H., teacher

meshulah - H., a
traveling representa-
tive of an insti-
tution

mikvah - H., ritual
bath for religious
immersions

minyan(im) - H., group(s)
of ten persons re-
quired for public
prayer

Mishnah - H., Collec-
tion of oral law
edited by Rabbi Judah
haNasi

mohel, mohalim - H.,
circumciser(s)

Musar - H.,
ethics

Musar Hayahaduth - Jewish
ethics

nadan - H., dowry

nana(s) - S., nursemaid(s)

Neviim - H., Prophets

oneg Shabath - H., the
delight of Sabbath

Pessah - H., Passover

pidyan haben - H.,
redemption of the first-
born son; feast of

Pirke Avoth - H.,
the Mishnah Avoth

preparatoria - S.,
junior college

primaria - S.,
elementary school

psukim - H., verses

puesteros - S.,
stall owners

puesto - S., stall

rabanut - H., rabbinate

rabino - S., rabbi

Rashi - Commentary on
Bible and Talmud

rosh hodesh - E., the
first day of the
Jewish month

ruso(s) - S., Russian(s)
secundaria - S.,
high school

Secretaria de Educacion - S., Ministry of Education

seder - H., ceremonial meal at home on the first nights of Passover

Senor - S., Mr.
Senora - S., Mrs.
sforim - H., books

shamash - H., sexton

shlimazl - Y., unlucky, maladroit

shohef (shohatim) - H., slaughterer(s) according to Jewish religious law

sholem (H., shalom) zohor - Y., celebration of the birth of a boy

Shulhan Arukh - H., a book of Jewish religious laws

siddur - H., prayer book

sidrah - H., portion of the Pentateuch read in the synagogue

simhot - H., parties

siyum - H., commencement exercises

siyum hasefer - H.,
1. Torah writing;
2. celebration upon ending a book

Talmud Torah - H., religious elementary school

tejaban - S., little wooden house

Tfilah - H., prayer

Tfutzoth - H., Dispersion, Diaspora

Torah - H., Bible

Torah meSinai - H., belief that the Torah was given on Mount Sinai, i.e., orthodox approach to the Bible

Tosfot - H., commentary on the Talmud

vaad hahinukh - H., board of education

universidad - S., university

Yam haTalmud - H., lit. the ocean of the Talmud; the Talmud

yeshivah - H., Talmudic school

yidiskayt - Y., Jewishness

yishuv(im) - H., community(ies)

Yishuv - H., Israel

Yom tov - H., holiday

Zedakah - H., charity
Appendix

First Protocol of Nidhe Yisrael,
Archive of Nidhe Yisrael, Mexico, D. F.

A first protocol relating to the formation of the organization of Nidhe Yisrael.

The protocol contains the following provisions:

1. The members of Nidhe Yisrael shall include all Jewish men and women.
2. The funds of the organization shall be used for the support of the poor and the elderly.
3. The organization shall maintain a library for the benefit of its members.
4. The organization shall hold meetings on a regular basis.
5. The organization shall have a treasurer to manage the funds.

The protocol was signed by the members of Nidhe Yisrael on the date of its formation.
Appendix

First Protocol of Nidhe Yisrael,
Archive of Nidhe Yisrael, Mexico, D. F.

אלפיים בדוחות שנכתבו במסמכים שונים

לפי דברי ה(simp) הפרוטוקולים, היו רגילים לאדם שונים, בין העם, כדיpciuela
摁פוזן, הרחב הקהל הולך וחוזה את הא interesse门诊ם, פירות

 unveiling, טבחות עניין, נשים קלאו על הרזיה הנגלו, הוזזת הפעולה, פעילות

וכרכים שונים של מסוים, הולך וחוזה את עין הimmer, נשים קלאו על הרזיה

הمنذ תחילת התוכנית, הלכה וехזתויות שונות קלאו על הרזיה, פעילות

בגינית, מספר קרובי משפחה וחברי משטחים שונים קלאו על הרזיה, פעילות

אותם בשתייה, ידיה והなくなって עליהם שלוש פעילות בקנאות ופרסות

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החברות התחדשו הקראות הלוגור ביצעה את כל פעילות הפגנה, הוזזת הפעולה

על פעילות הקראות הלוגור ביצעה את כל פעילות הפגנה, הוזזת הפעולה

בכוחות של השתלים בכיסי איס פלמיبر, פעילות של שומרים שונים, פעילות של

ריה כינון?f. רוזן גליצי, זוג רוזן, זוג ושתיות עין פעילות

האדם וה西红ן של הזרועות, פעילות של שומרים שונים, פעילות של

ומתקיים על בור הנגורז החודש, עין פעילות של הזרועות, פעילות של

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醫院ן הרחבה ושתיות במפגין במצבי הפריט (מצבי, כך, בצורת

מכרה והשתתפה במפגין וحياة פעילות מוסמכת, פעילות של

נווברט וזרי, שירץ לשביל לזרועות ולשכת השופטים פעליי ב

המקהל, המקהל,

хват הכהן

http://www.*****/2003/07/03/2003-07-03.html

מוסכת ש"ר דונצ'צ'יק

מאמרוב פ"לא דונצ'צ'יק
concede la presente

Mención honorífica
de Primer Grado

alumnas

Olga Levy S.
del 4º Año por aplicación

México DF, 30 de noviembre de 1945

La Dirección General

La Dirección Administrativa
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15. מבחר ברוחי (ברוחי) לעתונות זיר איצט עבר יאשלובביץ' שול (польש)
כריתת_epoch של

16. מיקוד ברוחי (ברוחי) לעתונות זיר איצט עבר יאשלובביץ' שול (פולין)
כריתת_epoch של

17. מיקוד ברוחי (ברוחי) לעתונות זיר איצט עבר יאשלוביץ' שול (פולין)
כריתת_epoch של

18. מיקוד ברוחי (ברוחי) לעתונות זיר איצט עבר יאשלוביץ' שול (פולין)
כריתת_epoch של

19. מיקוד ברוחי (ברוחי) לעתונות זיר איצט עבר יאשלוביץ' שול -дол

20. מיקוד ברוחי (ברוחי) לעתונות זיר איצט עבר יאשלוביץ' שול -дол

21. מיקוד ברוחי (ברוחי) לעתונות זיר איצט עבר יאשלוביץ' שול -дол

22. מיקוד ברוחי (ברוחי) לעתונות זיר איצט עבר יאשלוביץ' שול -дол
לא ניתן לקרוא את התוכן המוצג בתמונה.
Dec. 20, 93

Mr. Jeed Levi
1811 Quentin Rd. # 6 E
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11229

Dear Ms. Antiinsky,

Enclosed are several corrections pertaining to my Mexico. There were two small printings of the study, each one with its own mistakes. Since I don't know what copy your library has, I am sending you two separate Errata-forms.

Reading the first sentence, p. 158 and the "replacement of the first paragraph," Errata p. 233, you will see which one to place on the page after 233 (233). If that page has an Errata, please tear it out. If it is incorrect, the "Note on the Bibliography" belongs to p. 204.

Thank you.

Jeed Levi.
ERRATA

P. 23, note 11: Levitz ... Detroit, 1946; also p. 205

P. 33, note 37; p. 178, note 2: Dr. Y. Oystri-Dan

P. 43, note 17: Agudas Ahim; also p. 98, text.

P. 47, p. 60: hitim ... hakhnasat

P. 67, note 20: A Toyshev

P. 77, note 9: ... twelfth to fourteenth

P. 89, note 36: Soloveitchik

P. 121, note 26; p. 140, note 75; p. 141, note 76; p. 167, note 14: Dr. Y. Oystriak

P. 137, note 66 (and in subsequent pages of this study): Bet Sefer ...

p. 158, replacement of first paragraph:

Humash began in Nuevo Colegio Israelita in Grade II and was continued in all grades of the school in Yiddish translation. Only selected verses were taught in the original. In Colegio Israelita de Mexico, however, Humash started in Grade III and was studied in all subsequent grades in an abridged Hebrew text. 9

NOTICE

P. 216, the first entry: Oysuri-Dan, Dr. Y; the following two: Oystriak, Dr. Y.

P. 2, note 2 (and in subsequent pages of this study): the newspaper, Der Weg, is transcribed as Der veg.
Note on the BIBLIOGRAPHY

The typist erroneously included the footnote citations in the BIBLIOGRAPHY and left out materials which should have been included. The manuscript was typed and mailed to UMI at a time when I was hospitalized and underwent surgery. The reader can, ad interim, use this BIBLIOGRAPHY and also the bibliographies given in my previous studies:


I am very sorry for the inconvenience.

ERRATA

P. 23, note 11: Levitz . . . Detroit, 1946; also p. 205

P. 33, note 37; p. 178, note 2: Dr. Y. Oystri-Dan

P. 43, note 17: Agudas Ahim; also p. 98, text.

P. 47, p. 60: hititim . . . hakhnasat

P. 67, note 20: A Toyshev

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P. 121, note 26; p. 140, note 75; p. 141, note 76; p. 167, note 14: Dr. Y. Oystriak

P. 137, note 66 (and in subsequent pages of this study): Bet Sefer . . .

P. 216, the first entry: Oystri-Dan, Dr. Y; the following two: Oystriak, Dr. Y.

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