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A Pioneer in Jewish Education: Eliezer Rieger 1896 - 1954

Alvin Mars

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Abstract
The opportunity to research and write about the life and work of Eliezer Rieger was indeed an exciting one. He was an educator of great breadth and depth who lived during an important period in the development of the Yishuv in Palestine. He was active at a time when Hebrew education in Palestine and Israel was being formulated, and he made a significant contribution to its development. His interests in education were quite varied. During his lifetime he served as a teacher, textbook writer, school administrator, inspector of schools, researcher, professor of education, head of the Hebrew University Department of Education, educational historian, curriculum formulator, educational innovator and Director-General of the Ministry of Education and Culture to list but a few of his educational activities.

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First Advisor
Meir Ben-Horin

Second Advisor
William Chomsky

Third Advisor
Judah Pilch

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A PIONEER IN JEWISH EDUCATION
ELIEZER RIEGER 1896 - 1954

by
Alvin Mars

A Dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
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1970
A P P R O V A L

This dissertation, entitled

A PIONEER IN JEWISH EDUCATION
ELIEZER RIEGER 1896 - 1954

by

Alvin Mars
Candidate for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

has been read and approved by

[Signatures]

Date January 22, 1970
The opportunity to research and write about the life and work of Eliezer Rieger was indeed an exciting one. He was an educator of great breadth and depth who lived during an important period in the development of the Yishuv in Palestine. He was active at a time when Hebrew education in Palestine and Israel was being formulated, and he made a significant contribution to its development. His interests in education were quite varied. During his lifetime he served as a teacher, textbook writer, school administrator, inspector of schools, researcher, professor of education, head of the Hebrew University Department of Education, educational historian, curriculum formulator, educational innovator and Director-General of the Ministry of Education and Culture to list but a few of his educational activities. It is valuable, therefore, to investigate the life of Eliezer Rieger as an educator not only because he was a key figure in Palestinian education during a crucial period of its development but also because the wide scope of his interests and activities offers a unique opportunity to gain insights into many of the problems of Jewish education in Palestine and the State of Israel. Moreover, it is of value to note how these problems are reflected within the per-
my wife, Marilyn, who assisted by reviewing and typing the text of this dissertation and by being a constant source of inspiration and encouragement.
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INTRODUCTION

An Overview of Eliezer Rieger as an Educator

As a young man Eliezer Rieger often spoke of his intention to go on Aliyah to the land of Palestine, and to build a career for himself there as part of a rejuvenated Jewish people. Already in his youth his special gift of being a competent and talented administrator was recognized both by Rieger and by his friends. When asked what niche he would carve out for himself once he arrived in Erets Yisrael, he responded that it was his desire to become a great Starosta and thereby to govern his own province.¹ When Rieger finally arrived in the Jewish homeland in 1920 the province he was to select for himself was not a political one but rather one in the field of education.

Indeed, it was most fortunate that this was his choice, for he was to make an important contribution to Palestine and the State of Israel by virtue of his chosen career. The administrative abilities he demonstrated as a young man and throughout his entire life were of great importance for the development of Jewish education, but they were but one

¹ Dr. Shlomo Horowitz, Teacher, Bet Sefer Reali, Haifa, Israel, taped personal interview with the author, Haifa, June 2, 1968. In Poland a provincial leader was called a Starosta.
small part of his educational talents and interests. He was an educator of depth and breadth. His friend and co-worker A. Arnon has said of him: "From the aspect of the multiplicity of his interests in education, Riezer was one of few among the leaders of Hebrew education in Israel."2

It has also been said, "... he was a man of wide knowledge and deep understanding- a man full of the human sympathy which flows from experience."3

Dr. Alexander M. Dushkin, co-founder with Riezer of the Hebrew Secondary School in Jerusalem and life long friend stated:

That which is most evident in the personality of Eliezer Riezer was his blessed breadth of scope in the field of education. He dealt with the problems of the learner and the problem of the curriculum, with detailed methodology and with the philosophy of the educating society, with vocational education and education for citizenship, with laws of learning and with the practical organization of educational administration and supervision, with the building of a school as an institution and the building of a system of national education and the generalities of comparative education which encompasses all the nations of the world, with political leadership and with communal activities which negated party politics. He was one of the few who was blessed and gifted with the talent to work in depth and breadth at once- with a micro-

2 A. Arnon, In Memoriam for Professor Eliezer Riezer (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1954), p. 9. A. Arnon was an inspector in the Waad Leumi Department of Education and Ministry of Education and Culture of the State of Israel.

scope in one hand and a telescope in the other.  

Ben Zion Dinur, third Minister of Education and Culture of the State of Israel, viewed Eliezer Rieger as "... one of the leaders of Hebrew education in Israel, one of the organizers of our educational system and one of those who gave it form." His strength lay in the fact that "he saw education as the problem of problems in the life of the nation and in its fate. He saw it as the central problem of our existence and our future." According to Dinur, Rieger was a man of well thought out educational principles to which he was faithful all his life. Foremost of Rieger's principles was the centrality of education in the life of the nation.

Eliezer Rieger was described by a South African journalist as having the appearance of a businessman, with an outward reserve that indicated inner content. He was viewed as a man of strongly held convictions which were based on

5 Ben Zion Dinur, Ibid., p. 4.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
reasoning and not on pre-judgments. He spoke slowly, not from any hesitation about what he had to say but because he was looking for the best words with which to clothe his thoughts. The reporter continued:

He was a leader of youth movements and an orator in Australia [sic] and Poland..., but he is now a scholar and an administrator. This change from the "was" to the "is" I make advisedly, for it is a matter of deliberate choice on his part, influenced largely by the time he spent in England and the United States. He now has no wish to rouse emotions, preferring instead to explain matters rationally. The two threads, emotion and reason, run through his life, but he has consciously subordinated the former to the latter, so that you will find no sign in him of the fiery orator remembered best by those who knew him as the first president of the Shomer Hatzair in Galicia. It is not necessary or desirable, he considers, to rouse the emotions of youth. He prefers now to guide them.

According to Dinur, Rieger was the type of man whose character was expressed by a single fundamental idea which threaded its way throughout his entire life. This thread of character for Eliezer Rieger, in Dinur's opinion, was intellectual rationalism. Rieger was a man who reached this philosophy of life through thought and investigation. He believed that the motivating and decisive force in man's behavior and in the direction of his activities must be well based on intelligence and common sense. Once he decided on this point of view, Rieger made it govern his being. He lived by it and he worked by it. He was, however, not a rationalist by nature. Rather, it would be more correct to say that by forethought and self-recognition he made...

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9 Ibid.
intelligence govern his feelings. He felt that this is the proper and most desirable way of life for man. Dinur was of the opinion that for this reason Rieber often appeared to be a cold person. However, in truth, this was not the case. His fundamental belief that it was not proper for a man to reveal his inward feeling or to display an excess of emotion was often misunderstood and misinterpreted, and thus he appeared to others as cold rather than controlled.\(^1\) In conjunction with this Dinur stated: "The most fundamental of his [Rieber's] ideas was his belief in man and his hidden ability, hidden in each man; and from this we see his relationship to education... He had a great and strong belief in the power of man to educate, to educate himself and another, especially the younger generation- the child, the lad, the young man. Indeed, first of all he tried to educate himself. He always tried and invested all his life's great internal efforts to self education."\(^11\)

In 1946 the McNair Commission, a commission appointed by the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, reported on the condition of Jewish education in Palestine. As part of its findings it pointed out that it is necessary to realize that education means something more to the Zionist Jew than it does in England or in most other countries. Education is not merely a process of character formation, mind training or attitude development. According to this report, Jewish education in Palestine had a strong emotional content.

\(^{10}\) Dinur, op. cit., p. 5.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
and was regarded as one of the chief instruments in the building of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. In most schools one of the principal aims was to inculcate in the children a deep love of the land and, in particular, an attachment to Palestine as the land of the National Home.12

Rieger, who was one of the principal witnesses before the McNaughton Commission,13 concurred with this point of view, but went much further. According to Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan, Rieger viewed education as the central function of the Zionist movement. He saw Zionism as an educational problem and as an educational movement. Its central purpose was to re-educate Jews and to prepare them for becoming part of a modern, spiritual, national reality. Rieger was a Zionist from an educational standpoint, and sought to carry out the Zionist ideal of the rejuvenation of the Jewish people on their own land by re-education and by the wise application of educational methodology, philosophy and thought.14


13 David Senator, Executive Vice President of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, letter, Feb. 24, 1946, to Dr. Walter Zander in London. Walter Zander, a British business executive, has been secretary of the Friends of the Hebrew University since 1944.

14 Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan, taped personal interview with the author at Kaplan's home, New York, Nov. 21, 1967. Dr. Kaplan, one of United States' leading Rabbis, was a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Dean of its Teachers Institute. He is founder of the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism.
Rieger decried the lack of a definite aim in world education and called it the tragedy of the age. It is having an aim in life that gives an individual motivation and energy and the ability to surmount obstacles. Such is the case in the life of a nation as well as in the life of an individual. An aim is one of the most important possessions a people can have. Rieger noted that during the days of Herzl and after there were those who fought the idea that the Jewish people had a special mission. They believed that there were no historic missions, and that the Jewish nation like any other, had a right to exist without any specific mission.

In the light of social psychology, Rieger called out for:

... not a mission, but a collective aim. If life is to be lived in all its fullness, a collective existence must be evolved around national, social, religious, and other ideals. As I see it our aim of the Uptbuildings of the Homeland was the most encouraging and stimulating factor in the Jewish life of the past two generations.

Eliezer Rieger felt very strongly that the Jewish people has a clear, consistent and concrete aim with the power to grasp the logic and the imagination of the young person. This aim- pioneering in the building of the people and its land- has concentrated within it the wisdom, experience and desires of the Jewish community, and must serve as the basis for curriculum and for methods of instruction.

16 Ibid.
17 Eliezer Rieger, ha-Eshuakh ha-Ivri be-Zreta Yisrael: ha-Matara ve-he-Tokmith (Hebrew Education in Palestine: Aims and Curricula) (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing Co., 1940), pp. 53-54.
Rieger believed that Jewish youth must be trained to be pioneers, halutsim. This was the way he expressed his commitment to the constant growth and progress of the Jewish people. Not just the land but the people must be rebuilt within the framework of halutsiyut (pioneering). With this ideal all the problematic areas could be faced, and novel and untested solutions could be sought throughout the continuing history of the people. Conquering new frontiers and facing new challenges are characteristic of halutsiyut. One can always find the halut giving his allegiance to an idea before it has become profitable to do so. He is a trailbreaker who is the first to leap and to chart a new course for others to follow.  

The Jewish pioneer is a revolutionary who achieves his goal through constructive effort. While his goal is a revolution of values, he does not expect to achieve his purpose by waving a magic wand or by destroying the whole of existing society. Instead, he works patiently toward the changes he envisions, teaching himself how to handle new tasks and problems as he progresses.  

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19 Ibid., p. 3.
Pioneering as an ideal has a most crucial role in Palestine society, for it serves to direct youth towards a unified national purpose in a constructive rather than a destructive manner. Rieger felt that it channeled the youths' activities and made them real partners in an important endeavor. The idea of national and social rebirth through the rigors and challenges of pioneering regulated and harnessed the youthful energies of the people and directed and transformed them from a flood of untamed energy into a stream of constructive effort. 20

The Dissertation

Eliezer Rieger was a pioneer, too, but in the field of Jewish education. His lifetime spanned very important periods of development for many institutions and ideas in the fields of Palestine, Israel and World Jewish education, and his contributions helped to direct their courses. It is the purpose of this dissertation to document and to analyze Rieger's career and thereby to discover what he contributed as a key educational figure to the development and progress of Jewish educational thought and activity. Hopefully, new insights will be gained not only about Rieger's life and work but also

about the educational subjects in which he was involved.

A chronological approach has been adopted to present the subject. Each chapter will deal with a different period of Eliezer Rieger's life or with major areas of contribution within a particular time period. There are a number of subjects handled in more than one chapter since they continued through various periods of Rieger's life. Chapter one deals with Rieger's childhood years, chapter two with his life as a university student and leader in he-Shomer ha-Tsair, and chapter three with his first educational endeavors in and for Palestine. Chapters four and five cover Rieger's work as an Inspector in the Department of Education of the Wad Leumi and important contributions he made during that period. Chapters six and seven present material about Rieger's career and work in the Hebrew University Department of Education 1940-1951 and his influence on Jewish education at that time. Chapter eight documents Rieger's work as Director General of the Ministry of Education and Culture from 1951 to 1954, and chapter nine is devoted to a summary of Dr. Rieger's legacy and influence.
CHAPTER ONE

The Early Years 1896–1914

Family Life

Eliezer Rieger was born on May 5, 1896 in Grybow, a small town in the Carpathian mountains of Western Galicia. He was the middle son of Joseph and Hanah Rieger, who earned their livelihood by operating a hardware store in the town. They supplied farming and artisan tools to the surrounding communities, commodities of great necessity in an agricultural area.¹

Joseph Rieger lived in Grybow most of his life. One part of his family had reached this town by way of Leipzig and Cracow, when his grandfather, Naftali Weiss—a blind Talmudist of some repute, had decided to settle in Grybow.²

Hanah Rieger, on the other hand, had come to Grybow from the vicinity of Tarnow to live with her oldest brother, Samuel, after she was orphaned by both her parents. She was the youngest of thirteen children born to Rabbi David

¹ Mrs. Rivkah Rieger Kaplan, widow of the late Eliezer Rieger and wife of Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan, taped personal interview with the author, New York, Nov. 21, 1967. Herein-after referred to as RRK-2.

² Ibid.
and Malkah Goldberg, nine of whom died from diphtheria while still youngsters. Hanah's family consisted of a long line of Rabbis and Dayanim; her uncle Rabbi Naftali Goldberg, was head of the Beth Din in Tarnow. Her brother Samuel, who was sixteen years older than Hanah, supported her and served as her guardian during the last years of her youth before her marriage to Joseph. He owned a small department store in the town and was financially capable of the added burden.3

The piety, mysticism and emotion of the Hasidic movement had greatly influenced Jewish life in Galicia and had become very strong among most of the Jewish population of the Galician cities and towns during the nineteenth century. Moreover, the oppressive reign of the Austrian monarchs had limited the economic possibilities for Jews to the point where the majority remained very poor even at the beginning of the twentieth century.4 Rieger's family was also very much a part of the Galician environment. His parents struggled financially at the outset of their married life, and always maintained a pious home atmosphere. Eliezer's mother

3 Eliezer Rieger, "In Memory of a Jewish Mother," Ha-Aretz, XXVII (Dec. 15, 1944), p. 3.

4 N.M. Gelber, Toldoth ha-Tenuah ha-Tsiyyonith be-Galitsiyah: 1875-1918 (Jerusalem: ha-Sifriyyah ha-Tsiyyonith, 1953), pp. 12-15. See also N.M. Gelber, "Koroth ha-Tenudim be-Folin mi-Reyshith Halukatah we-Ad Milhemeth ha-Olam ha-Sheniyah," Beth Yisrael be-Folin, Yisrael Halpern, ed. (Jerusalem: ha-Histadruth ha-Tsiyyonith, 1948), pp. 121-125. Gelber reports that 53.3% of Galician Jews at the beginning of the twentieth century were involved in business as was Rieger's family.
was especially attached to the tradition throughout her entire life. She did, however, react strongly against what she considered tasteless customs like cutting one's hair or wearing a wig.\(^5\)

Eliezer Rieger himself describes his home life and his mother's influence on the community:

After years of a stubborn battle for existence and the trouble of raising children, a period of financial prosperity arrived. Our home had a balcony—the first in the town, I think—and in its center waved a Magen David. For a long time, non-Jews were afraid to go onto the balcony for fear that it would collapse beneath them. My mother, unwittingly, was also a political factor in the area. Hundreds of farmers, landowners, and simple citizens would come to ask her advice in private and public matters. They asked her whom to elect to parliament and to the village councils, where to build their church, and even sought her out as a judge of their controversies.\(^6\)

Joseph and Hanah Rieger and Samuel Goldberg were the three people who most influenced Eliezer Rieger as a young boy. From his mother he acquired a sharpness of mind and the ability to speak, and from his father he learned to have the simple and straightforward common sense of a farmer.\(^7\)

However, it may have been his uncle Samuel who had the most

\(^5\) Rieger, _op. cit._

\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Dr. Shlomo Horowitz, Teacher, Beth Sefer Reali, Haifa, Israel, historian, author of history texts and activist in and co-founder of the ha-Shomer ha-Tsair movement, taped personal interview with the author, Haifa, June 2, 1968.
profound influence on the young Eliezer. He was a man of the world, a secularist, and had traveled widely. His stories about distant cities and countries excited Eliezer and aroused his imagination. Samuel was the first to spark Eliezer's interest in the world of knowledge beyond the limited boundaries provided in the traditional Heder which he attended. Rieger wrote:

The long evenings at home were full of content. My uncle Samuel would come and would bring with him the best of Hebrew and foreign literature. He would read it to us, and he and my mother would explain it. In this way I came into contact with Ahad Haam, Bialik, Yalag, and Ranak on the one hand and with Emerson, Henry George,... Dickens and Dostoevsky on the other.

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9 Rieger, op. cit.
It was also Samuel who first began to teach Eliezer English.\textsuperscript{10}

One occurrence in Eliezer Rieger's childhood gives important testimony to the Zionist ideas which were nurtured in his home life and how they influenced him very profoundly even during these years. He tells a story about himself which was often repeated by many of his friends:

I still remember one dear incident from my childhood. On Tisha B'\text{av} a friend and I decided to go to Palestine on foot. After a few hours hike, a kind farmer who found us trembling from hunger, cold and shame took us back to the city and our homes. After I absorbed a beating from my late father, my mother came to me and said: "I understand what you did but you must promise that if you will ever again go to Palestine you will take me with you." I promised.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10} RRK-1.

\textsuperscript{11} Rieger, op. cit.
Education

When Eliezer Rieger was six years old he began studying at a secular elementary school in addition to his hours spent in the Heder. Secular education was frowned upon by most Jews in Grybow, who were afraid that it would lead to assimilation, and Eliezer's father was pressured and ridiculed by his friends when he refused to withdraw his son from the school. The family remained steadfast in its attempts to provide Eliezer and his brothers with a broad education and even hired tutors to give the boys extra hours of Judaic instruction to fill in the traditional Heder education. 12

In 1906, when Rieger was ten years old, his mother brought him to Cracow to study at the Government Gymnasium. When he first started at the school, he knew almost no Polish and, as a result, could understand almost nothing of what was said in class. Rieger overcame this initial difficulty by learning all his lessons by heart. He had a gift for imitating accents and dialects, and when he recited his work his teachers never knew that he was just learning the language. After eight years of study, Rieger graduated from the gymnasium. He was elected class valedictorian and delivered his address in beautiful Polish. 13

During the entire time that Rieger was in Cracow he

12 RRK-2.
13 Ibid.
studied Jewish subjects with the best teachers in the city. His parents arranged for him to live at the home of Shewach Walkowski who was also engaged to teach him Hebrew language and literature. Walkowski was a gifted Hebrew pedagogue who composed a Hebrew correspondence course containing thirty-two letters. Rieger said of Walkowski, "He could claim to his credit that he probably taught Modern Hebrew to more people than any other Hebrew teacher of his day." Less formal but equally influential on Rieger's life were the hours and visits that he spent with Dr. Joshua Ton, a Zionist leader and chief Rabbi of Cracow. He, too, guided Rieger in his Zionist studies, and he felt sure that the young man had an important contribution to make.

Tseirey Tsiyyon

At the time Rieger began his gymnasium studies most of his fellow students were apathetic about their Judaism. It has been stated:

14 Life History of Eliezer Rieger, typed, undated article, Rieger Personal File, Hebrew University Archives, Jerusalem.
15 RRK-2.
17 Ibid., p. 129.
18 Dr. Yehoshua Ton: b. 1870 (Lwow), d. 1936. Ton was the chief Rabbi of Cracow and a known Zionist leader. He was a Hebraist and helped to found the Tarbuth movement. He contributed many articles to the Shiloah. A large segment of his articles are published in Ketavim (Warsaw: Ahiasaf, 1922).
19 RRK-2.
Most of the Jewish students were indifferent, non-political, with most of their interests centered on entertainment and a little reading. Because of complacency they did not want to bother themselves with studies which were not in the framework of the schools. A small segment of Jewish students inclined to the socialistic movement and in their free hours studied nature, sociology, and Marxist economy.20

There was also a smaller percentage of the students who were inclined to assimilation and thought of themselves as "Poles of the Mosaic persuasion," and there were those (like Rieger) who already had Zionist inclinations.21

A series of Jewish youth groups (later amalgamated into the Tseirey Tsiyyon) for the Jewish education of gymnasium students began to arise before the turn of the twentieth century. One of the principal tasks of these different gymnasium youth groups was to awaken in the Jewish student a sense of the historical continuity of Judaism and the realization that he is firmly connected with the historic past of his people for whose higher ideals he is obligated to fight.22 N.M. Gelber points out:

The Zionist movement introduced a spiritual revolution in the ranks of youth. Instead of spending their time in folly, dances and various entertainments, under the influence of the Zionists the students became devoted to studies and slowly achieved a national-Zionist self-recognition....23

20 Gelber, op. cit., p. 675.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
Political activity of any sort was forbidden to gymnasium students, and therefore, these budding youth groups carried on their activities in secret.\textsuperscript{24} In spite of this secrecy the existence of courses and lectures was known to school authorities. They sought to educate Jewish youth for assimilation and therefore saw the work of these clubs as a great challenge. There was often persecution of Zionist pupils which increased when Zionist members refused to declare themselves as being part of the Polish nation and listed their nationality as Jewish.\textsuperscript{25}

In each gymnasium the Zionist students were organized into one club. Students of one class made up a group within the club which met a few times a week and studied Hebrew in groups of five for three to five hours a week by the Ivrith be-Ivrith method. Jewish history was taught for about two hours a week by older students and one to two hours

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid. For evidence that the particular group with which Rieger was affiliated in Cracow also existed as a secret organization see Zevi Karl, Cracow, Vol. II of Arim ve-Imanoth be-Yisrael, ed. Y.L. Fishman (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1948), p. 345.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 676. Jews refusing to declare a Polish nationality reduced the total number of Poles in secondary schools, and the teachers and administrators were concerned this would harm the Poles in their political-national position within the Austrian Empire. Gelber reports that in one incident in 1903 eighteen students were expelled from a gymnasium because of their Zionism. Shlomo Berowitz, however, claims that, on the whole, the authorities ignored the movement.
a week were spent on the study of the history of Hebrew literature. One hour a week was devoted to the geography of Israel and two hours to the history of Zionism. On Saturday afternoons students of all classes gathered for lectures, discussions or debates. University students or those in the upper grades were the lecturers. 26

Because of the initiative of the Lwow group all of the local clubs in Galicia organized into a national organization of secondary school students in 1900 called Tseirey Tsiyyon. In 1902 the first national conference of the organization was held in Lwow, and this yearly meeting was continued until the First World War. It took place in July after the school year had closed. 27 According to its initial constitution, the goal of the organization was the dissemination of the Zionist idea among students, the establishment of a supplementary course in Hebrew language and its literature, Jewish history, geography, sociology, national and ethical education and financial aid (student contributions for Palestine). 28

26 Ibid., pp. 676-677.
27 Ibid., pp. 677-678.
28 Ibid., p. 676. For further information on Tseirey Tsiyyon see below pp. 23-32.
Eliezer Rieger joined Tseirey Tsiyyon in Cracow in 1909 when he was thirteen years old. At the 1911 Lwow conference of the group he was elected to serve on the executive committee of the organization in Galicia. For the ensuing years he attempted to develop and to enrich the activities of existing groups and to create new ones. Even at this time Rieger was known for his talent as an outstanding orator and his talks and speeches served to inject the movement with a new spirit. It was not until after the start of the First World War, however, that Tseirey Tsiyyon under Eliezer Rieger's leadership was to take on a new significance for Jewish youth in Galicia.

29 RRK-2.
From the University of Vienna to Aliyah

University Years

In 1914 Eliezer Rieger was accepted as a matriculating student at the University of Vienna. His major subjects at the University were Semitic languages and literature and history, and his minor area of study was pedagogy.\(^1\) Rieger’s doctoral dissertation was called "*Wurzeluntersuchungen der Landwirtschaftlichen Ausdrücke im Alten Testament.*\(^2\) It was a linguistic-historic research paper in which he attempted to explain the continuity and evolution of agricultural terminology in the Bible through the perspective of the cultural development of Israel. In 1918 Rieger graduated with highest honors from the University with a Ph.D. degree.\(^3\) During his years in Vienna Rieger rounded out his education by taking courses at the Vienna

\(^1\) "Life History of Eliezer Rieger," typed, undated article, Rieger Personal File, Hebrew University Archives, Jerusalem. Hereinafter referred to as "Life History."


\(^3\) "Life History."
Rabbinical Academy. 4

At the beginning of the First World War Galicia's Jewish population suffered horribly from the onslaught of the Russians. Deportations, destruction, murder, rape and pillage were common occurrences. Galicia was the front between the Austrian and Russian armies, and as the Russian army moved into the Galician towns they attacked Jews and Jewish property. As a result more than 400,000 Jews fled westward from the front with hundreds of gymnasium and university students arriving in Vienna. 5

A New Youth Movement

Among those who found themselves in Vienna were Eliezer Rieger, Shlomo Horowitz and others who had just taken part in the recent yearly Tseirey Tsiyyon conference in Lwow. Because of Rieger's initiative the delegates to the Lwow conference gathered in the hall of the Austrian Zionist Federation in the Jewish section of Vienna.

4 The Vienna Rabbinical Academy was founded in 1893 and continued to function through 1938. Throughout the forty-five years of its existence it had a total of 324 students with the majority of them coming from Galicia especially during the years of the First World War. For more information see Sefer Zikkaron le-Veha-Midrash le-Rabbanim be-Vinah (Jerusalem: Maas Publishing Co., 1946). For documentation of Rieger's status as a registered student in the school see Sefer Zikkaron, p. 80.

5 N.M. Gelber, Toldoth ha-Tenuah ha-Tsiyyonith be-Galitsiyah: 1875-1918 (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1955), pp. 514-515. For more detailed information on the Jewish situation in Galicia and Vienna see Gelber, Toldoth ha-Tenuah..., chapter 21.
Although people knew then that they might return to Galicia at any moment, they decided to establish Tseirey Tsiyyon in the city. In this way there would be an opportunity to influence Jewish youths under very novel conditions. 6

A program was established as a result of the initial meeting, and, as in Galicia, courses were offered. The difference, however, between the situation in Vienna and that in Galicia, was that Tseirey Tsiyyon had all of its outstanding personalities available in one place. Among those in the original group were Aryeh Tartakower, Shmaryahu Ellenberg, Moshe Wald Yaari, Shalom Spiegel and David Horowitz. 7 A lecture series was held in basements, and

6 Dr. Shlomo Horowitz, taped personal interview with the author, Haifa, June 2, 1968. Hereinafter referred to as Interview.

7 Ibid.

Aryeh Tartakower was born in 1897 in Eastern Galicia. He studied at the University of Vienna where he received his doctorate in law and political science and where he was active in Zionist youth movements. He left for America just before the Second World War where he served as executive secretary of the World Jewish Congress until his appointment as a lecturer in sociology at the Hebrew University in 1946. He now resides in Jerusalem where he is chairman of the executive committee of the World Jewish Congress.

Shmaryahu Ellenberg was born in 1896 in Galicia. He was active in Tseirey Tsiyyon and was the co-editor of Moriah in Vienna from 1915-1917 and of Nowy Dzeinnik from 1918-1921. He was a teacher and principal of the Jewish Gymnasium in Lodz. From 1930-1935 he was the editor of the Polish monthly Miesiecznik Zydowski. He came to Palestine in 1940 and was the principal of an agricultural school and Beth Sefer ha-Tikhoni in Tel Aviv.
young people could hear about subjects such as Jewish history, Hebrew, Palestine and Zionism. Besides Rieger, the aforementioned leaders of the movement also gave lectures. One of the first activities of the newly founded group in Vienna was a hike to Herzl's grave. There were to be many other hikes and outings in the Vienna area.

Moshe Wald Yaari was active in Zionist groups in Vienna and his hometown of Rzeszow. In 1917 he was elected to the central administration of ha-Shomer ha-Tsair. He received his doctorate in law and political science at the University of Vienna. He immigrated to Palestine and became a city official in Tel Aviv.

Shalom Spiegel was also a co-founder of the ha-Shomer ha-Tsair movement. He studied at the Vienna Rabbinical Academy from 1917-1919 and the University of Vienna where he earned his Ph.D. In 1923 he became a teacher at the Beth Sefer Reali in Haifa and later at the Technion. In 1929 he went to America where he is now professor of Bible and Hebrew literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York.

David Horowitz was born in 1899 in Drohobycz in Galicia and was active in the ha-Shomer ha-Tsair movement in Vienna. He is presently Governor of the Bank of Israel. He has been governor for Israel of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Director General of the Ministry of Finance of the State of Israel and Director of the Department of Economics of the Hebrew University.

8 Dr. Shalom Spiegel, taped personal interview with the author, New York, June 27, 1968.
9 Horowitz, Interview.
During the years 1912-1913 the youth movement ha-Shomer arose in Galicia and established itself as a Jewish scouting organization based on the ideas proposed by Lord Baden-Powell.\textsuperscript{11} Actually, the publication in Polish of Baden-Powell's book \textit{Scouting for Boys} in 1911 signalled the beginning of Jewish interest in the scouting movement.\textsuperscript{12} For the most part, \textit{Tsiroy Tsiyyon} paid attention to Hebrew and Jewish studies for Zionist youth, and was not concerned with pioneering and scouting activities. The idea of encouraging youth to settle in Palestine and to rebuild the land was still not a part of the group's program.\textsuperscript{13} Heinrich Sterner, however, was greatly influenced by the scouting idea and helped to establish groups in Galicia called by the name he coined, ha-Shomer.\textsuperscript{15} Sterner also introduced Hebrew study and terminology into the scouting program.\textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{12} Gelber, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 638.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.} Gelber reports that the movement had only two members immigrate to Palestine before 1914.

\textsuperscript{14} Dr. Heinrich Sterner was born in Lwow in 1888. He was among the first organizers of the Zionist sport and exercise organization \textit{Dror} in Galicia. In 1908 he became the group's secretary and in 1911 he was elevated to the position of administrator. He organized summer camps for Jewish youth in Galicia in which he trained them in agriculture and scouting activities.

\textsuperscript{15} Gelber, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 689.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}
It is interesting to note that at the annual conference of Tseirey Tsiyyon held in Lwow in the years 1912-1914 a group of delegates already sought to combine their organization with the scout movement, but their requests were consistently rejected. One of the leaders of ha-Shomer at this time was Aryeh Kroch. He and others like him who had strong Zionist leanings joined both ha-Shomer and Tseirey Tsiyyon while in Galicia. The war brought these Jewish scouts also to Vienna. Their program in the main was exactly like that of the international scouts. It emphasized scouting activities, camping, hiking and scouting games with the addition of Hebrew.

On the other hand,

The Zeire-Zion [Tseirey Tsiyyon] came into being in the early days of the Zionist movement. Their idea was 'the creation of a Jewish people in the Diaspora on the basis of work and Hebrew Culture.' The Zeire-Zion groups did not merge until 1913, when in Vienna they proclaimed themselves as an independent Zionist Labor party. They refused to be considered a proletarian party which stressed class

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17 Ibid., p. 690.

18 Aryeh Kroch, Head of Tsofim, Israel, taped personal interview with the author, Haifa, June 2, 1968. Aryeh Kroch was born in Lwow in 1892. He received his education in technical training schools in Lwow and Dresden. He was commander of a Dror (Zionist athletic and sport association) in Lwow and in 1912 founded the first scout troop (called ha-Shomer) in Galicia together with H. Steiner. In 1920 he made aliyah and has served as a teacher and administrator at the Beth Sefer Reali in Haifa, as principal of the Pardess Hanah Agricultural College and as head of the Palestine boy scouts (Tsofim).

19 Horowitz, Interview.
struggle or Marxist ideology, but pledged themselves to aid the realization of Zionism through self-labor, self-redemption. The young Jew in the Diaspora, according to their theory, no matter what his class affiliation might be, was to strive to become a constructive member of the modern society in Palestine.

... Zeire-Zion... adopted the synthesis of Nationalism and Socialism, but... their socialism was that of a strictly evolutionary and voluntary nature through urging young Jews to go to Palestine to work out their own salvation and that of their people.20

The atmosphere in Vienna was ripe for the creation of a new Jewish youth movement based on the study of Zionism of Tseirey Tsiyyon and the scouting and pioneering of ha-Shomer. In Willi Hoffer's21 opinion, particularly influential were the ideas of Gustav Wyneken.22 He believed that adolescents had to free themselves from the discipline of the conventional German middle class in order to be able to express their ideals and desires more freely. The then flourishing German-liberal and Zionist students' organizations, like the emerging Blau-Weiss youth group, were thought to be dependent on and influenced by the goals


21 Willi Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D., was born in Bohemia and presently lives in London where he is a psychoanalyst.

22 Gustav Wyneken, a German educator born in 1885, was noted as a philosopher of German youth movements. He founded the Freie Schulgemeinde to carry out his ideas. He called for the recognition of the right of youth to form its own character. In his opinion youth culture had ethical and social laws different from those of adult culture, and nurturing this youth culture will create a new nature for all people. He believed that youth's desire to change and improve the world leads to a pure dedication to ideals. The educational community must be a "flock," a living organism, in which both teachers and students participate as equals.
and values of the adult society. There was suspicion of adult hypocrisy and of official attitudes to sexual morality and nationalism.²³

According to Shlomo Horowitz, one of the co-founders, the new movement ha-Shomer ha-Tsair was finally created in 1915-16 after long negotiations between Tseirey Tsiyyon and ha-Shomer. The idea of combining the two had been proposed anew in Vienna by David Cohen, a young man who was to die at an early age, and was adopted and realized through the tireless efforts of Eliezer Rieger.²⁴ According to Shalom Spiegel, Rieger was the first to take the initiative and begin action to change Tseirey Tsiyyon from a movement dedicated to philosophy, study and Zionist loyalty in the Diaspora into an organization which demanded that each member become a haluts in Palestine.²⁵


²⁴ Horowitz, Interview. Initially, the newly formed group was called only ha-Shomer, although the synthesis of Tseirey Tsiyyon and the original ha-Shomer had been realized completely in Vienna. The name ha-Shomer ha-Tsair was not officially adopted until the 1917 conference of the movement. Additional sources of information can be found in Gelber, op. cit., pp. 691-692, and David Lazar, "Al Nasey Legamrey Lo Aktuali," Ma-ariy, Sept. 8, 1967.

²⁵ Spiegel, Interview. Ha-kibutz ha-Artzi is an outgrowth of ha-Shomer ha-Tsair in Vienna. In A. Revusky, Jews in Palestine (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1945), pp. 150-152, it is stated:"There are two general Kibbutz organizations which attempt... to extend the community
Once the structure was formulated, it was understood from aforesight that Rieger would head the movement. He had a sense of organization, depth of thought, and unusual maturity. There were some who objected to his leadership because he lacked experience in scouting, but it was he who was the first head of the group.

A major difference between the new unified movement in Vienna and its two predecessors was that of motivation and leadership. In Galicia the movements had been initiated

of goods and efforts... to several such units [kibutsim] all over the country [Palestine]. The most radical experiment of this kind is embodied in the Kibutz Haartzi composed of members of Hashomer Hatzair. I do not believe that there is anywhere in the world another instance of so thorough and daring an application of communist principles— in the economic, not the political, sense of the word— to practical life.

The other more cautious application of the same principle is represented by the Kibutz Hameuhad whose leaders belong to the more moderate Palestine Workers' Party. This organization shows more willingness to compromise with the relative inequality existing among its member co-operatives...

In S.N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society (New York: Basic Book, Inc., 1967), pp. 27-29 it is stated that "... Hashomer Hatzair set up a considerable number of small radically communal, kibbutzim with strong socialist-Marxist orientation." According to Eisenstadt, ha-Kibuts ha-Meuhad "... fostered large, open kibbutzim tightly organized in a centralized federation, and ha-Kibuts ha-Artzi... upheld the tradition of the small and autonomous Kvutza...."

26 Horowitz, Interview.
27 Kroch, Interview.
and run by adults, but in Vienna the young people who had grown up in the movement took it over themselves. They had been influenced by the German youth movements they met in the city and believed in the power of youth to help society progress. It was they who caused the amalgamation. These young men took the slogan of "youth culture" from the revolutionary German movements and the fundamentals of scouting from the English, but they demanded of Jewish youth the creation of a new society and Aliyah to Palestine. The innovation of this new unified movement can be seen in the fact that it called upon youth to rebel against the existing reality of the Golah and against the established conventions of society, and at the same time suggested the Zionist ideal as a practical solution for the establishment of a new society. Moreover, it demanded personal realization of these goals by its membership, even if that meant leaving one's parents and home-life. The basic difference between Tseirey Ts'iyyon and ha-Shomer ha-Tsair was that the second inherited the first's loyalty to Zionism, but called for a new emphasis on personal action and Aliyah to rebuild the land of Palestine. The Shomer had to direct himself to become a pioneer in Erets Yisrael.

28 Ibid.
29 Rothenberg, op. cit., p. 67.
30 Spiegel, Interview.
A crucial factor which influenced all involved in the new movement's creation was the temporary nature of Jewish life in Vienna. Everyone knew that he would return home once the war and the international situation were normalized. Therefore, at the very outset it was decided that those who participated in ha-Shomer ha-Tsair in Vienna would start groups of their own once they returned to their home towns in Galicia. 31

The echo of the intensive work done in Vienna was felt in Galicia as large sections of it were freed by Austria and the Jewish students in Vienna groups were able to return home. They began to form local Kinnim (dens) of Shomrim and constantly maintained contact with the central organization of the movement. The central committee under Eliezer Rieger's chairmanship guided the new groups first by letters and then by constructing a handbook for Shomer counselors, Sefer Yiuta le-Madrichim Shomrim, published in 1917. After the war ha-Shomer ha-Tsair began to publish a supplement to Moriah, the journal for Zionist youth in Galicia. The supplement began to appear in Polish in 1918. 32 Shlomo Horowitz said, "Thousands were attracted to the movement, almost in a chain reaction, because there

31 Ibid.

32 Horowitz, Interview. Each city organization or Ken (den) was made up of all the troops in a particular city. A troop composed a number of smaller units called Kevu-tsoth (groups).
was a need for it. It was the fruit of a generational need." According to Eliezer Rieger:

... the hour was right for a rebellious Zionist youth movement. The Jewish Galician family, which provided most of the members for ha-Shomer ha-Tsair was assimilationist... from a national standpoint, bourgeois from a social standpoint, and conventional from an ethical standpoint. Ha-Shomer ha-Tsair called a halt to assimilation, to the bourgeois ideology and to conventional ethics, and demanded of Jewish youth Zionism, a new society, a new ethic and immigration to Erets Yisrael... Hundreds of young people left their schools and immigrated to Palestine in order to form the foundation of the Third Aliyah.34

A New Spirit for Jewish Youth

Ha-Shomer ha-Tsair created a new spirit for Jewish youth, one of action, bravery and heroism. A new type of hero, the pioneer in Palestine, was revered and emulated and a new emphasis on Jewish fitness, discipline and power was established. These motifs were first expounded for the movement by its president Eliezer Rieger.

In an article entitled "Three Documents"35 Rieger gave important insight into how the Shomer related to various aspects of Jewish tradition, and into the hero he valued

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33 Ibid.


most highly. There are three different sources—the Talmud, the prayerbook, and the Book of the Maccabees, in which the young Jew can read about Hanukkah, a word which arouses his desire for action and deeds. Both the Talmud and the prayerbook are closer in time to the present, but the youth "... does not consider the documentation of Hanukkah as a relic and he does not look for it, as does the Talmudist, in the faded pages of Golah writings, nor is he satisfied with the document of the ordinary Jew [the prayerbook]." Rieger believed that although the Book of the Maccabees may be chronologically the oldest of the three documents, it is closer in spirit to the Shomer than either of the other two. For the Shomer the Maccabees were not a relic, but rather something gigantic, alive, and even common. They exist not in the darkness of the past, but "... we see them around us and we hear them talking to us about the heroism of the bygone days and ... of those to come." The Shomer should be able to identify with the Maccabees and to recognize traits he has in common with them. He must feel as though he goes through life as heroically as they did.36

But the Shomer should not be satisfied with emulating the Maccabees. He should have the strength and desire to become a Moses. In an article called simply "Pesach," 37

36 Ibid.
37 Eliezer Rieger, "Pesach," Moriah, XII (April 1917).
Rieger pointed out that there were two types of historical heroes. The first is a result of the historical developments of his own era. He is a spokesman and reflection of its sorrow and longings. In Rieger's opinion, however, the second type was the superior and the one who should be imitated by the Shomer. Like Moses this hero is the reason for future historical development rather than a reflection of it. He is a genius through and through, an individual who is above the spirit of the time. He is able to re-evaluate values, and although he is misunderstood by his contemporaries, he is admired as a forerunner of a new age.  

However, as a movement, ha-Shomer ha-Tsair must be wary of the blind imitation of other movements. In an article of crucial importance called "The Revitalization of the Spirit" Eliezer Rieger carefully noted the dangers of copying existing influential German youth movements,  

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38 Ibid., p. 220.  
39 Eliezer Rieger, "The Revitalization of the Spirit," Moriah, VIII (June 1918). Hereinafter referred to as "Revitalization." While this article seems to essentially be a rejection of Ahad ha-Am's ideas in the article Tehiy-yath ha-Ruah, it is not indicative of Rieger's ideas throughout his entire life. Rieger's efforts for establishing Palestine as the cultural and educational center of the Jewish world were of greater importance in the scope of his entire life than this article. For more information about these efforts see below pp. 172-181.
and succinctly spelled out the realities and necessities of Jewish survival. In this article he noted that one of the leaders of ha-Shomer had pointed out that only infrequently does a Shomer take up a pen or give a lecture.

On the other hand, one of the charter-members of the Blau-Weiss organization had claimed that in his group leisure time activities had been replaced by serious discussions of Jewish and general problems of life using the best methods of self-expression. 40 Rieger responded to the claim:

I do not want to belittle the importance of the Blau-Weiss organization. This organization can defend not only its good ideas but also the positive results of its activities. But I claim that this is not the way. After years of experience... self-expression about the problems of life no longer needs to be the focal point of the group, its expression or activity. Literary giants will not add significantly to our society... Our souls do not yearn for speakers or writers. We need people who will grab a hoe or a trowel, a sickle or plow. Under our present circumstances trained educators should not seek out subjects for self-expression, even if they are anchored on the most logical assumptions. 41

Rieger pointed out that a number of years had passed from the time that Jewish youth groups had come under the influence of the spiritual German youth movement known as Jugendkulturbewegung. He felt that young people are al-

40 Ibid., p. 326.
41 Ibid.
ways more idealistic than adults, and that therefore the German and Austrian youth by virtue of the Jugendkulturbewegung were attempting to free themselves from their structured life's routine and from its enslaving discipline. Rieger noted that German society had a rich external and practical life, but that the middle class German citizen was deficient in spiritual life and thought. Therefore, the idealistic youth raised its banner and declared that it would not be restricted from enjoying life and from finding its own form of self-expression. A similar reaction had not developed in England or France. In fact, while the Jugendkulturbewegung attempted to uproot the desire for physical fitness among German youth, the English and French scouts attempted to advance it within their own membership. 42

Rieger asked the central question:

And what is encumbent upon us Jews? What are we suffering from, a deficiency of spirituality and dreams or of physical fitness and discipline. It appears to me that if there ever existed an imitation that could be defined as blind, our imitation of the Jugendkulturbewegung is the classic example of it. No, no! We must uproot our individualism and stangle our dreaminess, or more properly direct it- cut our wings. This must be our point of departure. The soul of Judaism does not yearn for Hillel but Bar-Kochba, and Shimon Bar Yochai cannot be our spiritual leader but rather Rabbi Akiba. 43

There are those according to Rieger who seek a rationale for Jewish life in the scientific concept of compensation. They claim that other nations may have material

42 Ibid., pp. 326-327.
43 Ibid., p. 327.
possessions like land and armaments, but the Jews rise above them and will rule the family of nations eventually by virtue of their spiritual possessions. In Rieger's opinion those who accept this line of thought are in error because the demands placed on a nation which lives in material abundance are very different from those of a nation which has no national material possessions like the Jews and must live like a hunted animal. He says, "A nation of the first type will not fulfill its mission if it does not serve love, truth and justice. The second type of nation will miss the mark if it does not assure itself of the basic conditions needed for daily existence."

Rieger concludes "The Revitalization of the Spirit" by stating:

"We Jews must at this moment worry about our daily portion, and a regular resting place, just as all the other nations of the world do... Only when we will be full and living under our own roof, in our own home, will the pearls [of spiritual culture] have their real value."

No one can deny that spirit and culture have precedence over the first; but the reference here is to true culture. It cannot be our present culture which is reminiscent of the culture of the declining Rome. I prefer the fist to counterfeit culture. The fist is at least real, unfalsified, unpainted. There is something alive in the fist, this is its primitive factor. The fist, power, will always be the arm which carries out its preferred spirit. It is important that the fist will only serve a healthy body. The mighty fist must not mark us with the sign of Cain, but it cannot turn into our Achilles' heel. If life is precious to us, we must not become a lamb amidst a pack of wolves.

We have suffered already in times of political independence from lack of understanding of material culture. Perhaps that last two thousand years of our struggle with the most decadent materialism, and perhaps the suffering of the generations, whose

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44 Ibid., p. 328.
source was the lack of our own roof will teach us the laws of practical idealism. And he who believes in the rationale of history must think that we went into exile so that the nation of the highest spiritual achievements will acquire what is necessary for the fulfillment of its mission: Power, Power, Power. 45

The Status of the Movement

Based on these ideas which captured the imagination and spirit of the Jewish youth of the period, the ha-Shomer ha-Tsair movement grew in numbers and enriched its developing program. The status of the movement by the fall and winter of 1917 was described by Eliezer Rieger after he toured fourteen cities and visited their groups on behalf of the Supreme Council of ha-Shomer ha-Tsair. The cities he visited were: Rzeszow, Jaroslaw, Miszmar-Hasan, Lwow, Drohobycz, Boryslaw, Sambor, Sanok, Gorlice, Novi Santch, Jaslo, Tarnow, and Cracow. 46

Having made this trip Eliezer Rieger was able to conclude, "Our movement, at its dawn, is already a reservoir of young Jewish energy, whose explosive power no one can restrain." 47

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45 Ibid.


47 Ibid.
half of ha-Shomer ha-Tsair activities in Galicia positive results could already be seen. Before the war five per cent of the group's membership at most spoke and knew Hebrew, but on this tour Rieger counted at least 15 per cent who had acquired this skill. In the past only about 20-25 per cent learned Hebrew, while in 1917 Rieger's observations demonstrated that about 90 per cent studied the language. Before the war only about 30-40 per cent of the membership learned Jewish history and their knowledge was very superficial. By the end of 1917, 100 per cent of the Shomrim were studying the history of the Jewish people, and they knew the material in much greater depth.48

Moreover, a new and important aspect had been added to the ha-Shomer ha-Tsair program. Now, in addition to Hebrew and history, the Shomer also learned the technical skills of scouting and various trades. There was no uniform way of teaching this technical knowledge in the Kin-nim; however, Rieger was convinced that this area of the program was most successfully executed at vacation camps. He noted that those who attended the vacation camps at Dembin met with particular success.49

One of the crucial problems which confronted the movement in all of the cities was the difficulty of finding adults to teach the various subjects. The problem was

48 Ibid., p. 78.
49 Ibid.
equally severe in finding instructors of Jewish history and Hebrew and only slightly less difficult in finding teachers of technical skills.

Rieger also commented on specific situations within ha-Shomer ha-Tsair groups and thereby crystallized the growth, development, and problems of the movement. For example, Rieger noted that a Shomer Ken existed in Rzeszow, a city in which he felt Jewish life was completely neglected. The Ken had no Hebrew teacher nor any adult leadership. There was, however, an attempt made at serious study by the young people, and therefore, some progress was recognized. The Jaroslaw Ken was a particularly strong group with a warm feeling of camaraderie among all its members. History and technical skills were well taught, and this Ken had the most Hebrew atmosphere of all those that he visited. In Rieger’s opinion, however, Mizmar-Hasan had the strongest Ken in Galicia. The group made good progress in Hebrew and history and careful attention was paid to the history of Zionism. There was a group of girls who were able to discuss Jewish and technical matters in Hebrew. He found the technical work on a high level there, also. They had a photography laboratory, and carpentry and book-binding were taught. The group’s spirit was characterized by a great deal of singing.51

50 Ibid., p. 79.
51 Ibid.
The situation was not nearly as good in the other cities and groups. There was no unity within the Shomer ha-Tsair organization in Lwow. Each of the thirteen groups in the city had a different policy, and, "... they seem to compete in ignorance of Judaism." The Drohobycz Ken had one hundred members but could find no qualified Hebrew teacher, and in Sambor there were attempts by a professor of religion to convince the Shomer ha-Tsair group to abandon its work. The Cracow group was disappointing for it did not strictly follow the Shomer program and gave the children other forms of activities. Rieger felt that this was most unfortunate for "... a movement which wants to be the motor of our nation and stand guard on its rejuvenation, must, as an army, have one unified form of organization. Uniformity of aims is not enough. Only the uniformity of means creates that zeal... which creates and builds with unrestricted force."  

Youth Day - 1918

On the 18th - 20th of May, 1918 Siegfried Bernfeld

52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., pp. 79-80.
54 Ibid., p. 80.
55 Siegfried Bernfeld, 1892-1953, was born in Lwow. He was a pupil of Sigmund Freud. Influenced by Gustav Wyneken, the German educator and philosopher, he helped found the Jugendkultur movement while a student and published the youth magazine Der Anfang (Berlin, 1913-14). With the help of the Joint Distribution Committee, he founded the Hebrew Paedagogium at Vienna and the Jewish Children's Home at Baumgarten. Before the Second World War he immigrated to the United States.
called a "Youth Day" conference in order to establish a comprehensive Jewish youth organization in Vienna called the **Verband der Jüdischen Jugend Österreichs**. 56 He "... became converted to Zionism when the influx of Jewish refugees from... Galicia... revealed to him... the complicated nature of the 'Jewish Question'."57 The youth conference took place in one of the biggest halls in Vienna, the **Grosse Musikvereinssaal**. **Ha-Shomer ha-Tsaair** represented a large part of the assembly. The movement, however, did not agree with Bernfeld's stated principles of freedom and called for a more strict form of education. It even pleaded for coercive Hebraization.58 "One of the spectacular events of the **Jugendtag** was the inspired speech delivered in fluent Hebrew by the young Eliezer Rieger, at that time acknowledged leader of the **Hashomer Hatzair**...."59 Rieger's remarks centered around the theme that the ha-Shomer ha-Tsaair was ten years ahead of the Austrian Jewish youth movements. This was so in his opinion because ha-Shomer ha-Tsaair had accepted the importance of **Halutsi**-

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56 Hoffer, op. cit., pp. 150-151. For more information on this subject see Gelber, *Toldoth ha-Tenuah ha-Tsiyyonith*, pp. 693-696. At the conference Bernfeld spoke of involving Jewish youth in the general problems of all humanity. Rieger's retort was that Jewish youth should be involved in Jewish problems first.

57 Hoffer, op. cit., p. 150.

58 Ibid., p. 151.

59 Ibid.
youth. He was sure that the western Austrian movements would adopt this position in time under the influence of good counselors, and for this reason ha-Shomer ha-Tsair was prepared to enter the "Verband" willingly.60

The Lodz Conferences - 1919

The ha-Shomer ha-Tsair movement refined its ideas as the years progressed and had its influence spread beyond the boundaries of Galicia. In two important conferences held in Lodz in April, 1919, the movement was defined as basically educational, and incorporated the Jewish scout movement of Congressional Poland into its ranks. Rieger keynoted the first of these meetings and created the tone for the conference by declaring, "It is certain that our Shomer movement is an educational youth movement...."61

He felt that the education which the movement offered should not be revolutionary or artificial. Rather,

... we should only try with the help of the good elements, deep rooted in ourselves, to defeat the bad elements... Naturally, this is applicable only to that man who believes in youth, in good, and in the fact that a man has good instincts and a Divine spark which has to be and can be ignited....

In order to explain more efficiently what I understand under the term education, I will give the following example. It is certain that all those who devote themselves out of love or passion, for instance, to music or to the study of a language, etc. have

60 RPK-2.

an inborn ability in the given field which they only enhance and broaden. So it is in the field of education. That which is in an unconscious form has to be awakened, or that which has been awakened can be completed, but nothing above that which is already in human nature can be created.62

Rieger stated that the German system of education with its idealistic formalities could be harmful, and he preferred a more free one. The absolutism of a categorical imperative is not in consonance with ha-Shomer ha-Tsair educational ideology. Rieger felt, "Shomer laws and Shomer education ought to be Torah Shebalev for us; education which is composed of formulas ceases to be education...." Finally, Rieger warned that the ideal of democracy and socialistic justice must be cultivated in the minds and indoctrinated into the hearts of the Shomrim. However, the movement must be careful not to become party minded, but should endeavor to spread and cultivate all the best ideals of mankind.64

The second Lodz meeting of great importance in April 1919 was that of the first conference of Congressional Polish scouting. Rieger was the representative to this conference for ha-Shomer ha-Tsair.65 Rieger spoke extem-
poraneously at the conference and injected into it a spirit of enthusiasm. It was recognized that because of Rieger's participation and influence in the conference, "... the wonderful but suppressed youthfulness of most of the delegates was awakened and rejuvenated...."66

This, in turn, led to the

... most important result for the movement... - the unification of the Congressional Scouting Federation with the Galician. From this time forward we will work together with the comrades in Galicia, and the mutual cooperation, especially with regard to their Hebrew independence which is more obvious than among us - will cause a complete revolution in our movement: a revolution for the good.67

The Tarnow Conference - 1919

During the summer of 1919 another ha-Shomer ha-Tsair conference was held, this time in Tarnow. It was at this meeting that an ideological rift within the movement began to crystallize based on the question of whether the movement should be one of strength or spirit. Since the original expression of Rieger's ideas about strength and power in the article "The Revitalization of the Spirit,"68 opposition to this point of view had arisen. There was a group of Shomrim which felt that the proper path for the

66 Ibid., p. 15.
67 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
68 See above, pp. 30-33.
movement was the spiritual discussions and intellectual activities Rieger had argued against. Rieger assured everyone that this ideological difference would not split the movement. The essence of the ideas were the same - the rejuvenation of the Jewish people. Their differences were not fundamental but rather just methodological. Rieger did not negate the importance of intellectual activities but rather felt that the emphasis of the movement must remain on work and action. At a meeting of the ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir leadership at the conclusion of this conference Rieger was elected president of the organization for a second time.

The Lwow Convention - 1920

In the spring of 1920 there was a convention of Shomer leaders in Lwow at which the topic of discussion was the objective foundations of the movement. David Horowitz outlined three bases for the ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir movement: 1. subjective, 2. social, 3. national. In explanation of these three points he said:


1. The first requires that every Jew should live according to his own inner ideals and possibilities; only such a life is a full life, every other is decadence which is exactly the life of the present society. Therefore, there is a gap created between this society and the Shomer...

2. In the present society the machine is everything and man is its tool. There are two classes of people: 1) labor cattle, 2) an intelligentsia which flourishes on the first's backs. The Shomer will live in such a society where all people have the opportunity for improvement.

3. Such conditions in a society develop the subjective values of the individual and the values of national culture. 72

Rieger agreed with Horowitz's conclusions but interwove them with his own ideas and developed four objective foundations for the movement. These four foundations were: 1) youth - idealism, faith and growth, 2) ethics - social justice which can be materialized in Jewish life in Palestine, 3) nationalism - not merely faith in the Jewish people as God's chosen, but confidence in it as the people striving for internationalism, the link among the nations envisaged by our prophets, 4) bravery - such behavior of a Shomer in life which will make him an idealist and a man of action. 73

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72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
At this convention of ha-Shomer ha-Tsair in Lwow in 1920 Eliezer Rieger took leave of the organization as its chief. He did so, he said,

... with a feeling of joy, for he sees it flourishing and at the same time with a feeling of fear, whether the fate of the Shomer will not be the fate of those who at the time of Shabbtai Tsvi, pinned wings on themselves and stood on roofs to fly at midnight to Palestine, but the Persian mercenaries broke their wings. 74

**Aliyah**

During his last year in Europe Rieger had wished to be self-reliant, 75 and rather than return home after completing his degree at the university, he accepted an invitation to be principal of the Hebrew Gymnasium "Yavneh" in Lodz. After one year in this position Rieger left on Aliyah to Palestine. 76

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74 Ibid.


76 "Life History," *op. cit.*
Building a Jewish Homeland 1920-1928

The Beginning of a Career

Eliezer Rieger arrived in Palestine during the summer of 1920. Filled with the zeal of his youth and the spirit of his youth movements, Tseirey Ts'iyyon and ha-Shomer ha-Tsair, he decided to try his hand at physical labor before beginning any other work, and for the summer months of 1920 he helped to build the road between Jerusalem and Kiryat Anavim.

Immediately after this experience Rieger was engaged as a teacher of general and Jewish history and literature in the Beth Sefer Reali of Haifa headed by Dr. Biram.

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1 Ministry of Education and Culture of the State of Israel, Archives, Eliezer Rieger-Personnel Questionaire, File 454, Portfolio 806 (Jerusalem).


3 Eliezer Rieger, Chicago, letter, Oct. 4, 1930, to the Secretary of the Department of Education of the University of Chicago. Rieger's decision to begin a career in education can also be seen as a result of the influence of his youth movements. Education was at the core of the ideology of Tseirey Ts'iyyon, and throughout his career Rieger was to become a torch-bearer in Palestine for concepts which had been central to the movement such as education, pioneering and labor, and aliyah.

The Beth Sefer Reali, modeled on the Real-Schule of Europe was founded in 1913. It played a central role in the 1912 "Battle of Languages" (Milhemeth ha-Sefo't) which was an important step in establishing Hebrew as the language of instruction in Yishuv schools. For further information see below, pp. 121-122.

Dr. Arthur Biram came to Palestine from Germany in 1914. He was the founder and a teacher and principal in the Beth Sefer Reali in Haifa.
He left this school after teaching for only one year because of a clash of personalities with the principal. It was during that year that he met his wife Rivkah Brandstetter, who was then living in Haifa. They were married in Jerusalem on December 10, 1921. In 1921 Rieger was appointed an instructor in the Beth ha-Midrash ha-Ivri le-Moroth in Tel Aviv where he taught for a year, and then he went on to serve as a teacher in the Gymnasia Herzlia from 1921 to 1928. He continued to teach the same subjects he did in Haifa.

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4 RRK-3. According to Mrs. Kaplan there had been tension between Biram and Rieger because Rieger was a strong personality and Biram considered him a threat. Three years later Biram wrote to Rieger and apologized for their misunderstanding.

5 RRK-3. Rieger had met Rivkah Brandstetter in Tarnow and again in Vienna through their involvement with Tsie ray Tsiyon. Finally, he met her again in Palestine where they married and had three daughters- Hamutal Kopito, Shlomith Haber-Schaim, and Hagith Shlonsky.

6 Rieger, Chicago, letter, op. cit. Rieger became a member of the Aseyfat ha-Nivharim in 1926 and was a delegate to the fifteenth Zionist Congress in Basel in 1927.

The Gymnasia Herzlia was founded in 1905 in Jaffa as a private institution. (See Fania Matman, "Kakh Nosdah ha-Gymnasiyah ha-Ivrit be-Yafo," Sheviley Hahanuch, XXX, No. 1 (Autumn 1969), pp. 58-61). It's program was modeled on the European Gymnasium. Indeed, in J. Bentwich, Education in Israel (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1965), p. 12 it states: "The syllabus [of the Gymnasia Herzlia] was a translation of that of a Continental gymnasium, with some Jewish studies thrown in. This mixture of subjects, with no clear integration, formed the model for secondary schools founded subsequently...."

For further information see below, pp. 120-121. The Beth ha-Midrash ha-Ivri le-Moroth (Women's Teacher Training College) was founded in 1913 by the Russian Hovevey Tsiyon. For further information about these schools and their founding see, Sefer ha-Hinnukh we-ha-Tarbuth (Jerusalem: The Ministry of Education and Culture, 1952), p. 1.
Toldoth ha-Zeman he-Hadash

One of the immediate problems and challenges that Rieger faced as a history teacher in Palestine was that he was handicapped because there was no high school history text book in Hebrew. If the language was to be established as the modern national tongue it would have to be used not only in classroom instruction but also as the language of texts read by all the students. Rieger made his contribution in this area by writing Palestine's first modern history text book in Hebrew called Toldoth ha-Zeman he-Hadash (The History of Modern Times). The text was primarily a general history book, and while Jewish history was included in it, it was handled only in the perspective of the Jewish role in general humanity and not as the major emphasis of the book. One of the first problems Rieger met in writing this history text, since he was pioneering the endeavor, was the scarcity of historic scientific terminology in the Hebrew language. Rieger overcame this obstacle by creating a number of terms.

7 Eliezer Rieger, Toldoth ha-Zeman he-Hadash (Tel Aviv: Kohelet Publishing Co., 1924). Hereinafter referred to as N.T.
of his own.  

In his book Rieger explains that he is inclined to divide history into three parts; a) the period of the east—where Asia is central—to the conquest of Alexander the Great, b) the period of the west—where Europe is central—to the French Revolution, and c) the universal period—where the stage of history spreads over the entire planet.  

It is interesting to note that even in this high school book on general history Rieger incorporated a number of ideas which either reflected his beliefs about the Jewish people or were part of his developing thoughts about the role of the Jews in the history of modern times. This can be seen when he discusses the world situation leading up to the modern period. He does so nation by nation, and he mentions the Jewish people almost as though they had been a people living on their own land for the recent millennia like the Germans or the English. Moreover, in discussing Zionism he forthrightly states, "The victory of Zionism will be the victory of the spirit and will over matter, of quality over quantity, and of peace—

8 A few examples of the terminology he created for this book are: abdication—abdikation, sovereignty—sovereignty, guild—genossenschaft, surplus value—Überschusswerte. As far as I could ascertain, these terms are not presently in use.

9 M.T., pp. 16-17.

10 Ibid., pp. 25-27.
over war."11 Rieger expected Zionism to carry a revolution of values in its wake. If it is to be successful it will change the Jew's entire life, relationship to his fellow man, and society— not just the political structure. The same idea is demonstrated in Rieger's evaluation of the French Revolution. In his opinion it was a failure because it "... did not include an ethical internal revolution- and without... the rejuvenation of the inner man and personal, eternal idealism- there is no rejuvenation for society."12

Totsereth ha-Arets

Another important contribution Eliezer Rieger made during his years as a high school teacher in Tel Aviv was his role in helping to found and lead the Movement for Totsereth ha-Arets (home grown or home made produce and products). In the years 1923-24 when the movement was created there existed almost no industry in Palestine. Most products were brought from overseas, and even agriculture was so underdeveloped that butter had to be brought from Egypt. Besides citrus fruits, almonds and olives there were almost no home grown vegetables and

11 Ibid., p. 275.
12 Ibid., p. 73.
fruits available.  

At this time a small group of friends living in Tel Aviv realized that the Yishuv would have to take upon itself the responsibility of developing agricultural and industrial productivity if it wished to progress. It was therefore informally decided in 1923 to form a committee to discuss and act upon the problems of produce and products and to make this committee the nucleus of a movement, Totsereh ha-Arets. The new movement saw as its goal the development of intensive industry and agriculture in Palestine by fostering creativity and by educating the community. The people in Palestine were very skeptical about purchasing Palestinian produce, and the committee, therefore, saw education as the more essential of its goals. Among the members of the first committee were Eliezer Rieger, Mordecai Bernstein, Shalom Yafeh and Alexander Yevserov. Rieger was elected chairman of the movement.  

As chairman, Eliezer Rieger fulfilled an important

13 Alexander Ezer (Yevserov), taped personal interview with the author, Beth Hakerem, Jerusalem, May 19, 1968.

14 Ibid. Yafeh and Yevserov together created the Mishar we-Tasiyyah company. The company began to publish a bi-weekly trade and economic magazine and helped to carry out Totsereh ha-Arets exhibitions. There was no official connection between the magazine and the movement, but they shared the same goals.
role as representative of the movement. Among the committee he was the most masterful in the Hebrew language, a very good speaker and a good administrator. Under his guidance a Totsereth ha-Arets exhibition was organized by the committee in 1923 as an educational project. It was set up in three rooms of the Zionist Club on Shederoth Rothschild in Tel Aviv, and about thirty different organizations participated. It was felt that even if the home made products were of lower quality, the community must be convinced of its national obligation to buy them anyway. 15

Rieger believed that by educational means, "We must accustom the Vishuv slowly to eat more of the foods already created in the land or those which the land will be able to create and eat less of what the land is unable to produce." 16 His devotion to this idea, his wife reports, caused some hardships in his home, for he would not permit foreign products to be used or served. 17 He saw, however, in the Movement for Totsereth ha-Arets "...
one of the processes of our identification with the land of our origin and our covenantal connection with it. A cosmopolitan nation like ours must become accustomed to live not only in this land but also from this land... and the basic value which is in Totsereth ha-Arets is the coalescence of the nation and its complete identification with its birthland which it now dwells in..."18

Moreover, Rieger believed, "... our students must know that our agricultural and industrial development depends first and foremost upon the internal market of Palestine. A good internal market is a precondition for the acquisition of overseas markets... Just as it is impossible to create a Hebrew birthland without Hebrew work, so it will not be created without Hebrew production."19

After the first exhibition the movement began to develop and grow. New people joined who were more expert in industry and economics, and the goals changed. The major task now became not to educate the community but to educate the producers to create products on a high enough level that the community would not have to be persuaded to buy them. Therefore, Rieger slowly began to withdraw from his position as chairman and to concentrate his activities on the sub-committee whose purpose it was

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18 H.E., p. 257.
19 Ibid., p. 259.
to stimulate programs to train youth to be good producers and consumers. Rieger was in his last months as head of the movement when it held its second exhibition in 1925. This one was housed in Beth Sefer le-Banim on Rehov Aḥad Ha-am. In addition, the Totsereth ha-Arets movement opened a store in Tel Aviv for the sale of home made products under Rieger’s guidance along with the help of the Department of Trade and Industry of the Zionist Executive. 20

**The Palestine Youth Delegation**

The year which spanned from the middle of 1924 until just about June 1925 was one in which Eliezer Rieger played an important part in a different type of educational project devoted to rebuilding Palestine. The Keren Kayemeth (Jewish National Fund) with M.M. Ussishkin at its head was having great difficulty in funding and financing its organization. One of the chief reasons for this was that there was but little money coming from the United States. The distribution and collection of "blue boxes" for Keren Kayemeth in America was at this time the responsibility of the Junior Hadassah alone. It was felt that all the Jewish youth organizations of Amer-

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20 Ezer, op. cit. The Totsereth ha-Arets exhibition was eventually taken over by the Mishar we-Taasiyyah company which developed it into the Yerid ha-Mizraḥ. According to Ezer the movement died out naturally as it achieved its goals and there was no longer a need for it.
ica should be enlisted to raise funds and to distribute and collect the boxes. In order to put this idea into effect Julius Berger, who then worked in the youth department of the Keren Kayemeth, invited Eliezer Riegler, Shalom Spiegel, and Lotta Levinsohn to travel to the United States as a youth delegation.\textsuperscript{21} The purpose of the delegation was to bring the message of Halutsiyuth to the Jewish youth of America and also to enlist their moral and financial support for the Jewish National Fund.\textsuperscript{22}

According to Miss Levinsohn, both Riegler and Spiegel were well suited for this important mission because "... they represented a type of East European intellectual, then still unfamiliar on the American scene, for whom Zionism was more than an idea, an inspiration, but a way of life to be followed out to its ultimate implication; self-fulfillment through service to the Land of Israel."\textsuperscript{23} Both men were energetic, wrote a great deal, lectured and did the necessary organizational work to make the delegation a success. It was Lotta Levinsohn's particular function to act as their American Zionist social sponsor,

\textsuperscript{21} Shalom Spiegel, taped personal interview with the author, New York, June 27, 1968. Spiegel was at that time a teacher at the Gymnasia Herzlia. Shlomo Horowitz was also invited to participate in the mission but declined.


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
translator and social secretary.\textsuperscript{24}

The idea of a Palestine youth delegation was, strangely, not well received at first by the Zionist Organization in the United States. The \textit{New Palestine} remarked in an editorial that the delegation came to the United States "... without our consent,"\textsuperscript{25} and the group was forced to remain in London for about two months while Louis Lipsky, head of the American Zionist organization, considered whether he truly wanted to invite them. In one of his telegrams to the Palestine Youth Delegation he intimated that no one from Palestine was needed to explain Zionism to American Zionists.\textsuperscript{26}

Eliezer Rieger developed a specific idea which he impressed upon his colleagues and which influenced their work once they arrived in the United States. He felt that the desired increment from America for the Jewish National Fund would never be realized unless American youth were educated about the Zionist idea. One cannot make an appeal to indifferent people. American Jews had to be educated to identify with the land of Palestine.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid. Both men had a book knowledge of English and Levinsohn was just becoming familiar with Hebrew. Therefore, until the men mastered English the common language of the delegation was German.


\textsuperscript{26} RRR-3.

\textsuperscript{27} Spiegel, \textit{op. cit.}
The New Palestine pointed out a serious problem among Jewish youth at the time the Palestine Youth Delegation arrived. It commented, "The student is so engrossed in making his way through high school and university, that it is with difficulty that he is torn away, for a time, from his secular pursuits to affiliate himself with things that have a Jewish value." \(^{28}\) Rieger saw an idealistic youth movement, bent first on the reform of social issues as an answer to the crises of American Jewish youth. The spirit of Blau-Weiss and ha-Shomer ha-Tsair should be injected into the youth movements. The idea of Palestine must become the rallying point for these groups. \(^{29}\) He went on to state:

The youth movement of Blau-Weiss and Hashomer Hazair began and developed out of a general human aim. The ethos which demands truth to its own being and consequential action, was the bridge which led this youth first to Judaism, consequentially to Palestine, and finally to working in Palestine. We cannot as yet perceive this general psychic maturity and intellectual preparedness in the American youth organizations. They are clannish and lack the dynamic force and magic of a movement...

By linking the youth to the ideals of Palestine, you can arouse their interest in Judaism. Palestine will give them the ideal content of their lives, and unfold to them the marvelous destiny and titanic strength of the Jewish people. With Palestine as the center, the schools, synagogues and most of all the youth organizations will receive new life. \(^{30}\)

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\(^{28}\) Jewish Youth, p. 2.


\(^{30}\) Ibid., p. 505.
According to the New Palestine there was a serious defect in the fact that all Jewish youth movements were dependent on the financial contributions of adults who did not participate in them. The movements' members felt that all they had to do was study and carry out their programs. That is why the work of the Palestine Youth Delegation came to be viewed

... as being of the highest value. They are engaged in working, through the young people, for the National Fund. They are interested in creating, first, an understanding of the fundamental ideas of the National Fund, and, what is just as important, of the ideal of service for the National Fund. They hope to make the Jewish youth responsible for this work. They want to have the Jewish youth assume the duty of developing an interest in the National Fund. To knowledge, service is added. Once the Jewish youth activities appreciate that through service for the National Fund, they acquire a deeper connection with the movement, and help directly in the maintenance of the purposes of the Zionist organization, they become a tangible asset, and although the cost of maintaining their own organizations may still have to be met by outside contributions, they are in a sense self-supporting units. By thus connecting the work of education with the immediate problems of Zionist life, the promoters of the movement who enlist the Jewish youth in the work of the National Fund, are helping to solve the difficulty involved in their own permanent organization.31

As soon as the delegation arrived, it began work on educational and organizational innovations. Meetings and seminars were instituted with college age youth which eventually led to the founding of the collegiate Zionist society, Avukah.32 Young Judea and Junior Hadassah.

31 Jewish Youth, p. 2.

32 Spiegel, op. cit. Also found in Rieger's personal papers belonging to Rivkah Kaplan.
sah were encouraged to conduct more intensive programs and financial campaigns, and plans were made for their continued activity in behalf of the Jewish National Fund. The five branches of Tseiroy Tsiyyon in Greater New York participated in the distribution of the National Fund boxes and devoted an entire issue of its magazine Farm Folk to this project. The ha-Shomer ha-Tsair and he-Haluts organizations were also drawn into the activity of distributing the boxes. In addition a conference of Jewish educators was called by Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan in February 1925 at the suggestion of the Palestine Youth Delegation to discuss the implications of Palestine and the Jewish National Fund for American Jewish youth and education. Among those in attendance were Henrietta Szold, David Yellin, Dr. Samuel Benderly and Dr. Kaplan. At this conference Dr. Rieger

33 "Land for the Chaluzim: The Jewish Youth of America Cooperate with the Pioneer Youth of Palestine," The New Palestine, VIII (Jan. 2, 1925), p. 15.

34 Henrietta Szold (1860-1945) created the Hadassah organization in the United States in 1912. In 1927 she was selected to serve on the Zionist Executive of the World Zionist Organization and to administer its Department of Education and Health in Palestine. She was the founder of Aliyath Noar.

35 David Yellin was born in Jerusalem in 1864 and died there in 1941. He was a teacher in the Lémel School in Jerusalem from 1886-1914 and was a teacher and dean of the Hebrew Teachers Seminary in Jerusalem from 1910. In 1903 he founded a teachers association Aqudath ha-Morim. While he was in America in 1924 he lectured at the Jewish
pointed out that while general education in America is practical, Jewish education suffers from a lack of contact with real life. His suggestion was that it should be connected with the creative life of Palestine. The children must learn to participate in the joys and responsibilities of Geulath ha-Arets (redemption of the land), which must become their first care and thought.\(^{37}\)

In June 1925, just before the delegation was about to leave the United States, a report on its activities was made in the New Palestine. Its goals were stated as being education - to stimulate personal service in and for Palestine, organization - to organize existing youth institutions for Geulath ha-Arets, and finance - to establish

Institute of Religion and Columbia University. He was appointed lecturer and finally professor of Hebrew poetry of the Middle Ages at the Hebrew University.

Samson Benderly was born in Palestine in 1876 and died in 1944. He immigrated to the United States in 1898 and settled in Baltimore where he conducted a number of Jewish schools in that city. Benderly graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, but in 1910 he became the director of the Bureau of Jewish Education in New York City, a position in which he served for more than three decades. For further information see Nathan H. Winter, Jewish Education in a Pluralist Society: Samson Benderly and Jewish Education in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 1966).

a continuous source of income for the Jewish National Fund by making it a year-round project for youth. The delegation was said to have centered its activities in New York City but also worked in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, Maryland and the New England states. It accomplished its mission by speaking at mass meetings of federated youth organizations, at conventions, and by lecturing before individual youth groups, Hebrew school assemblies, and conferences of Hebrew teachers and principals.38

The delegation worked through the youth organizations already in existence. Zionist youth organizations were furnished with a systematic Jewish National Fund box and dunam program, and other youth organizations which had previously had no contact with the Jewish National Fund were persuaded to make its program an integral part of their work.39

The delegation also introduced the Jewish National Fund box into the Hebrew schools. By virtue of a plan Rieger and Spiegel instituted, each pupil was expected to keep a box at home and to return it to his school to be emptied at Succoth, Hanukkah, Purim, and Shavuoth. The


39 Ibid.
delegation suggested that the ceremony of collecting the funds be used to discuss the importance and role of Palestine. About 25,000 boxes were placed in the Hebrew schools in 1925 as a result of this program. 40

One final project which the Palestine Youth Delegation initiated was a "Conference of Jewish Youth Organizations for Palestine." The conference was held in New York during April under the auspices of Young Judea, Junior Hadassah, Junior Mizrachi, Young Israel, Young People's League of the United Synagogue, Inter-varsity Menorah Council, League of Jewish Youth, hé-Haluts and Young Poale Zion. 41 Among the speakers who participated were Rieger, Spiegel, Dr. David de Sola Pool and Louis Marshall. 42 The conference resolved that the youth organizations would cooperate with the Jewish National Fund Bureau for America in redemption

40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 "Jewish Youth Mass Rally," The New Palestine, VIII (April 24, 1925), p. 523. Dr. David de Sola Pool was Rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel in New York. He was president of Young Judea of America four times.

Louis Marshall was a famed constitutional lawyer. He was president of the American Jewish Committee and helped to establish the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and was president of Reform Temple Emanuel in New York and the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary. Although a non-Zionist he worked closely with the World Zionist Organization and helped to create an enlarged Jewish Agency for Palestine.
of the land of Palestine and that they would attempt to establish contacts with the halutsim in Palestine and to develop the spirit of Halutsiyuth among the Jewish youth of America.\textsuperscript{43}

During Rieger's year in the United States he contributed a number of articles to the journal The New Palestine. The one which gives the most interesting insight into his views and which evoked a strong reaction from Rabbi Meir Berlin,\textsuperscript{44} then president of the American Mizrahi, was entitled "... Kulo Techelet: Where Fringes are not Essential." In this article he reacts to the current idea that the halutsim are irreligious and destructive of Jewish tradition. For the halul, Rieger feels, "... labor in Palestine is ... a religious experience, the deepest motive of ... [his] existence.\textsuperscript{46}

He went on to state:

When we say that a new religion is budding in the life of the workers in Palestine— a religion of work and of joy in work, a religion of Sabbaths

\textsuperscript{43} Youth Delegation, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{44} Rabbi Meir Berlin came to the United States from Volozhin, Poland. Besides becoming president of the American Mizrahi, he was also president of the World Mizrahi Organization and vice president of the Zionist World Executive Committee. He moved to Palestine in 1933.

\textsuperscript{45} Eliezer Rieger, \textit{The New Palestine}, VIII (Jan. 9, 1925), pp. 22-23.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 22.
and festivals, a religion of unrestrained striving for self-improvement and the betterment of the world one lives in: we do not wish to deny that many ritual and ceremonial customs of Judaism are ignored, not out of spite, but from a lack of interest. Sabbath day walking limits and ritual baths, synagogues... and often even kosher kitchens..., are not upheld in most of the Kvutzoth.  

Reiger believed that it was unfair to expect of halutsim who had escaped to Palestine from what they considered a congealed, ritualized Diaspora Judaism to adopt just that form of religion in their new homeland. He was convinced, however, that a rejuvenated Judaism would develop in Palestine from the mixing of old and new ideas.

Reiger concluded:

The sages said: A Tallit that is all Techelet (blue) required no Zizit. Chalulim, giving to Judaism all they have, their talents and their careers, their hearts and their brains, the work of their hands and the marrow of their bones— are in no need of ritual practices to betoken their Judaism...  

In his article "Religion and Religiosity" Rabbi Berlin attacked Reiger for confusing the two terms of Berlin's title. He claimed that religion is something objective and absolute. It contains books and traditions. It is not just a feeling. On the other hand, "Religiosity has no well-defined content. This is why there is not a Jewish religiosity and a non-Jewish religiosity. Moreover, religiosity may sometimes go hand and hand with the

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47 Ibid.  
48 Ibid., p. 23.
most irreverent deed."

Berlin adds sharply:

In other words, the writer [Rieger] admits that the idea of praying to the Creator is discarded, that what Jews have held to be an essential of the sanctity of the family does not exist, that Kashrut is out of style. Notwithstanding this, the tone of the article is such as to give the impression that the author stands for religion and seeks to find it—where?—in religious sentiments...

To be sure the writer calls this a new religion; but to begin with, when, pray, did the Jews abolish their old religion and embrace a new one?

Rieger was shown Berlin's article before publication and wrote a retort titled "Ethics of the Chalutzim: A Glimpse into the Life of our Builders" which appeared in the same issue. In it he noted that young men who were indifferent to religion in the Diaspora had become more religious in Palestine. He felt that religion had become deeply rooted in the hearts of the halutzim and that essential religious practices like the Sabbath, festivals and milah are generally observed. Rieger also believed that there would even be a renaissance of Jewish religious practices in Palestine. Therefore, he cautioned:

... narrow minded dogmatists [not to] rush in and trample upon the religious feelings of the Chalutzim with violent demands upon their conscience. Such people will find that they are not only biting into granite, but that they hamper the religious

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development of the Chalutzim by creating disgust for the things that they preach through their inquisitorial dicta. 51

When the work of the delegation was completed and Rieger was ready to embark for Palestine, he received a letter from M.M. Ussishkin requesting that he delay his departure. Ussishkin himself wanted to come to the United States to continue to cultivate this important country for the Zionist Organization. He noted that Rieger had had great success and would be needed to lay the groundwork for Ussishkin's arrival in a few months' time. Rieger refused to stay and returned immediately to Palestine and to teaching. 52

Rieger's Work for the Keren Kayemeth

Rieger maintained his interest in the Keren Kayemeth even when he was again in Tel Aviv. At the first convention of the Palestine Teachers Council for the Jewish National Fund he was elected to its executive committee and appointed to its cabinet along with Hayyim...

51 Ibid., p. 142.

52 M.M. Ussishkin, Jerusalem, letter, June 19, 1925, to Eliezer Rieger in New York. When Rieger returned to Palestine he received a letter from A. Granovsky dated Aug. 31, 1925 requesting that he continue to work for Keren Kayemeth on a full time basis. Desiring to return to teaching, Rieger refused this offer, too. These letters are found in Rieger's personal files.

Menahem Mendel Ussishkin (b. Russia, 1863; d. Jerusalem, 1941) was elected a member of the presidium at the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 and became president of the Jewish National Fund in 1922.

Abraham Granovsky was born in Bessarabia and immigrated to Palestine in 1922. He was soon thereafter appointed managing director of the Jewish National Fund.
The three main speakers at this first convention were Ussishkin, Bialik and Rieger. While the first two emphasized the national obligation to redeem the land, it was Rieger who put the obligation into an educational perspective. He pointed out that education must be rooted in the reality of life. In some way the epic of rebuilding the land and the obligation of redeeming it, the nation's greatest reality, must find concrete expression in the education which the children receive. The land question must be handled by itself and integrated into every other aspect of the curriculum. The geography teacher must use every opportunity at his disposal to discuss it, and the history teacher should explain the decline of those countries throughout world history who suffered from land problems. The Bible teacher may present the laws of Yovel and Shemittah. The biology and literature teachers can easily select material which would inaugurate discussion and study about the land, and the mathematics instructor can select his figures and examples from the history of Keren Kayemeth.

Rieger made a number of other suggestions which emphasized the centrality of the Keren Kayemeth in educa-

54 Ibid., p. 227.
tion. He believed that textbook writers must be persuaded to incorporate information about Keren Kayemeth in their books, and that field trips to Keren Kayemeth lands must be made a fundamental part of each school's curriculum. Just as he did in the United States, Rieger emphasized the importance of each child being responsible for his own Keren Kayemeth box. The school too must organize parties, raffles, and other activities in which the students participate in gathering money. Moreover he felt that the schools must limit their demands on student participation to only the most elementary public activities, the most central of which is the Keren Kayemeth. During their school years students must concentrate their time and energy most intensively on this endeavor, and thereby they will learn to carry it into their adult lives.55

In 1926 Eliezer Rieger was named editor of a new youth journal entitled "Ha-Noar we-Ha-Arets." It was a bi-monthly sponsored by the Keren Kayemeth, and included news about the organization and articles and reprints by both young people and well known authors and poets. The magazine appeared through the summer of 1927 and then went out of existence. In stating the philosophy of the

55 Ibid., p. 228
Journal Rieger declared that the Hebrew farmer who works on the land in Palestine "... is the supreme realization of the phenomenon of youth." Moreover, "... at a time in which there is no educational hero who is satisfactory ... as an example to the younger generation... the example of the Hebrew farmer who does important work on the national land makes its way into the hearts of the young. This example is still able to bring about a complete revolution in our world of education, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora." Rieger dedicated the magazine to the workers of Palestine but noted that it would follow no line of partisanship. Its central theme and connecting link would be the ideology of youth - that which seeks the eternal truth and absolute right rather than the temporal compromises of the political party. The magazine was to serve, in Rieger's mind, as a vehicle of expression for Palestinian youth, as a source of influence on youth in the Diaspora and as a stimulus for a general youth movement. He concluded by proclaiming his faith in the potentiality of Jewish youth now that they have regained

57 Ibid., p. 3.
58 Ibid.
their own land:

We are the children of an international nation. Our internationality was a curse for us all the time we were without a homeland, but it will be a source of our strength and blessing all the time we dwell in our national home. A basic national culture will help the Hebrew nation take courage... The Palestinian youth that was brought here from the five sections of the world, and from the seventy nations will find that the short road to itself is the road around the world. We must assume that the Hebrew youth in Palestine, by the very nature of its quality, will draw near to the youth of other nations. They will forbid war after war, race hatred, enmity among nations, oppression and mutual backbiting, and will seek to increase cooperative efforts among every nation and tongue in order to bring about a pure humanity.59

59 Ibid.
CHAPTER FOUR

Inspector of Education 1928-1940

Activities in the Department of Education

In July of 1928 Miss Henrietta Szold, who had been elected to the Zionist Executive in 1927 and was placed in charge of its Department of Education and Health, wrote to Eliezer Rieger and informed him of her intention to engage him as an inspector for the Zionist Organization's Department of Education. Dr. I.B. Berkson, who had already been selected as the new Director of Education but had not yet started to serve, had given his approval. Rieger's talent was recognized by Miss Szold who had been impressed with his thoroughness as a teacher, his competency and impact during his mission for Keren Kayemeth to the United States,

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1 Henrietta Szold, Jerusalem, letter, July 10, 1928, to Dr. Eliezer Rieger, Zionist Archives, (Jerusalem) J17/126. In the first years of the Mandate the Zionist Organization was recognized as the Jewish Agency under the Mandate Authority. The Jewish Agency proper, as a body representative of all Jewry, Zionist and non-Zionist alike, was constituted in 1929, and took over the responsibility of education. It lasted only until 1932 when the Waad Leumi was created; and the Department of Education then passed into its sphere of activity.
and by his activities for that organization in Palestine. ²

Eliezer Rieger's new responsibilities as a district inspector were to help write the education budget, write reports on the progress of the schools and teachers, and develop the talents of inexperienced young teachers. ³

His initial supervisory work-load of schools included all Hebrew schools in Haifa and its suburbs, Acco and Kefar Baruch, the Sharon and the settlements in Judea. In addition, he was responsible for Beth ha-Midrash le-Morim, the Hebrew Gymnasia and Bet ha-Befer le-Mishar in Jerusalem. ⁴ When Rieger returned from a two year leave of absence to the United States, he was appointed inspector of all secondary schools in place of Dr. Joseph Luria who had been elevated to Acting Director of the Department of Education. Rieger combined this position with some teaching he did in pedagogy at the Hebrew University. ⁵ From 1936 until he resigned from the Department

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³ Dr. I.B. Berkson, personal interview with the author, New York, Dec. 20, 1967.

⁴ Protokol Mishivath Meetseth ha-Mefakhim (Minutes of the Council of Inspectors of the Kenesseth Yisrael Department of Education), Dec. 4, 1933, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/153, p. 1. These minutes are hereinafter referred to as Council of Inspectors.

In 1940, his work was expanded to incorporate the entire complex of schools in Beth ha-Kerem - with special arrangements to be an administrator at the Hebrew Secondary School,\(^6\) and the informal educational areas of scouting and youth work.\(^7\)

During the years that Rieger was a member of the Department of Education he spoke out on a number of specific issues, both curricular and administrative. While most of his ideas were not accepted or acted upon because of the disagreement of the other inspectors, lack of funds and simple inertia, they did help to create an atmosphere for educational activity and thought. A few of his suggestions and statements did, however, bring about the desired change.

In the area of the curriculum Rieger expressed the feeling that Zionism should not be taught as a separate subject, as was the custom of the day. Rather, it should be incorporated into a general subject area called social studies and should be related to many different aspects of Jewish life in Palestine and the Diaspora.\(^8\) In add-

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\(^6\) See below, pp. 138-139.

\(^7\) Council of Inspectors, July 20-21, 1936, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/158, p. 5.

\(^8\) Council of Inspectors, April 12, 1939, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/160.
ition, at a meeting of inspectors, Rieger emphasized the importance of the concept of Totsereth ha-Arets in citizenship education. He called for finding a suitable educational path to place this idea in its proper perspective in the Hebrew schools in Palestine. He felt that use of this concept could serve as a shield against the polarization of Palestine's youth, something he feared would be the result of the Trend system of education. The other inspectors at this meeting disagreed and warned that the concept of Totsereth ha-Arets might be too overwhelming and difficult to be stressed in the schools. Rieger also recommended that the school year be lengthened, at least for the purposes of informal education and club programs, and extended throughout the entire summer. The schools and club programs would help keep the children off the streets and provide them with much needed additional opportunities for aculturation. Rieger constantly spoke of the possibility of organizing village education in such a way that the garden next to the school would not be considered a toy. He noted experiments in the United States where village youth would go to a real experimental farm one day a week and work and carry out

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Finally, a recurring point which Rieger would make was that the inspector should check not only the number of hours which a student must be in school, but also the scope of the curriculum he has to study. Rieger believed that the curriculum was overloaded with a variety of subjects and that the student suffered because of this.

During the years in which Rieger worked in the Department of Education an inspector's duties included overseeing and guiding all the educational activities of the schools for which he was responsible. Rieger, however, felt that this was a poor approach to supervision. He, in contrast, stood for the specialization of the inspector's job to deal with a specific area of the curriculum or of school administration rather than with the entire school. Within the structure of the Trend system, however, this suggestion was impractical because inspectors were permitted to observe only

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12 Ibid. There had been no curriculum revision since 1923. The first which was to take place occurred in 1954 when Rieger was Director General.
in the schools of their Trend. An area specialist would have to observe in all the schools regardless of Trends, and it was only the Director of Education who had that right.\textsuperscript{13}

There were other innovative ideas that Rieger proposed in the area of supervision, administration and teacher training which were to have some impact in future times. At meetings of the inspectors he expressed the feeling that even schools which were not officially part of the network of schools affiliated with the Department of Education should receive some supervision from the Department. The condition existed where there were a multiplicity of schools with no supervision at all.\textsuperscript{14} One of Rieger's responsibilities in the Department of Education was the area of youth work. It was through his initiative that a structured Youth Department was founded as part of the Department of Education which offered the first opportunities for youth work within a governmental framework.\textsuperscript{15} Yosef Meyuhas, who was the first head of

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{13} Council of Inspectors, Oct. 10-11, 1935, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/158, p. 1.
\item\textsuperscript{14} Council of Inspectors, April 14, 1936, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/158, p. 5.
\item\textsuperscript{15} Yosef Meyuhas, Jerusalem, letter, Nov. 15, 1951, to Eliezer Rieger, Ministry of Education and Culture of the State of Israel, Archives (Jerusalem), File 27, Portfolio 1108. Yosef Meyuhas was born in Palestine in 1906. He was director of the Youth Bureau of the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi from 1935-1948 and director of the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture since 1948. He is a co-founder of the scout movement in Israel.
\end{itemize}
the Youth Department, was responsible to Rieger.\(^{16}\) In the area of teacher training Rieger constantly sought to distinguish between an inexperienced beginning teacher and one who has tenure and experience. He demanded that for their own education teachers in the first category must have the responsibility of developing and reporting on their lesson plans prior to each class for their first three years of teaching. Expert teachers should be freed of this responsibility.\(^{17}\) Dr. Rieger, and through him Dr. Luria, became convinced that those who wanted to be high school teachers must have thorough pedagogic training in conjunction with their academic studies at the Hebrew University. The lowest degree the University offered was the M.A., and because of the dearth of qualified people, University graduates were being accepted as teachers without training or experience in education. Rieger's stand and that of Luria created an added impetus on the part of the Waad Leumi Department of Education for the establishment of a Department of Education at the University.\(^{18}\) Dr. Alexander

\(^{16}\) Yosef Meyuhas, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 22, 1968. Hereinafter referred to as Meyuhas Interview.

\(^{17}\) Council of Inspectors, Jan. 3, 1936, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem), J17/158, p. 2.

\(^{18}\) Dr. Alexander M. Dushkin, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 12 and June 13, 1968. Hereinafter referred to as Interview.
Dushkin has said:

He [Rieger] insisted unweariedly that a thorough pedagogic training was essential for those University graduates who wished to make a vocation of teaching - that proper methods of transmitting knowledge were as important as the knowledge itself. It was his insistence and eloquent backing that helped Dr. Magness, Professor Klinger, the author [Dushkin] and others to organize a teacher training program at the Hebrew University, which later developed into a full School of Education. 19

The years in which Rieger served as an inspector were also filled for him with many personal and communal educational endeavors beyond that of the Department of Education. In 1929 he served as chairman of the second annual meeting of the Palestine Hebrew Teachers for the Jewish National Fund, 20 and in 1930 he received a two years' leave of absence to travel to the United States to study for his M.A. in education. 21 Henrietta Szold had suggested that Rieger make the trip in order to become more expert in educational matters, and he had agreed. 22 During his first trip to America, Rieger had


21 Dr. Joseph Luria, Jerusalem, letter, July 12, 1931, to Eliezer Rieger, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/126.

22 RRK-3.
become friendly with Dr. Alexander Dushkin who was then Director of the Bureau of Jewish Education in Chicago. Dr. Dushkin offered Eliezer Rieger a position teaching Hebrew and Hebrew literature at the College of Jewish Studies, and he suggested that Rieger study at the University of Chicago. Rieger accepted the invitation, came to Chicago and graduated from the University of Chicago in 1932 with an M.A. His thesis was entitled "Selection of a Spelling Vocabulary in Hebrew," and was to serve as the basis for his future work in this area. His thesis and course work in Chicago gave special attention to scientific patterns of curriculum and methods of instruction.

Once back in Jerusalem Rieger founded the Society for Progressive Education. It began in about 1936 and lasted until the outbreak of the Second World War. The society offered monthly lectures for those interested in

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23 Dushkin, Interview. As noted above, p. 22, Rieger already had his Ph.D. Therefore, once in Chicago he taught courses in general history at the University of Chicago, too.

24 "Life History of Eliezer Rieger," typed, undated article, Rieger Personal File, Hebrew University Archives, Jerusalem. Hereinafter referred to as "Life History."


26 "Life History."
advancing educational thought. For the most part Waad Leumi inspectors, principals and professors participated.²⁷ Rieger himself toured the country lecturing on four different subjects. His four prepared talks were:

1) "Scientific Achievements in the Field of Pedagogy,"
2) "The Essence of the Project Method,"
3) "The Improvement of Discipline in the School,"
4) "The Study of Spelling in the Elementary School."²⁸

A Criticism of Rieger's Supervisory Activities

Rieger was not popular within the Histadruth ha-Morim or among many of Palestine's teachers. He was a demanding inspector, forceful, and uncompromising in his requirement for well-prepared well-taught lessons. When he saw obvious incompetence he moved swiftly to have a teacher removed or the situation repaired. He was cool and very formal in his professional relationships, attempting never to be swayed by emotion in a professional matter. Many teachers were obviously frightened by him and by his forthright manner.²⁹

Seizing on an isolated incident during one of Rieger's

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²⁷ Bentwich, Interview.

²⁸ Eliezer Rieger, Jerusalem, letter, April 20, 1934, to Mr. P. Lev-Tov, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/121.

²⁹ Dr. Shlomo Horowitz, taped personal interview with the author, Haifa, June 2, 1968.
inspection tours to the Galilee in 1929 the Histadruth ha-Morim solidified its position against Rieger and attacked him publicly in its journal He'ad ha-Hinnukh.

The journal editorialized:

... Dr. Rieger, the inspector of schools in the Galilee, came to one of the "points of his sovereignty," called a meeting of parents in order to deliver a report about the condition of learning in the school [in Tiberias], and told them, among other things, that the "discipline is defective," "that the students lack knowledge because the teachers have not taught them," "that each teacher is good in himself but that the staff of teachers is nothing."

The parents who are residents of the town, each one, understandably, having his own favorite teacher and his own hated one, sat and enjoyed what their ears heard; each one saw the "checks" as belonging to the hated teacher's account...

It is our desire to point out the deed of this inspector not only in order to prove that the inspector is not worthy of his position and that this job does not fit him - this the Department of Education will certainly understand (and if it will not understand this immediately, it will understand it after the damage is done to the school which the "words of wisdom" of this same inspector will cause), but it is our wish to demonstrate the fallacy of the popular idea that the supervisor is an inspector...

And we would advise Dr. Rieger to return to his work [teaching] for another few years, and only afterwards will he emerge with the ability to take part in supervision. For the essence of his understanding of the matter of supervision as inspection from above... like a taskmaster... [or] policeman, is still primitive, childish, or perhaps, what is worse, bent from the outset for the purpose of a career....

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30 He'ad ha-Hinnukh, III (March-April 1929), pp. 185-186.
The result of this attack and the teachers' fears of his forcefulness affected him throughout his entire career. It was to be felt when he was considered for the position of Director of the Department of Education in 1937 and when he was finally appointed Director General in 1951.31

The Hebrew Scout Movement

Another area of major interest for Eliezer Rieger during his service in the Department of Education of the Haad Leumi was that of youth work and scouting. This was a theme which recurred throughout his entire life. Rieger believed:

Youth is the potential of society for good or for bad, and we must not be satisfied with the regular measure of care within the framework of the school curriculum alone... [A] great deal of attention must be budgeted for youth services... and the training of youth counselors must be placed upon the universities corresponding to the existing pedagogic department for the training of teachers.32

Rieger saw that the major area for conflicts between the school and the youth movement existed in the General Zionist schools where there was no single re-

31 See below, pp. 212-215.
cognized youth movement. Instead, all of the groups sought to attract members. On the other hand, there were recognized youth movements in the Histadruth ha-Ovdim and Mizrahi schools which corresponded with the ideologies of the particular Trend. The non-affiliated General-Zionist schools, therefore, were in a very difficult position. They would destroy school spirit by refusing to permit students to participate in youth movements of a particular ideology, and the school would be in a position of refusing to recognize youth movements which were supported by other national institutions.33 In Rieger's mind the Hebrew Scouting Association of Palestine offered an excellent program which would overcome these difficulties and others. He wrote:

... There are two great advantages to the Hebrew Scout Association of Palestine: a) non-partisanship, b) patience in its social program. These advantages are important in view of other youth organizations which are like explosive material for Keneseth Yisrael and its social continuity.34

Besides having no political stand the scout movement did not attack the schools or parents. It was an educational movement which sought to cooperate with the school and home. The new element which was added when


Rieger, Joseph Bentwich and Yosef Meyuhas came into contact with it in 1934 was the idea of halutsiyuth. But for Rieger the scouts had a pioneering endeavor to instill in Palestine youth ever and above that of the agricultural-labor pioneering represented by the other youth movements. He said:

... we must not present the city in Palestine as a sign of abomination or as an empty vessel for the sake of agricultural pioneering. There is no future for Zionism and the Hebrew village in Palestine if the city stands as a stumbling block in the path of the rebirth. It is the responsibility of Zionist education and scouting to raise this level of the spiritual, ethical and communal climate of the Palestine city and to nurture social ideals in the city youth. The necessity to broaden pioneering to include the city area and to teach the way of an idealistic life within the city is a Zionist educational problem of the highest level.

In 1934 Aryeh Kroch, a teacher at the Bet Sefer Reali and leader of the scout movement, and Joseph Bentwich of the Mandate government's Department of Education, simultaneously reached the same conclusion: the scout movement should be adopted and sponsored by the Waad Leumi's Department of Education. The scouts could

35 Bentwich, Interview.

36 Eliezer Rieger, Jerusalem, letter, no date, to Aryeh Kroch and Professor L. Roth, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) File 3623. Leon Roth was born in London in 1896. He was educated at Oxford and was appointed professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University in 1928. In 1940 he was elected rector of the University.

37 Aryeh Kroch, taped personal interview with the author, Haifa, June 2, 1968.
claim to be non-political and educational. Moreover, they were the only movement without a sponsor for they had no party of their own. 38 Rieger's most important contribution was that in 1934 he accepted the idea of Departmental sponsorship of the scouts and guided it through two years of negotiations. Aryeh Kroch said that it was Rieger's interest and activity which influenced the Department to adopt the Scout Association in 1936. In addition, he instigated the invitation of Yosef Meyuhas to be the head of scouting and youth matters. 39

Finally, on May 4, 1936 in conjunction with the Seventh Conference of the Hebrew Scout Association a founding convention was held to ratify the agreement with the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi. Eli-ezer Rieger delivered the keynote address of the convention and welcomed in a new era of Palestine scouting:

... the scouting movement is a serious movement. For the most part one relates to this movement as though it were childish or a sport or a game which is suitable for childhood but not for the years of adulthood. This approach does not suit and is not the case for our scouting association. The times in which we are living, the land we are building, the people whose children we are, place upon us obligations so serious that we cannot be satisfied with a movement which stands for "let the children get up and play in front of us..."

[2 Samuel 2:14]

38 Meyuhas, Interview.

39 Kroch, Interview.
There is a time and a place for everything. There is a time for unity. Divergence is good - at least to a reasonable measure - at a time when the nation is established and is living a normal life. At such a time divergence is able to renew the face of literature and art. And there is a time for unity, especially at a time when a nation wants to build its state. Unity means emphasis of a single issue without being drawn to secondary issues.

We must emphasize that the scouting movement desires national solidarity and unity. Schism - to which we are accustomed - is the inheritance of the ghetto and a remnant of the ghetto. The scouting association desires to raise a generation strong in its muscles, desires, discipline and order. 40

The Director of the Department of Education was to serve as president of the Hebrew Scout Association of Palestine and to chair various Department and Association committees which would oversee and maintain the new relationship. Because of Rieger's involvement, Luria asked him to accept the first presidency of the organization. 41 He did, and he served in that capacity until March, 1943 when he resigned because he no longer had any connection with the Waad Leumi. 42 During Rieger's tenure he was instrumental in overcoming the only major challenge to the Scout Association's independence from political affiliation. The first group of graduates from the Scouts created a settlement called Magen Michael with-


41 Kroch, Interview.

42 Minutes of the Action Committee of the Scout Association, March 6, 1943, State of Israel Archives (Jerusalem), Original No. 426/3, File No. 1419.
in the framework of ha-Kibuts ha-Meuhad. They wanted to influence the scout movement to accept the haluts idea of this movement, and make settlement on the land its main purpose. 43 Rieger sat at the head of a conference held at Aynoth in 1942 which rejected the idea. Under his influence, it was established at that time that the scout program should deal with halutsiyuth in general and not just with settlement on the land. Hebrew Scouting was to be a haluts and general movement at the same time. 44

Education and a Free Society in Palestine

In July and August of 1936 Eliezer Rieger was sent to England by the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi to be its delegate to the seventh World Conference

43 Kroch, Interview. See above, pp.21-30.

44 Meyuhas, Interview. When Rieger speaks of halutsiyuth he calls for a spirit of self dedication and self sacrifice to be directed not only to agricultural endeavors, but rather to all aspects of the society such as city problems, Totsereth ha-Arets, industry, etc. As a general movement, the Scout Association would incorporate the haluts ideology. It would, however, also make the general growth and development of the members an important goal. Scouts were to be imbued with a sense of dedication and self sacrifice for the rejuvenation of the Jewish people, and not just with the desire to fulfill these goals through agricultural settlement.
of the New Education Fellowship.\footnote{Dr. Joseph Luria, Jerusalem, letter, July 19, 1936, to the French Consul-General of Jerusalem, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/121. In "New Education Fellowship Conference in Cheltenham," Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic, Aug. 8, 1936, it was reported: "Speakers of international repute are giving lectures each evening; study courses in educational practice and research are being held; and personal contact between members and nation and nation is regarded as one of the chief values of the conference." It is interesting to note that Rieger's picture was included in this article. For further information about this conference see, Gloucestershire Echo: Special New Education Fellowship Issue, July 31, 1936.} He was one of those who delivered a major address at the convention. The topic of his presentation was "Education and a Free Society in Palestine."\footnote{Eliezer Rieger, Education and a Free Society in Palestine (Tel Aviv: Palestine Literary Service (Mimeo), 1940.} It was well received and considered one of the major contributions to the conference by everyone because it stimulated enthusiastic debate about education in Palestine.\footnote{Mrs. Lucy L. Wilson, London, letter, Aug. 31, 1936, to Miss Henrietta Szold, Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) J17/121.} In his remarks Rieger pointed out that the first Jewish generation in Palestine attempted to relieve itself of the burdens and fetters of the Diaspora. It cast aside Diaspora (and unfortunately some conventional) behavior patterns for the purpose of integrating the Jewish self and liberating the Jewish personality. For example, the Jewish child was no longer intimidated by his teacher as he was in Europe. Instead, he developed a relationship with his teacher where both were equals, without tension or a sense of coercion. Pupils, in fact, customarily ad-
dressed their teachers by their first names. 48

Rieger presented to this conference his belief that
another outstanding achievement of Hebrew education in
Palestine

... is the unification of the Jewish people... It
is, indeed, the task of education to render us
dissimilar to each other, and thus to enrich human
thought and activity; but it is no less the busi-
ness of education to make us similar and like-minded
to a certain degree, so as to create harmony be-
tween people in their mental exchange and in their
evert behavior. This is one of the most important
problems in our contemporary Jewish sociology.
It was not only that the Jews were in exile: the
Jewish people itself was an Exile, and not merely
one Exile but dozens.

... When you enter a classroom in a Hebrew school
in Palestine and find that the 40 pupils come from
15 or 20 different countries... and when you see
them integrated to such an extent that it has be-
come difficult to distinguish the original social
and cultural strata, you realize that you are
witnessing a most interesting historic process
which is taking place in our generation: the pro-
cess whereby a nation, through the unifying factor
of schooling, regains its identity finally re-
discovering its true self after having lost it for
many a century. 49

Hebrew Education in Palestine

One of the major contributions Rieger made as a
result of the experiences and insights he gained as an
inspector was his book Ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri be-Erets Yis-
rael (Hebrew Education in Palestine) which was published
in two volumes: Part One - Yesedoth u-Megamoth (General
Principles and Trends), 50 and Part Two: Ha-Matarah

48 Rieger, Education and a Free Society, op. cit.,
p. 3.

49 Ibid., p. 4.

50 H.E.
we-ha-Toehnith (Aims and Curricula). Dr. Zvi Adar said of these books, "The text Hebrew Education in Palestine is perhaps the most comprehensive and constructive book that has been written about the education question...."

Rieger began his book with an attempt to make a philosophic statement about the necessity and direction of Jewish life and the aims and purposes of education in Palestine. Rieger saw Jews of his generation turning to undirected radicalism and analyzed the problem as follows:

... A talented and persecuted nation like ours is raising a fanatical social type that seeks to overturn the bowl of constructive activity for talented Jews. For the most part they are found in economic and social strata which do not properly reflect the greatness of their ability. They are being strangled by lack of a broad horizon and by lack of better prospects for the future. They seek an outlet for their spiritual energies and for the creative desire within them—and there is none.

There is developing within them either an inferiority or superiority complex. They seek recompense for their degradation. At one time they found this satisfaction in superstition or mysticism— they were "Ghetto dreamers"— and at our time they find it in underground work and in the pouring out of fire and brimstone upon the existing social and political order.

51 Eliezer Rieger, Hebrew Education in Palestine - Part Two: Aims and Curricula (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing Co., 1940). Hereinafter referred to as A.C.

52 Dr. Zvi Adar, In Memoriam for Professor Eliezer Rieger (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1954), p. 12.

Rieger believed that it was Zionism which could best direct Jewish talent and desire for social reform into constructive action.

In Rieger's view the school was both the offspring of society and its creator at the same time. If there is a change in education which the society itself is in favor of it is probably worthwhile to carry it out. Society is usually conservative, and a call for a change usually means that all is not well. On the other hand, Rieger cautioned that the school must be careful not to outstep the bounds of the community's desires and to take the initiative in change. This will cause a great public dispute, and it is necessary to preserve the school as the community's common institution. Change can be made only where it is in accordance with the present level of society, or where it is felt to be an absolutely essential innovation if it is beyond the level of society. In either case there must be toleration of other arguments and a willingness to subjugate self-desire by all factions of a society.

In Rieger's opinion, a well balanced education is built upon admiration of the past, trust in the generation living in the present, and faith about what our children will do in the future. He criticized those who over-emphasize any one element of this chain of development by saying:
In orthodox socialistic education the future becomes fixed... This type of future directed orthodoxy is no less dangerous than an over-abundance of past directed orthodoxy, and perhaps even more so, since the past has already passed the test of life while the future is always a more or less estimated existence.54

The fervent upholders of the tradition believe too much in the abilities of men of past generations, and not enough in their own powers. However, orthodox socialists, in the same way, may depend too much on their ability to see the future more clearly than the men who will actually live in that period.

To Eliezer Rieger the central aim of all Hebrew education in Palestine was pioneering.55 He decried the fact, however, that to a great extent the Yishuv had lost the pioneering spirit. Most of the pioneers in Palestine came from abroad, and Rieger believed that the challenge to Hebrew education is to develop the spirit of pioneering in Palestine, at least until many more of its major problems are conquered. At that time a new goal can be sought. He made an important point when he stated:

54 Ibid., p. 82.
55 See above, pp. 7-9.
In our times there is no people or language with a social, educational goal that is more concrete, structured or fundamental in its human value than the goal of building Palestine and renewing the people by means of developing its pioneering spirit.

One must not necessarily look upon pioneering as a passing aim. The tasks of pioneering in rebuilding the people and its land requires, at least, a few generations to be realized... However, pioneering is not our "final" educational aim... Every final station of today will become an intermediary station by the measure that we draw near to it. In another three or four generations, when a large measure of the educational aim of this generation-pioneering in building the people and its land-will have been carried out, the national genius will seek for itself and will find a new final station, and so on without end.56

In spelling out what he meant by pioneering, Rieger noted that the pioneer always seeks out the challenge, the line of greatest resistance. The ordinary individual who has a choice between a path of ease and one of difficulty will take the easier. The pioneer, however, seeks after a goal with an inner motivation that will make him face the most difficult challenges willingly. Experience has shown that the pioneer grows more as an individual from taking the more difficult path than does the ordinary person from treading his broad and simple one. Rieger went on to say:

The pioneering desire for the line of greatest resistance is still necessary in the building of our land for a long time to come. Therefore, there is a necessity to prepare youth and to educate them in this commandment. This education corresponds to the nature of the child. The desire to pave new paths under difficult conditions is

56 H.E., p. 186.
very close to youth. Of all the ages, the age of youth is drawn more to the line of greatest resistance. We must pay attention to this quality of the younger generation... Walking the path of least resistance wears down the energy and destroys the soul of the educant.57

Also, from Rieger's perspective, the pioneer always seeks to be first. He does not carry out his task in an atmosphere of general agreement. On the contrary, the majority is against him and mocks him. Nevertheless, the pioneer seeks to "... change values by daily and hourly work, and by constructive activity, patience, stubborness and self-education."58 To emphasize this point and to develop it Rieger said:

If pioneering is really to bring about a change in values, it must not involve revolutionary overturning of the society. Rather, it should bring about very slow and gradual changes. Otherwise the revolution will be but merely an external fact and not be part of the essence of the society. From this we can draw certain practical conclusions. We must prepare our students for changes in values, but we must prepare them for it by means of work and by accepting the commandment of national responsibilities. We have to organize our students to give actual help to the nation....59

Rieger believed that the radical demands had a greater attraction to youth than moderate ones. Youth seeks out the challenges that demands made upon them offer. Pioneering must find its way not only in radicalism but in the challenge of its demands. Demands made upon youth

57 H.E., p. 136.
58 Ibid., pp. 191-192.
59 Ibid.
must include the challenge of pioneering tempered by moderation. However, these demands must be exciting and truly challenging. If they are feeble, they will lose their attraction for the young and make no real impact upon them. It is the school which must create a lack of ease among the younger generation and must establish the challenges and demands which will capture its students' imagination. It must make its pupils hungry for action and deeds. This is what will bring about a change for the good in the life of the Yishuv. It was Rieger's firm conviction that, "... there is no preservation for human culture without the organization of powers for the good."60

A crucial contribution which Rieger made in his book, Hebrew Education in Palestine, was his insightful critique of the Trend (Zeramim) system of education which existed under the Waad Leumi.61 Coupled with this

60 Ibid., pp. 192-193. In S.N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967), pp. 17-18, the image of the pioneer in Israeli society is spelled out. First, it includes an element of social and personal sacrifice often for the good of the general community. Second, there is a strong emphasis on agricultural work and on living in a community which will lead to the development of an ideal society (the kibuts). Third, there is emphasis on the cultural rejuvenation of the Hebrew people.

61 For further information on this subject see Elijah Bortnickler, "Education Trends in Palestine" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1953).
criticism was a plea for a unified school system. The official structure of the education system during the Waad Leumi period included two committees of the Waad Leumi, an administrative and an education committee, which established fiscal, administrative and educational policy. The Department of Education was the authority which executed all the decisions of these committees. The Department had a director who was also an inspector, with the authority to visit any school in the system.

If, however, he was unable to carry out this responsibility (and he usually was too busy to visit schools) he could delegate it to other inspectors provided they visit only those schools affiliated with the Trend for which they worked.

The Waad Leumi recognized three different Trends within its Hebrew education system: a. General Zionist b. Mizrahi c. Histadruth ha-Ovdim. Each of the Trends (or sub-systems) had the right to develop its educational activities in accordance with its own particular needs, and each received a budgetary allotment according to a standardized key. While supervision of the Trend was nominally in the hands of the Department of Education, it was actually controlled by a special supervisory committee belonging to that Trend. The responsibilities of the Trend inspectorate were to establish curricula, to hire, fire
and transfer teachers and administrators, and to arrange other administrative and physical necessities for its schools. Appointments required the signature of the Director of the Department. This was usually just a formality.

Rieger criticized the existing educational structure because he believed it was too political. Appointments to the education and administration committees were made according to political affiliation. Even in the Department of Education teacher appointments and other key issues were settled according to political rather than educational expediency. Rieger understood the original division of education into its two Trends, and accepted it more than he accepted division into three. In order to advance the ideas of Zionism the people had to be unified. The religionists, however, were afraid of the secularization found in the Zionist schools, and religious education was anachronistic to the non-religious Zionist. In Rieger's opinion an ideological and organizational error was made in 1920 when an agreement was reached at the London Conference by which all of Orthodox education was placed under the auspices of Mizrahi. Education now became dependent not only on

an ideological difference but also on political ones. Since the religious party merited such special attention the Histadruth ha-Ovdim also demanded similar recognition to operate its own schools under the Department of Education.\(^{63}\) In Rieger's mind a precedent for a division between secular and religious education existed in other countries, but there could be no rationale for an educational division based on class difference as was the case with the Histadruth schools.\(^{64}\)

Rieger believed that the partisanship of the day which was being injected into the school system was harmful. It led to propaganda and a psychology of negativism in children.\(^ {65}\) Rieger further stated:

... All propaganda, and included in this, understandably is the political, is harmful to youth, even if it is so directed towards desirable goals. And why is it so? Because of the ruinous means which propaganda needs. Propaganda is not interested in the child and his spiritual and material advancement, but rather sees him as a tool for the advancement of a known goal... The propagandist does not view the child as anything but a means to his end, while the educator views the child as an end in and of himself....\(^ {66}\)

Rieger suggested that the Hebrew education system in Palestine should be unified on the basis of three principles: a) on a cultural synthesis which properly

\(^{63}\) H.E., pp. 26-36.
\(^{64}\) Ibid., pp. 53-54.
\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 71.
\(^{66}\) Ibid., pp. 74-75.
balances the societal forces at work in the nation during the period, b) on unifying the curricula in use which are reflections of various segments of the society, c) and on a unified school organization under the central authority of Keneseth Yisrael. 67 As a realist Rieger recommended that if it would be impossible to unite all three Trends, at least the General Zionist and Labor Trends should be merged. Moreover, he stated that if politics does not permit even this union to come, then the ideas of unified education should be incorporated into the General Zionist Trend alone. 68

In order to be meaningful, the curriculum of the unified school must reflect both theoretical and practical experience, the abstract and the concrete. Rieger believed that "...the school is required to help the child by explaining the realities of life... But it is incumbent upon the school to present this reality gradually and in a more or less distilled form, according to the age and understanding of the child." 69 Rieger's major criticisms, however, of the curriculum used in Palestine schools were that it was not select enough and that

67 Ibid., pp. 78-79.
68 Ibid., p. 92.
it had no real central aim. He said:

In the Hebrew school in Palestine there is no selectivity in the curriculum at all. The number of subjects is great, each subject cloaked in an abundance of material and cut off from one another. Our curriculum in the elementary and secondary schools is... a program of layers, that are resting one upon another, without being united into an organic unit....70

There are those in Rieger's opinion who attempt to cover up the lack of a central aim in the curriculum with a "pedagogic fig leaf." They claim that the school must create for the child only the opportunity, the framework and the conditions, and the child will create the content and values. Rieger said:

This new approach does not stand up in the face of sociological criticism. First of all, one must not make a complete division between the creation of opportunities and the creation of content and values. They are interdependent, and the nature of the opportunities and the conditions structure to a large measure the nature of the content and the values.71

A number of suggestions were proposed by Rieger in order to make the curriculum more select and to cut down the number of subjects. First, he recommended that groups of subjects be combined into educational units like Hebrew studies, social studies and science. Secondly, he would alternate the emphasis on particular subjects so

70 Ibid., p. 18
71 Ibid., p. 47.
that everything would not have to be studied all the
time. Also, students should be offered the possibility
of choosing certain subjects within the curriculum which
are of interest to them in place of others. In general,
he felt that more English and Arabic should be taught,
and that student organizations and weekly assemblies
should be developed.\(^{72}\) These ideas were to be put into
practice when Rieger and Dushkin established the Hebrew
Secondary School.\(^{73}\)

\(^{72}\) Ibid., pp. 112-122.

\(^{73}\) See below, pp. 120-139.
CHAPTER FIVE

Two Contributions

Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod

During the period that Eliezer Rieger served in the Waad Leumi Department of Education he made two very important contributions, one in the area of Hebrew language spelling instruction and one in secondary educational curriculum and structure. The first was a result of a scientific study he conducted, and the second was accomplished through his participation in the creation and administration of a new type of secondary school.

Rieger's book Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod which was published in 1935 was based on a study he conducted in Palestine during 1929-1930. The results of this study and a foundation writing vocabulary were submitted by Rieger as a master's thesis at the University of Chicago in 1931.

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The thesis was titled "Selection of a Spelling Vocabulary in Hebrew." Rieger felt that the spelling of Palestine Hebrew school children was defective, and he attributed this to the lack of a systematic method of spelling instruction and of a structured list of words based on scientific analysis. Each class studied the words which its teacher felt were difficult, irregardless of the words having usefulness in everyday life. There was no systematic progression from year to year, nor was there necessarily any particular unity in the way teachers selected spelling and vocabulary to be taught to their classes. Therefore, Rieger in collaboration with Menahem Arnon authored the text Horaath ha-Ketiv and presented a structured and unified method of spelling instruction. A series of spelling primers was published by these two based on the methodology presented in Horaath ha-Ketiv.

In Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod Rieger devoted his initial efforts to explaining the construction of a scientific curriculum for spelling for the Hebrew schools. He felt that the quantitative-objective scientific method

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3 Eliezer Rieger and Menahem Arnon, Horaath ha-Ketiv (Tel Aviv: The Department of Education of Knesset Yisraeil, 1935).
that he presented should serve as a cornerstone for curriculum in many other subject areas like grammar, arithmetic, and other technical subjects. He did not, however, see the quantitative-objective method as being the sole basis for curriculum construction. Obviously, it could influence but not have so profound an effect on the liberal areas of the curriculum. 4

Rieger felt that a foundation writing vocabulary based on an objective word count serves many important purposes. Pedagogically, it aids in "... selection of words for the most common spelling needs; setting standards of word-knowledge for reading preparation; evaluation and selection of readers, textbooks, and children's literature; investigation of method for gradation of words and careful planning of courses of study; construction of spelling and writing tests and scales; the teaching of a foreign language." 5 In addition, Rieger stated that the psychologist would garner important insights and impartial evidence into the minds of those whose vocabularies were analyzed, whether they were children or adults.

Rieger was obviously greatly influenced in his work by the contribution of E. L. Thorndike of Columbia

4 Rieger, Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod, p. 2.
University. In the introduction to his *Teacher's Word Book of 20,000 Words* Thorndike states that the list of 20,000 most frequent words presented in his book was derived from word counts based on children's literature, Bible and English classics, elementary textbooks, trade books, daily newspapers and correspondence.6

Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod presented a Hebrew spelling vocabulary of 2017 words arranged in descending order of frequency. The vocabulary was extracted from an aggregate of 200,000 running words, out of which one third represents sampling material from the correspondence of 521 adults, another third is derived from the spontaneous writing of 286 Palestinian Hebrew school children, and one third is taken from Biblical narrative and representative passages of Jewish folklore. Rieger compiled in this way three different word lists - one of childhood, one of adulthood, and one of literature. These were combined into one final list. In the first list only words with the minimal frequency of ten were registered. Because of this restriction only 2017 words out of a total of 5,892 different words were entered. The total of 5,892 words with their repetitions constitute 200,000, or all the running words. The 2017 words which

were entered in the vocabulary make up with their repetitions 95 1/4 percent of all the spelling material. 7

Rieger concluded:

The results of the present study show that the ten most frequent words in Hebrew written discourse constitute, with their repetitions nearly twelve percent; the hundred most frequent words, about forty-one; the five hundred most frequent words more than seventy-two; the thousand most frequent words more than eighty-five; and the two thousand most frequent words about 95 1/4 percent of all Hebrew written vocabulary. 8

To Rieger it seemed only logical to expect word lists to be constructed on the basis of word meaning rather than of word form. However, he found many educational studies which were constructed on another, incorrect basis. He attributed this to the fact that the original studies in the field were not done by educators. J. Keding secured data about the frequency of syllables and words in German in order to create an efficient system of shorthand or for the practical end of printing composition. Rieger believed that what may be good for a stenographer or printing compositor may be misleading for a spelling investigator. Spelling is not merely a compound of letters and syllables irrespective of their meaning. 9

8 Ibid., p. 3.
9 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
cluded:

But, both in the case of spelling and reading vocabularies, the word meaning is the only plausible unit. To build on word forms means to rely on false associations, based upon reasoning from mechanical similarity of shape or sound. Such "reasoning," however, aligns itself naturally with false perception of relationship on the part of the pupil and misleads him to promptings which are rather directly proportionate to his grasp of meanings.10

Because of this conviction Rieger was careful to differentiate between homonyms and, in each case, indicated the homonym's particular meaning.

A number of criticisms of Rieger's work were published in the years after its completion. The sharpest of these was made by Zevi Scharfstein when in his book *Darkhei Limmud Leshoneynu* (Methods of Teaching Hebrew) he stated:

These enthusiastic words are based on the assumption that the material for 200,000 running words, that is, the few chapters of Bible stories, a few selections from the Mishnah and Aggadah, private and business letters, in conjunction with letters and compositions of Palestinian children which the author gathered are the entirety of the Hebrew language. Naturally, this is incorrect... One must not be quick to make computations about the importance and value of words and the percentages they represent on the basis of limited material, very limited, which does not include the Latter Prophets and Writings, and which does not incorporate the appearing Hebrew newspapers and has not touched Hebrew literature. Indeed, all the material that was gathered is like a drop in the sea - from a sea which is made of the basic

10 Ibid., p. 16.
possessions of Jewish culture.\(^{11}\)

Scharfstein also pointed out that Rieger's list omitted many essential words which incorporate crucial concepts for the Jewish people. Some of the omissions, he claimed, make no sense at all. For example, the word for "uncle" is included in the list but not the word for "aunt." However, in Scharfstein's opinion the major fault with the study rests with the sample which was selected.\(^{12}\) Furthermore, Scharfstein claimed that the letters and compositions of Palestine school children and adults is not indicative of general Hebrew usage. His reason was that the majority of Hebrew speakers in Palestine at that time were immigrants whose knowledge of Hebrew was imperfect.\(^{13}\)

Harry Blumberg reacted to the Rieger word list from the vantage point of high school Hebrew courses. His reaction was:

... Dr. Rieger's sampling of 200,000 words is taken in part from compositions of Palestinian school children, from business and social correspondence of Palestinian adults, and in part from classical Hebrew literature. This word list, the first of its kind in the field, does not, however, conform to the reading goal set forth in the language syllabus of the high school course, and contains a number of locutions current in modern Pal-


\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 185.

\(^{13}\) Zevi Scharfstein, "*Mileth ha-Yesod Bilshoneynu,*" *Hinnukh*, (5695), p. 143.
Which the American student of Hebrew may never meet in his two or three year course. Furthermore, Dr. Rieger's word book omits any sampling of Modern Hebrew literature, for which the high school curriculum [New York City-Public Schools] explicitly aims to prepare the student.\(^\text{14}\)

On the other hand, David Rappaport in an article in Jewish Education reacted to Rieger's word list and its applicability for the elementary Hebrew school in the United States. He questioned:

Can one adopt the scheme used by Thorndike and Rieger for developing a word list for elementary Hebrew schools in the United States? The answer must be in the negative. The children in the United States read and speak English in a free and natural manner. The children in Israel speak and read Hebrew freely and easily. But to the children in the United States Hebrew is not their mother tongue. Their use of Hebrew is neither free nor natural. There are no Hebrew letters or compositions written freely by children in the United States... It is clear therefore that there is no ideal basis for establishing a basic Hebrew word list established by Rieger for Israel...\(^\text{15}\)

William Chomsky in his text, How to Teach Hebrew in the Elementary Grades, commented on Rieger's text Otsar Milloth ha-Yesed and pointed out that our goal in teaching Hebrew is "... to have our pupils find their way progressively into literary materials. Hence, for our purposes, occurrence frequency in reading materials,\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{14}\) Harry Blumberg, "Some Desiderated Materials in Hebrew Language Teaching in the Public High Schools," Jewish Education, XII, No. 3 (Jan. 1941), pp. 166-167. Blumberg is an author of a number of textbooks in the field of Hebrew language and grammar.

\(^{15}\) David Rappaport, "A Basic Word List for Elementary Hebrew Schools," Jewish Education, XXII, No. 3 (Summer, 1951), pp. 52-53.
rather than utility... will have to serve as our criterion for selection of vocabulary." Finally, Spotts concludes in his dissertation, "... the results of Rieger's initial investigation as contained in his Otzar, must be deemed, for the most part, to be inapplicable to Jewish education here in America."  

Horaath ha-Ketiv

As an outgrowth of Rieger's scientific research into spelling curriculum construction, he and Menahem Arnon authored a spelling curriculum and methodology under the auspices of the Waad Leumi Department of Education entitled Horaath ha-Ketiv (Teaching Spelling). There was opposition within the Department to the publication of an approved methodology for teaching spelling, even though at the time that Teaching Spelling was written there was no spelling curriculum for the Hebrew schools. In fact, Y. Azaryahu, another Department inspector, wrote

17 Spotts, op. cit., p. 74.
19 Ibid., p. 15.
to Rieger and pointed out that he was opposed to the text *Teaching Spelling* for two reasons. First, he did not feel that the spelling deficiency among the students was such a serious problem that a special text based on English and American spelling books had to be used. Second, he questioned the amount of time the subject would take. It appeared to him that it would use about one-third of the time in the curriculum allotted to Hebrew.\(^2^0\) When the book was published the Department of Education prepared an introduction which stated:

The text *Teaching Spelling* was commissioned by the Department of Education... It is based upon the scientific research carried out by Dr. Rieger which was published under the title *Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod*. Based on the word list, a method of teaching is presented and developed. Realizing that current methodology is very poor - instructors teaching by means of dictation and copying, and that there is no unified spelling program, it is hoped that teachers will experiment with this method. The method is not incumbent upon any single teacher, but the vocabulary list is required for everyone to cover.\(^2^1\)

Using *Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod* as the basis for *Teaching Spelling*, Rieger and Arnon set as their task to break the word list down into segments of instruction and to present a methodology. The two criteria for word selection for different class levels were the technical


and psychological difficulties of a word. The most frequent words were not necessarily the ones which were presented earliest because their forms may have been exceptionally difficult. Levels of difficulty were established on the bases of the opinions of experienced teachers, and by giving a comprehensive examination and establishing which were the words in which the testees erred most frequently.

The curriculum was organized for grades two to six. The authors stated:

We skipped the first grade entirely. The period of growth of the brain centers continues at a rapid rate until the age of seven; after this age growth is slower. It is not, therefore, desirable to burden the brain of a child who has not yet reached seven with dry, methodical studies.

For classes seven and eight no special spelling curriculum has been prepared... After five years of formal studies knowledge of spelling should be sufficient enough to enable a pupil of grades seven and eight to make do with a more natural connection between writing and spelling.

The most general structure of the methodology presented in Teaching Spelling required three repetitions of each word list. The lesson itself is presented. The first review comes about two days afterwards, the second

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22 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
23 Ibid., p. 25.
24 Ibid.
about two weeks after the first and the third review about three months after the second. At the end of the year two weeks are to be set aside for review of words commonly misspelled in all the reviews.  

There were two different methodologies used in the actual teaching of the spelling lessons: one for grades two and three, and one for grades four through six. The first is the study-test method where students learn the words and are then examined, and the second is the test-study method in which students are tested on the words and then study only those they have misspelled. The reason that the test-study method was not recommended for the second and third grades was because the children in these classes were young, their writing had not yet been formed, and they might be right one day and spell the same word wrong on the next. In addition, the test-study method implies an ability for self-study and discipline which younger children may not yet have acquired. In the test-study method the student is freed from having to study what he already knows, but he must still take the weekly, monthly and yearly tests given.

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25 Ibid., p. 23.
26 Ibid., pp. 30-31.
More exactly, the lesson organization for these two methods is as follows:  

**Study-Test Method:**

1. The teacher writes a word on the board and pronounces it.
2. The students (as individuals and in chorus) read the word.
3. The teacher reads a sentence which includes the word.
4. A few students do the same (each composing his own sentence).
5. The students repeat the word.
6. In this order all the lesson's words are learned.
7. The students are tested on all the lesson's words.

**Test-Study Method:**

1. The students are tested on all the lesson's words.
2. They mark each other's or their own test.
3. Each student practices individually the words in which he erred.

Rieger and Arnon also specifically outlined the structure of the methodology as it was to be used each week, month and year. For three weeks new lessons are to be presented, and on the fourth week a day is to be spent

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27 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
in review of the entire month's work. This procedure continues for six months. At the end of six months there is a general review period of six weeks - one week per month, and one day per week. At the end of this time there is a two week period set aside for review of those words that individuals are still misspelling. The weekly schedule also calls for the students to learn one half of the week's portion on Sunday and the second half on Monday. On Tuesday the students are tested on the week's portion and the teacher takes their copybooks home. On Thursday individuals review their own mistakes. In all lessons, including the review, the study-test method and the test-study methods are used.\(^\text{28}\)

In the series of spelling books which was produced in conjunction with *Teaching Spelling* each word was followed by a sentence in which it was included. Rieger and Arnon felt that this was the most desirable arrangement for they believed that knowledge of how to spell a word is dependent on understanding it, and that the best method is to present that word in its natural setting - a sentence. To some extent an effort was made in the spelling books to connect the words of a single lesson by virtue of their subject. This, however, was not always possible. It was also attempted to structure the

individual lessons in a symmetrical fashion with the more difficult words coming at the beginning and end and the easier ones in the middle. The authors' rationale for this structure was that absorptive powers are stronger at the beginning and end of a period of impression and weaker in the middle. 29

**Founding the Hebrew Secondary School in Jerusalem**

One of the major contributions Rieger made during his tenure as an inspector for the Waad Leumi's Department of Education, came about through his participation in the founding of a new type of secondary school in 1936, the Hebrew Secondary School (*Beth ha-Sefer ha-Tikhen*) in Beth ha-Kerem, Jerusalem. 30 To the point that this new school was founded, and even for decades afterwards the model for most secondary schools was the *Gymnasia Herzlia*. Bentwich said:

It was essentially a town school and had a bourgeois stamp... Its declared aim was to prepare students for admission to a university or technical college (abroad). The syllabus was a translation of that of a Continental Gymnasium, with some Jewish studies thrown in... The school had a mixture of subjects, with no clear integration... 31

Both the Herzlia and the Beth Sefer Reali in Haifa began secondary education for their students when they

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30 For more information on the Hebrew Secondary School see below, pp. 155-164.

were ten years old. Preceding that there were four year preparatory schools connected with these institutions so that a student need never study in another school. A lower level secondary education was provided from the time the student was ten until he was fourteen; at that point students in the Beth Sefer Reali could choose to major in a realistic or humanistic course of studies. This same choice could not be made at the Herzlia until the student was in the seventh form (sixteen years old). In most cases both realistic and humanistic students had to study similar subjects, the difference being that a student had more hours in those subjects related to his particular course of study depending on whether it was humanistic or realistic. The result was an overabundance of courses taken by most pupils, and the schools were almost completely academic.  

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32 Eliezer Rieger, Hebrew Education in Palestine: Part Two - Aims and Curricula (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing Co., 1940), pp. 238-245. For further information on secondary education in Palestine during the decades of the thirties and forties see Leon Roth, ed., Problems of Hebrew Secondary Education in Palestine (Jerusalem, Rubin Mass, 1939). In the Herzlia an agricultural course of study was offered from the sixth form (15 years old) to the eighth form. It is of value at this juncture to take note of the curricula offered by a German Gymnasium, and that of the Herzlia and Beth Sefer Reali in order to place the emerging curriculum of the Beth ha-Sefer ha-Tikhen in a proper perspective. According to Rieger, Hebrew Education: Part Two, p. 210, the final year of study at a German Gymnasium a student in the classical course of study had two hours of religion, three of German, five of Latin, five of Greek, two of one modern language, three of history, one of geography, three of mathematics, two of nature, and one hour of art. Like the classical student, the realistic student had the same number of hours of religion, German, history, geography and art. On the
Rieger reacted strongly to many of the aspects of secondary education and the secondary schools which he felt needed change or improvement. For example, he could not accept the attachment of preparatory elementary grades to secondary schools. He remarked about this issue:

other hand, he had no Latin or Greek studies, three hours of study in each of two modern languages, five hours of mathematics and six of nature.

The curriculum in the last year of studies at the Herzlia (see Rieger, Hebrew Education: Part Two, p. 243) offered thirty-seven hours of study for students of the humanistic course and thirty-eight for those of the realistic. One studying in the humanistic program had four hours of Bible, two of Talmud and Aggadah, five of Hebrew, two of general literature, four of history, three of mathematics, two of physics, two of geography, two of nature, six of English, four of either Arabic or French and one of athletics. The realistic pupil had the same hour program in Bible, Hebrew, geography, nature, English and athletics. However, he studied no Talmud and Aggadah, general literature or Arabic and French. The realistic student had more hours of mathematics (five) and physics (five) and added to his program theoretical geometry (two hours) and chemistry (four hours).

At the Beth Sefer Reali the realistic student had 34 1/2 hours (see Rieger, Hebrew Education: Part Two, p. 244). The humanistic student had four hours of Bible, six of Hebrew, three of history, six of English, four of Arabic and four of French, four and one half hours of athletics and one of assembly. The realistic student had the same number of hours only in Bible, Hebrew and assembly. He had more hours of exercise (five and one half), fewer of English (only five), and no Arabic, French or history. Instead, he had five hours of mathematics, five of physics, and three of chemistry.
First of all we must uproot from our secondary schools the sore of class separation which we inherited from Europe. The children of our aristocracy in Palestine do not send their children to folk schools but rather place them in "preparatory schools" which are attached to the secondary schools and which serve as nests of separatism... Our social life is greatly saturated with class tension, and the school does not have to further nurture social contrasts. 33

With reference to the highly academic nature of the secondary school curriculum Rieger commented that the overwhelming majority of secondary school students do not enter a university or even take a matriculation examination. Indeed, only one student in five who finishes a secondary school is accepted at the Hebrew University. Rieger stated:

... the rest of the students [four out of five] do not attend the University and do not need an academic curriculum. There is no ethical or social justification to teach four students what only the fifth needs at the price of not teaching the four what they need. 34

As Rieger saw it, there was a threefold purpose for secondary education. First, it had to provide a living literary, social and scientific education to make it easier for the students to integrate themselves into the confusing modern society. Second, it had to provide vocational guidance to help the students find work in accordance with

33 Ibid., p. 212.
34 Ibid., pp. 221-222.
their talents and abilities. Finally, it had to provide the proper preparation for the continuance of studies on a higher level for those students who were suitable for it.  

Rieger called for the recognition of the nature of the adolescent as the basis upon which to create educational division between elementary and secondary education. The secondary school should begin its studies not when pupils are ten years old, rather twelve, and the educational system should be sub-divided into six year courses - one for elementary and one for secondary. The first two years of the courses should be directed to ascertaining the talents and skills of the pupils. The second two years should offer many courses of study directed to pre-vocational training, so that those who will not be going on to the university can acquire an understanding of how their skills and talents can be used. During the final level of secondary education, the last two years, four different courses of study are to be offered. Instead of just a humanistic or realistic course, Rieger asks for literary, social, mathematics, and biology courses of study. He feels that specificity leads to economy of learning and to more varied opportunities.

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35 Ibid., p. 222.
to offer success to students with particular interests and talents.\textsuperscript{36} On the other hand, Rieger believes that a curriculum must be structured which would reduce the unreasonable number of courses offered. Many subjects should be combined into general subject areas like Hebrew studies or social studies, and electives must be offered, especially during the first stage of secondary education.\textsuperscript{37}

Rieger readily admitted that his ideas about secondary education were greatly influenced by his contacts with American secondary education, which he called the most democratic in the entire world. Indeed, his 6-6 (2-2-2) plan was really an adaptation of the American 6-3-3 plan: six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school and three years of senior high school. The American division, he claimed, was based on the psychological necessities of early adolescence. At this age the student needs expert guidance which will help him reveal his inclinations and his special interests and which will aid him in the selection of a course of study.\textsuperscript{38} Rieger felt that this was true not only for American but also for Palestinian Hebrew education. The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid., pp. 240-241.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid., pp. 249-253.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 187.
\end{itemize}
Hebrew secondary school student needed direction beyond that which the traditional Gymnasium was offering.

The founding of the Hebrew Secondary School in Beth ha-Kerem (Beth ha-Sefer ha-Tikhen) was a means by which Rieger was able to realize his goals for secondary education in Palestine. There were a number of factors, however, which led to its creation. According to Ben Zion Dinur (Dinaburg) he first suggested the idea of creating a secondary school in connection with the Beth ha-Midrash le-Morim ha-Ivri in Beth ha-Kerem (Hebrew Teachers Seminar) in 1931.

There were a number of reasons for Dinur and the Seminar Administration's proposal that this secondary school be established. First, the Seminar had the problem of finding suitable students who would want to prepare themselves for teaching. At the end of the decade of the twenties and at the beginning of the thirties a number of changes had occurred in the structure of the Seminar. Until the beginning of the thirties it had accepted only those students who had completed eight years of schooling. They would study at the Seminar for five years and would graduate. A large portion of the gradu-

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39 Hereinafter referred to as Seminar, Hebrew Teachers Seminar or Beth Midrash le-Morim.

40 Ben Zion Dinur (Dinaburg), Principal of the Hebrew Teachers Seminar in Beth ha-Kerem and third permanent Minister of Education and Culture of the State of Israel, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 19, 1968. Hereinafter referred to as Interview.
ates did not enter education at all, but at the end of their studies at the Seminar went on to architecture, medicine, law and the like. The Seminar really served as a secondary school. Therefore, the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi felt that it had a reasonable and ideological basis for budget cuts when this became necessary in the early thirties. Since many students did not go on to education, younger students who had less than ten years of school and would be less serious about teaching as a career could no longer be accepted. However, after a few years of experience it was learned that students who came with this background were not properly prepared for a teachers seminar, and it was felt that it was important to open a high school which would be connected with the Seminar. 41

The idea was discussed with Dr. Luria, inspector of secondary schools, and Dr. Berkson, Director of the Waad Leumi Department of Education. The Department hesitated to take action at this time for three reasons: 1) it did not have the budget, 2) it was not sure that the Seminar would be able to administer the school, and 3) the Hebrew Gymnasium already existed in Jerusalem and might be harmed by the addition of a new institution. 42

41 Ben Zion Dinur, "The Hebrew Secondary School," unpublished article in the private files of Ben Zion Dinur. 42 Ibid.
Another factor which led to the establishment of the Secondary School was Rieger's demand for a new overall structure for education. The proposal for a 6-6 educational plan of six years of elementary school and six years of high school was first presented by Rieger at a meeting of secondary school principals in 1932. The Histadruth ha-Morim (Teachers Federation) was the idea's major opponent. It objected to the formation of a six year elementary school for it felt that this would destroy the elementary school by cutting off its last two years. This, in turn, would cause students to drop out of school earlier.43

The new Department of Education of the Hebrew University also was most important in the creation of the Hebrew Secondary School. One of the ideas which was established immediately at the Hebrew University's Department under the direction of Alexander Dushkin was that teacher training should not only be theoretical - teach-

43 Joseph Bentwich, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 22, 1968. For more background material see also Naftaly S. Glasman, "The Structural Reform in Israel Education," Jewish Education, XXXIX, No.2 (April 1969), pp. 25-26. Glasman points out that the Teachers Union demonstrated its objection to the school by having an adjacent elementary school operate grades one through eight. In this way the teachers' organization forced the Hebrew Secondary School to recruit students from private schools by reducing the pool of students in the immediate area.
ing through lectures and reading, but that teachers should also have the opportunity to observe experienced teachers, learn how to observe, and do practice teaching. Already in 1934 Rieger and Dushkin discussed and developed the idea of establishing a laboratory school connected to the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi and the Hebrew University. 44

Additional reasons and purposes for the establishment of the Hebrew Secondary School were stated by Alexander Dushkin:

"... When we opened the school in 1936, it was a unique institution. It came into existence not merely to meet a local need - that of creating another secondary school for the rapidly growing community of Jerusalem. It was intended also, and more particularly, to render two important central services to the development of the Jewish national school system, namely - a) to enable the then newly organized Department of Education of the Hebrew University to train secondary school teachers effectively, by giving them guided opportunities for observation and practice, in addition to teaching them the theory and methods of education; and b) to make it possible for the University faculty to deal intimately with the problems of youth education in the new land, and to seek to improve it by constant, cautious experimentation with better methods and deeper insights. To achieve these ends the Hebrew University joined with the Education Department of the Waad Leumi and with the Hebrew Teachers' College in Beth Ha-Kerem to develop an Experimental and Practice School according to the highest educational standards known to us. 45"


Rieger guided the proposed Hebrew Secondary School through the many levels of discussion and negotiation which were required within the Waad Leumi Department of Education. According to Dinur, Rieger and Luria realized that the new institution would have serious opposition if it came before the Waad Leumi's education committee, and they therefore decided to involve the Department of Education on their own authority without asking anyone.46

The crucial meeting which led to the Hebrew Secondary School's establishment in 1936 took place between representatives of the Department of Education of the Hebrew University and the Waad Leumi on April 25, 1935.47 It was at this time that the Hebrew University accepted the Waad Leumi Department's proposal to participate in a new type of secondary school which would be a service institution for experimentation, observation and research for the University. In the minutes of this meeting it was stated:

With respect to the secondary school in Beth ha-Kerem it is possible to accept the proposal of the Department of the Waad Leumi with the condition that this institution will serve as a service for the Depart-

46 Dinur, Interview.

ment of the University. The proposal is to create a preparatory-secondary school along the lines of the American junior high school... The Department of the Waad Leumi is interested in this experiment no less than the University Department, and it must be carried out with the cooperation of these two institutions.48

There was an elementary demonstration school housed in Beth ha-Kerem, and at this meeting it was agreed that the preparatory-high school would be structured on the foundation of its two upper classes, grades seven and eight, with the addition of one year, grade nine.49 It was further agreed at the meeting:

This three department institution will give its students a cultural, general, modern education and also a pre-vocational education based on the inclinations of the educants, their personalities and their talents. The curriculum of the school will be divided between required studies and elective subjects. The former will include the regular school courses... Elective subjects will include the fundamentals of vocational education, fine art, and also selected work in the sciences, literature and language. Each year every student will choose two elective subjects in addition to the regular required studies... The essential goal is not a technical education but rather recognition of the student's inclinations and talents through these electives in order to guide him towards his future. For the students who will not continue their studies after the ninth year this curriculum will give them first hand knowledge of practical subjects which will ease their entry into a vocational education. For the majority of the students who will continue their studies after the ninth year there will be created, on the basis of the pre-secondary course, an upper secondary school of three additional grades - 10, 11, 12, and their curriculum will be structured around different subject areas based on the students' inclinations and talents.50

48 Ibid., p. 1.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
In a follow up letter to the April meeting dated May 28, 1935 the Hebrew University formally accepted the proposal of the Waad Leumi Department of Education that it participate in the establishment of a new secondary school. It did, however, stipulate that a number of requirements be fulfilled. First, the University Department of Education reiterated the fact that the school must serve as an institution for observation and experimental research for students and teachers of the University Department. 51 Secondly, it pointed out:

The school will be under the joint management of the Department of Education of Kenebeth Yisrael and the Department of Education of the Hebrew University; with the assistance of the Beth ha-Midrash la-Morim ha-Ivril in Jerusalem, owner of the building, and with the assistance of the parents of the school. The administration will be in the hands of Dr. Alexander M. Duschkin for the Department of Education of the University and in the hands of Dr. Eliezer Rieger for the Department of Education of Kenebeth Yisrael. It is agreed that Dr. Rieger will devote one half of his time to this work in exchange for payment of half of his salary to the Department of Education of Kenebeth Yisrael by the Secondary School. 52

The letter also assumed that the Hebrew Teachers Seminar in Beth ha-Kerem was prepared to provide suitable quarters in its building without charge to the Secondary School, and that further it would grant permission for use of its laboratories, auditorium, fields, equipment


52 Ibid., pp. 102.
and tools by the new school. This stipulation was formally agreed to by the Hebrew Teachers Seminar in June of 1935. Proprietorship was officially to be in the hands of the Department of Education of Kene Yisrael, and the school's management would consist of representatives of the two departments of education, of the Beth Midrash le-Morim and of a parents committee. Further, appointment and dismissal of teachers would be dependent on the agreement of the two departments participating in the administration.

When the school began operating it had only about one hundred students. The small size of the student body put a limit on the number of experiments that could be conducted initially. The school, in addition, had hoped to attract children from all levels of society. However, there was a natural selection which took place because tuition fees had to be paid. For the most part, the school was populated by a student body made up of a cross section of the middle class groups in the community.

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53 Ibid., p. 2.
54 Ben Zion Dimur, Jerusalem, letter, June 11, 1935, to the Department of Education of the Hebrew University and the Waad Leumi, Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, J17/381.
56 Dushkin, Interview.
The curriculum of the newly established Hebrew Secondary School was carefully spelled out from the beginning. In addition to what could be expected to be the regular educational aspirations of most educational institutions in Palestine (like a general Hebrew education; recognition of the pupil's obligations towards the Land of Israel, the people of Israel and humanity; admiration for the importance of Israel; preparation for a life of purposeful work; ethics, manners, and consideration; health of body and mind), it listed a number of special goals. First, it desired to make it possible for the student to learn the fundamentals of different subjects like the vocations or fine art. Second, the school sought to offer the student the opportunity to learn about himself, his inclinations and his talents, by means of selecting the different subjects. Also, it hoped that the teacher would gain insight into the characteristics of the student by virtue of his selection of these subjects and by his success in them, and would thereby be able to guide him towards his brightest future.58

This first curriculum divided the education program of the school into three main sub-headings: 1) required studies, 2) elective studies, and 3) counselling, assembly

58 Ibid.
and clubs. The required studies included the general heading of Hebrew studies (Bible, language, literature), social studies (history, geography, citizenship), nature studies, mathematics, English, physical education, hygiene and sports. 59

There were three different aspects listed under the Hebrew Secondary School's elective program. The first was vocational education. This included a business and clerical course and industrial workshops in carpentry and electrical circuiting. There were also courses in home economics (cooking and sewing), printing and journalism, and agriculture (gardening and chicken raising). The second element of the elective system was a fine arts program. It included an art laboratory for drawing, modeling and weaving. Dramatics, orchestra and choir were also part of this program. Finally, there was a general elective heading called free sciences which included either scientific experiments and nature study, creative writing and additional reading of literature, and Arabic. 60

The counselling, assembly and club programs included both private lessons for students who were having difficulty and independent work for motivated and especially talented pupils. There was also personal counselling. Assem-

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
ties were organized to display group and subject area work, and a club and scout program were started. 61

The school day lasted from 8:00 A.M. until 2:30 or 3:00 P.M. four times a week and from 8:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. twice a week. There were forty-two hours of school in a normal six day week. The lessons were scheduled to last forty-five minutes and had a five or ten minute break between them. Each day there was a thirty to forty minute break to eat in school, and four times a week there was a half-hour for exercise and sport. Twice a week there was a full period allotted for a school assembly. Of the total forty-two class hours each week twenty-nine were allotted to required subjects and twelve to elective subjects. 62 For the most part required subjects were taught in the morning and electives during the afternoon. 63

A visitation report evaluating the Hebrew Secondary School at the end of its first year of existence commented on various important aspects of the program. First, it pointed out that its two principals sought to diversify the

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid. The actual class-hour division for the first years were as follows: Required Subjects - Hebrew studies - eight to ten periods, mathematics - four to five periods, social studies - four periods, nature and science - three to four periods, English - five periods, exercise and sports - total of two periods, assembly - two periods; Elective Subjects - two electives for four periods each - eight periods, counseling and private work - two periods, clubs and scout group - two periods.

the program as it developed into a six year school. (The first two years of the program have already been described). For classes three and four it was proposed that there be a clearer definition of groups of studies for each pupil. Twenty-eight of thirty-six actual class hours would be assigned to specialization in any of the following subject groups: literary-historical, science and mathematics, agriculture, industrial or domestic science, music and art. Specialization during years five and six would be even more specific in preparation for the University or various training colleges. All this was still in the planning stage for only the first three classes existed. 64

This report also pointed out that the form master of each class gave an additional period devoted to discussion of school topics, questions of general interest, and topics of specific scholastic matters. Also, the last period on Friday was devoted to a school assembly. 65

Under the heading of general comments this same visitation report remarked:

It is, of course, much too early to express an opinion as to the standard of this new school, but there is every hope that under the administration of its present able and keen principals that the school will prove a success. The commencement of the secondary stage at the age of 12+, the opportunity given for the

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., pp. 2-3. For further information about the Shiur ha-Mohanenekeh and the assembly see below pp. 160-163.
selection of special subjects at an earlier age than in other secondary schools and the encouragement of individual tastes in the lighter subjects are all sound in theory at least, and it will remain to be seen how successful their achievement will be. The efforts made to stimulate a school spirit are also commendable. There is, however, still a need for improvement in habits and discipline and the development of a more proper attitude to serious study.

The teaching staff includes some teachers of outstanding ability, who, too, are sure to contribute to the success of the school....

The school authorities are alive to the need for conducting educational experiments in various directions, and it would be interesting to watch these experiments and the general progress of the school.

At the end of the first school year it became apparent that Dr. Rieger was devoting a great deal of time to the success of the secondary school, and there was the feeling in the Waad Leumi Department of Education that so much of an inspector's time should not be devoted to one institution. It was at this point that Dushkin wrote to Luria reminding him and the Waad Leumi Department of the commitment to the Hebrew Secondary School. He noted that it was

66 Ibid., p. 4. Two of the outstanding faculty members, even at this early period, were Dr. S.D. Goitein and Dr. Ernst Simon. Rieger (and Dushkin during his tenure) always attempted to attract outstanding staff, often turning to the faculty of the Hebrew University for Hebrew Secondary School teachers.

Dr. S.D. Goitein was professor of Islam and Islamic Peoples at the Hebrew University and head of its Makhon le-Mada' ha-Mizrah (Institute of Oriental Studies). From 1938-1948 he was an inspector and officer of higher education in the Department of Education of the Mandate Government.*

Dr. Ernst Simon settled in Palestine in 1928. He was a professor of Education at the Hebrew University and has served as an inspector of secondary and higher education for the Ministry of Education and Culture of the State of Israel.

* Dr. Geitanein is now Professor of Arabic at the University of Pennsylvania and visiting Professor of Judaic-Arabic at Dropsie University.
the Waad Leumi Department which proposed the new school to the Hebrew University Department. Dushkin accepted the responsibility on behalf of the Hebrew University of participating in this joint endeavor with the understanding that Rieger would divide the responsibility of administration with him. He stated that if Rieger would not be permitted to continue to participate actively in this work, he did not see any possibility of continuing the school.67

The Waad Leumi Department acquiesced to Dushkin's (and Rieger's) demands and permitted Rieger to continue as co-principal of the Hebrew Secondary School. He remained in this position until 1940 when he left the Waad Leumi Department of Education. At that time he was appointed to the faculty of the Hebrew University Department of Education and became sole principal of the school by virtue of his new position.

CHAPTER SIX

The Hebrew University Department of Education
1940-1951 Part I

In August of 1940 Eliezer Rieger left his position as inspector in the Waad Leumi's Department of Education and accepted an appointment as a lecturer in practical pedagogy at the Hebrew University. He was informed at the time of his appointment that his position was dependent on Dushkin's option to return to the University and reclaim the pedagogy lecturership at the end of the school year. In the summer of 1939 Dushkin had left for New York on a two-year leave of absence to become the Director of the Jewish Education Committee. He still had a year of that leave remaining. Rieger was also informed that the job of principal of the Hebrew Secondary School in Beth ha-Kerem would be part of his responsibilities, and since Dr. Ernst Simon had been acting principal during 1939-1940 Rieger would have to make the necessary arrangements with him to assume his duties, too.¹

¹ Zalman Schoken, chairman of the Hebrew University Executive Council, letter, Aug. 26, 1940, Jerusalem, to Eliezer Rieger, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File. Before this official appointment Rieger taught a number of courses at the Hebrew University in the methodology of teaching.
When Dushkin had originally requested his leave of absence in 1939, he had coupled it with the request that Rieger be appointed to his position in practical pedagogy. There was no question in his mind that Rieger was the most qualified for the position, by virtue of all his scientific research in education and his involvement in the Hebrew University Secondary School. Dushkin left with the understanding that Rieger would be appointed by the Senate of the University without any difficulty, and indeed the Senate was favorable to Rieger. Simultaneously there was a lecturship available in educational theory and philosophy at the Hebrew University for which Ernst Simon had applied. Problems arose, however, when the appointments came before the University's Executive Council headed by Zalman Schocken. There was a majority in favor of appointing Rieger and Simon to the two positions, but in order to appease a faction in favor of appointing a third candidate, namely Nisson Toueff, dean of the Hebrew Teachers College in Boston, to a University lecturship in education, a special sub-committee for academic procedure was appointed to look into the qualifications of the three candidates. The Senate, by a small

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2 Alexander M. Dushkin, letter, August 1939, Camp Modin, Maine, to Eliezer Rieger, Rieger personal papers belonging to Mrs. Kaplan.
majority, agreed to the Executive Council's request for this sub-committee. The result of the sub-committee's deliberations was that Touroff was appointed to the position in Principles of Education and Simon was named Dushkin's substitute in pedagogy. Both Rieger and Dushkin were very disappointed. In an exchange of telegrams at the end of August Rieger wired, "Appointment Simon your successor necessitates my immediate withdrawal from school and your earliest return for settling principalship...," and Dushkin replied, "Dreadfully disappointed political deal sacrificed you - me - all we built - sent official protest - convinced my return futile. Assume Simon principal."

In his letter of protest Dushkin said:

I must express my disappointment and great sorrow upon receiving the surprising news of Dr. Simon's appointment to the position in practical pedagogy. As you know I respect him as a philosopher and as a teacher. Likewise, you are aware that I supported his candidacy for the position in the Principles of Education. But I am sure that he is not

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3 Eliezer Rieger, letter, July 1939, Jerusalem, to Alexander M. Dushkin, Rieger personal papers belonging to Mrs. Kaplan.


5 Eliezer Rieger, telegram, Aug. 27, 1939, Jerusalem, to Alexander Dushkin, Rieger personal papers belonging to Mrs. Kaplan.

6 Alexander Dushkin, telegram, Aug. 29, 1939, Camp Modin, Maine, to Eliezer Rieger, Rieger personal papers belonging to Mrs. Kaplan.
the suitable person to continue my work in practical education. I expressed this opinion in public before the University and in private to Dr. Simon. This opinion is based not only on my evaluation, but on the evaluation of all those who have worked with him. It is known that Dr. Simon does not think of himself as a practical pedagogue, and did not offer his candidacy for my position for he does not have the methodological sensitivity and the practical talents required for this work.

Likewise I feel very deep sorrow for the great injury... which was inflicted on Dr. Rieger. Indeed, he was the candidate which the senate considered... as the most qualified and suitable for my position. The executive council even agreed with this opinion by a great majority, a majority of seven votes against one. It is my desire to vigorously protest against the political action which sacrificed him in order to appease the two contesting factions in favor of their two candidates for the other position, in the principles of education. With this sacrifice you have sacrificed, in my opinion, the educational groundwork and projects for which I worked in Palestine and in which Dr. Rieger participated with me.

The situation resolved itself when Touroff left the University after one year. Rieger was appointed to the position in practical pedagogy and Simon began giving the courses in the principles of education. Rieger and Simon were good friends, and during the year that the latter served as principal of the Hebrew Secondary School he referred to himself and signed all correspondence with the title "acting principal." Simon emphasized to all that

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his administration was a transitory one until Rieger would officially replace him.⁹

In March 1941 Rieger was notified that Dushkin would not return to the University and that his appointment as a lecturer was being made permanent.¹⁰ While Rieger's position as the lecturer of practical pedagogy carried with it the responsibilities of being head of the Department of Education, he was not officially elected as chairman by the Department's faculty until July 1942.¹¹ In April of 1950, ten years after his original appointment, Rieger was raised to the level of associate professor in pedagogy.¹² Rieger's full time work at the Hebrew University ended in 1951 when he was appointed Director General of the Ministry of Education and Culture.¹³ He was at that time given a two years' leave of absence (which

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⁹ Dr. Ernst Simon, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 28, 1968.

¹⁰ David Senator, Executive Vice President of the Hebrew University, letter, May 23, 1950, Jerusalem, to Eliezer Rieger, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.

¹¹ Note of the Department of Education, July 16, 1942, to the Central Office of the Hebrew University, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.

¹² David Senator, Executive Vice President of the Hebrew University, letter, May 23, 1950, Jerusalem, to Eliezer Rieger, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.

¹³ See below, pp.242-245.
was eventually extended for a third year), but was still required to teach three hours a week at the University or one-third his normal teaching load. At the beginning of April 1954 Alexander Dushkin wrote to Professor B. Mazar, President of the Hebrew University, requesting that Rieger be elevated immediately to a full professorship. The University could not act quickly enough and informed Dushkin on April 11, 1954 that a decision on Rieger's appointment to a full professorship would have to be delayed until after the academic year in June or July. Rieger died one week later on April 19, 1954.

Rieger's work at the Hebrew University, however, was not only a matter of career but also a matter of conviction. He felt that the University had a unique role to

14 M. Spiegel, Associate Director of the Department of Organization and Information of the State of Israel, letter, Nov., 1951, Jerusalem, to Mrs. Irving Engel, President of the National Council of Jewish Women, Archives of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the State of Israel, File 27, Portfolio 1108.

15 M. Nurok, financial secretary of the Hebrew University, letters, Dec 12, 1951 and Dec. 30, 1951, Jerusalem, to Eliezer Rieger, Archives of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the State of Israel, File 27, Portfolio 1108.

16 Alexander Dushkin, letter, April 8, 1954, Jerusalem, to Professor B. Mazar, President and Rector of the Hebrew University, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.

17 Academic-Secretary of the Hebrew University, letter, April 11, 1951, Jerusalem, to Alexander Dushkin, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.
play in the lives of the people of Israel and that it would affect them most significantly through its influence on education. It was the Hebrew University which could best help the nation face its major educational problems. The University must take the lead in teacher education and in curriculum development. It must give direction in broadening and deepening the work of educators. Rieger believed that it is the Hebrew University Department of Education's mission and role to

... firmly establish its demonstration schools: the Experimental Secondary School at Beth ha-Kerem..., the Experimental Primary School, and the Beth-Hayeled Experimental Kindergarten. These must be rendered truly exemplary... For it is these schools, which serve as a laboratory for the Education Department, that prospective teachers learn how to translate the educational theory they receive from their University teachers into the language of practice...

During the short course of its existence, and with the small resources at its disposal, the Education Department has tried to fulfill its functions on scientific lines... Hitherto, owing to force of circumstances, the problems of Hebrew education - aims, curriculum, methods - have been dealt with in a rather haphazard and make-shift manner. Half-truths and current slogans have filled the educational void in Hebrew education both in this country and in the Diaspora. There is need now for exhaustive thinking and clearness of purpose. The Hebrew University and its Department of Education owe a duty to the Yishuv and the Diaspora to concern themselves fully with these tasks.18

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A Trip to South Africa

During the fall and winter of 1942 Eliezer Rieger traveled to South Africa to conduct a fund raising campaign for the Hebrew University. The trip was financially successful, and it was reported that Rieger helped collect 43,000 L.P. Rieger's one problem was that he had to delay his return to Palestine into the new year, 1943, because it was war time and he could not get passage back via regular flights or sea voyages. It was during this trip to South Africa that Rieger first expressed the idea that it is the role of the Hebrew University to provide a renewed Zionist spirit for the Jewish populations of the democratic countries which envisions a modern Jewish civilization adapted to Jewish realities in Palestine and in the Diaspora. He explained:

... we therefore... expect that our Hebrew University will perform the same function in the twentieth century as the Yeshiva of Yavne did in the second, but with this difference: Yavne taught the Jewish people how to live after the destruction of the Second Temple; the Hebrew University will lead the way to Jewish life in the Third Commonwealth. I know of no other institution which can instill idealism and the will-to-live into European Jewry, broken though it is


21 Eliezer Rieger, telegram, Dec. 29, 1942, to David Senator, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.

with spiritual nihilism and despair, which can infuse into the life of Anglo-American Jewry the spiritual content of which it is so void, which can give roots and depth to the Yishuv in Palestine and render it immune against the tendency toward Levantinism. 23

Eliezer Rieger as Chairman of the Hebrew University Department of Education

As chairman of the Department of Education, Rieger worked constantly for the recognition of education as a subject worthy of scientific study. He felt that the University and its education department would help to solve the problems of Palestine and of the Diaspora and would give them new direction only when the professors would be able to look into the problems of education and present them in more depth to their students. There were always those who looked down upon education and who felt that it was too practical or artistic a subject to be part of the University curriculum. Education was viewed as a profession, and teacher preparation at the University could, therefore, be no more than supplementary work. The idea that education itself should be approved as a subject for scientific study was not accepted. 24

23 Ibid.

Education was finally accepted as a secondary or minor 하 jap (subject area), by the Senate of the University in 1944. It was limited, however, to only those students who did not already study philosophy, sociology of culture and psychology. Rieger was happy about the recognition but objected strongly to the restrictions placed upon the new 하 jap by the Senate.25

However, now that education was determined to be a 하 jap there were two educational frameworks which had to be distinguished. The first was the subject area (하 jap) of pedagogy. It became one of the 하 japim which every student in the University was permitted to choose as one of the three subjects required of him in order to receive the M.A. degree.26 The subject area was studied for two years, and the general approach to it was theoretical.27

On the other hand, everyone who was preparing for teaching upon graduation was required to study in the Department of Education in addition to the three regular


26 Apparently by 1947 all restriction on education as a 하 jap were removed.

27 RS.
subjects demanded of every student, one major and two
minors (one of the secondary or minor subjects could be,
as has been stated, the subject field of pedagogy.)
The length of study required by the Department for a
teachers diploma was two years, and only students who
had completed two years of study at the University or
had graduated from the University could be accepted. 28

In contrast to the Hug, the Department was not open
to every student who wished to attend. The Department of
Education was very cautious in choosing candidates for
admission. Each candidate had to fill in a special ap-
plication, write an autobiographical sketch and compose
an essay on an educational subject. He also had to have
a personal interview. In addition, an appraisal of each
candidate was attained from each University teacher with
whom he had studied. Since about 1946-1947 preliminary
observation and practice teaching in schools were intro-
duced. Each candidate was required to spend two weeks
in a school under the supervision of an experienced teach-
er and to give several lessons or parts of lessons. By
means of this process students who, because of their average
academic standing, would not have been admitted to the
Department were accepted upon the recommendation of their

28 RS. Ex-soldiers who wished to study education were
also accepted as were some others who did not meet exact
requirements. Special exceptions were made for those who
were worthy in the eyes of the Department.
critic teacher. On the other hand, some students with outstanding grades demonstrated either to themselves or to their critic teachers that they were not suited for teaching. 29

As Rieger defined it:

... the purpose of the Department is the preparation of teachers for teaching in the two highest classes of the elementary schools and in all grades in the secondary schools. The course divides into theoretical and practical.

Study of general methodology and subjects serve as a transition to the practical work of the Department of Education. The essence of the practical work is listening to lessons and giving lessons. We require about three hundred hours which are divided as follows: about fifty hours of preliminary practical work which precedes acceptance of the candidate into the department and is done in one of the secondary schools in Israel (or in upper elementary school classes), about one hundred and fifty hours in the secondary school in Beth ha-Kerem throughout a year or two, about fifty hours of listening to and giving lessons in one of the secondary schools between Purim and Passover in the second year, and a one week pedagogic outing during the first year. The practical work concludes with the presentation of three sample lessons.

The practical work, both listening to lessons and giving them is done with the guidance of one of the teachers of the institution in which the work is done. In the Secondary School in Beth ha-Kerem a few teachers work permanently as counselors of the students of the Department of Education... 30

Rieger himself took the University students on weekly


30 RS.
visits to different schools in Jerusalem and its suburbs. In addition, he personally conducted the one-week yearly outing to visit the country’s schools. He took his students to all types of institutions (a reform school, Agudath Israel schools, Arab schools.) The principal would generally discuss his school with the students, and Rieger would make comments. 31

The actual curriculum of the Department of Education for students preparing for teaching consisted of about nine hours a week of course work during both the first and second years of study. In the first year the curriculum included general introductory courses in pedagogy, psychology and methodology and two to three hours of observation and practical experience. The second year’s program included an additional course in psychology, courses in the methodology of teaching specific subjects and about five to six hours a week of observation and practical experience. 32

The curriculum of pedagogy as a secondary Hig included only theoretical courses. Courses such as Introduction

31 Dr. Samuel Kneller, teacher and administrator at the Hebrew Secondary School, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, June 16, 1968.

32 RS.
to Psychology, The History of Education, Philosophy of education and Hebrew Education in Palestine were offered to first year students. Second year students had a much wider choice of subjects. Their course offerings included: Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence, Educational Psychology, Principles of Jewish Education, Seminar in the History and Philosophy of Education, the Social Foundations of Education, Comparative Education, Selected Problems in Education and Teaching and the Foundations of Educational Hygiene.33

During the decade of the forties the Department of Education listed only three full-time teachers. There was a lecturer in educational methods and administration (Rieger), a lecturer in the principles of education (Simon) and a professor of psychology (Bonaventura). There were also four part-time instructors who taught the specific methodology of Hebrew subjects, mathematics, physics and social sciences.34

After a great deal of deliberation in conjunction with Rieger's patient guidance the faculty of liberal arts

33 Ibid.

34 "Department of Education at the Hebrew University" (unpublished anonymous paper, June 7, 1946), Hebrew University Archives, File 2275, Year 1946, pp. 1-2.
approved pedagogy as a major subject (Heb. rashi) in June 1950, and in November of the same year the action was ratified by the University Senate. At about the same time, the University introduced for the first time the B.A. as the lowest degree instead of the M.A. The purpose of this action was to insure a wider dispersal of academic qualifications to a larger number of people. The minimum period of study for the B.A. was three years. In order to deal with the new situation the Department of Education was restructured to include students of four (rather than the previous two) different categories. These new categories of students were:

... a) those who study education within the framework of B.A. with no thought of teaching (e.g. officials of the Ministry of Education and other educational bodies); b) those who besides the theoretical studies within the B.A. system also want to qualify for the teaching profession; c) those who want to carry their studies beyond the B.A. stage on to the M.A. or M.S. degree (and doctorate in the Theory of Education); d) those who are not content with the higher academic degree of M.A. and want to qualify as teachers. Students under categories (a) and (c) will get their University diploma pure and simple while those under (b) and (d) will get a Teacher's Diploma over and above their regular University diploma.

The procedure of selecting candidates for the Teacher's...
Diploma under this new system of B.A. remained the same as it had been when Rieger established it in 1946.38

The Progress of the Hebrew Secondary School

During the decade of the forties the Hebrew Secondary School continued to develop and progress under Rieger's direction as principal.39 He served as the connecting link between the Hebrew University and the secondary school, and he viewed them as one institution.40 The burden of functioning in a full capacity in both institutions was very difficult, however, and as early as 1941 Rieger suggested that it be divided between two different people.41 In fact, Rieger was the last person to fill both positions simultaneously.42


39 Ibid. For further information see also Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, J17/1584 and J17/ 330.

40 Dushkin, Interview.

41 Minutes of a conversation between Professor L. Roth, Dr. Eliezer Rieger and David Senator, Oct. 2, 1941, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.

42 Dushkin, Interview. Rieger was succeeded by a member of the Hebrew Secondary School Administration, Dr. Meir Shapira, a physics teacher who continues to this time as principal.
The development of the Hebrew Secondary School during these years under Rieger's guidance can most clearly be seen in the crystallization of the school's curriculum and its innovative system of courses of study (Megamoth). About the standard secondary curricular practices of the day, Rieger said:

It is only from an historical viewpoint... that I can explain to myself the division into realistic and humanistic departments as is the custom. It does not suit the need of the people... and it is not justified from a scientific or pedagogic viewpoint. There can be no doubt that the development and nature of the State requires a social course of study which would serve as a spring board for innovations. Many have already realized that we are failing miserably... in Judaic studies. We have a humanistic trend which includes Hebrew literature, Talmud, general literature and art. Certainly if we want to emphasize so many things, it is impossible to succeed, and this is not a course of study. We must become involved in realistic Megamoth, for it is impossible to compare a mathematics-physics trend with a biological-historical one.43

Rieger's reaction to this problem on an institutional level was to institute the idea of courses of study other than the realistic and humanistic and to restructure the general program of students enrolled in a particular course of studies.44 In 1946 and 1947 Rieger wrote to Dr. M. Soleveitchick, director of the Waad Leumi Department of

Education, to request permission to institute four different courses of study instead of just two.\textsuperscript{45} In a formal proposal to the Waad Leumi Department he pointed out his desire to establish the following courses of study for the two highest classes: a) literary, b) social studies, c) mathematics-physics, d) mathematics-biology. Rieger stated:

We hope to achieve a few things as a result of our reforms:

a. to inculcate in our students in the two highest classes habits of concentration and, by means of this, depth in work.

b. to attract youngsters to the social and literary sequence who to this point had been almost entirely drawn to the realistic course and who thought of the humanistic course as beneath their dignity.

c. to make it possible for groups of students... to concentrate on Hebrew studies within the literary course by devoting two-thirds of their studies to them in the two highest classes; the Hebrew studies of these students will include Bible, Hebrew, Talmud, broadened Hebrew literature, Israel history, sociology of the people of Israel and geography...

d. to prepare those who intend to enter the University... so that they will know what to choose and they will be able to enter with fewer difficulties in their studies than up to now, especially in subjects like Talmud, classical languages, social sciences and biology.

e. to give an advanced preparation to those who intend

\textsuperscript{45} Eliezer Rieger, letter, Jan. 6, 1947, Jerusalem, to Dr. M. Soloveitchik, Director of the Department of Education of Keneseth Yisrael, Archives of the State of Israel, Joseph Bentwich Files, File 678. See also E. Rieger, E. Simon and A. Bonaventura, letter, July 28, 1946, Jerusalem, to Dr. M. Soloveitchik, Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, J17/1493.
to enter higher educational institutions for art.

In a letter sent the following month, Soloveitchick informed Rieger that the Waad Leumi's Department of Education had no objection to his proceeding with the proposed innovations and experiments.

These curricular changes were indicative of the Hebrew Secondary School's approach to each individual student. According to Yisrael Mehlman, a teacher and administrator at the school, "The Tikhun [Hebrew Secondary School] considered the personality of the student in an ever increasing measure... The feeling existed that it was desirable to provide for each student as an individual, if it were possible - for then each student would have his own personal curriculum..."

In 1947 Joseph Bentwich wrote a report on some other innovations in the school for the McNair Commission.

46 Eliezer Rieger, letter, Jan. 6, 1947, Jerusalem, to Dr. M. Soloveitchick, personal files of Professor Ben Zion Dinur.

47 Dr. M. Soloveitchick, letter, Feb. 11, 1947, Jerusalem, to Eliezer Rieger, personal files of Professor Ben Zion Dinur. See also Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, J17/1493.


First, he was impressed with the nature of the literature courses. In each class reading matter was grouped around a certain theme like New Palestine or the Golah. Bentwich also considered the course on world literature a novelty. He said:

To be sure, a survey of "World Literature" had been included in the syllabus of the Hebrew Secondary School in Palestine since its inception, but while this usually is given in the form of an outline of literary history, Beth Hakerem is attempting something much better: it confines the course to the study of

a) one type of literature - the drama...

b) one literary trend - the realism and naturalism of the 19th century

Another experiment which Bentwich felt was worth noting was a course conducted by Rieger himself in civics. The course consisted of a quick review of world Jewry's demography and the structure of Palestine Jewry. The class discussed modern day problems, and Rieger took his pupils to visit government and other public institutions. Bentwich felt that the course aimed not only at presenting a fair survey of modern society in Palestine but also an objective insight into the key foundation of that society.52

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
Bentwich also responded positively to the club program (lucim) which had been developing throughout the years. At the time of his report there were thirteen clubs among which were Esperanto, dramatics, weaving, physics, mathematics, literature, philosophy, astronomy and chess. About fifty per cent of the student body chose to participate.53

An important objective of the school was to provide for a large measure of "pupil participation." It was the first secondary school in Palestine to establish a shiur ha-mehannekh (home room advisory period).54 The shiur ha-mehannekh took place regularly each week. The topic for each lesson was arrived at jointly by the teacher and the class. The students knew about the week's topic at least a week in advance and could prepare for it.55 Parts of the period were often devoted to class affairs and disciplinary matters.56 The students were directed to

53 Ibid.
feel that a successful lesson was a class accomplishment.
At the beginning of the year each class committee collected a list of topics from each student. A second list recorded what individual students could speak about or contribute. The committee reviewed the lists and put together a class program.57 The educational principle upon which the shiur ha-mehannekh was founded was that the students must be active in planning and carrying out programs and that the teacher serves as an adviser whose influence permeates the lesson.58 Some of the programs included opportunities to listen to music or see art displays, modern scientific progress, the latest explorations and discussions of all sorts including those about problems in the school and ways of improving it.59 The school also encouraged greater pupil participation through its student council and a number of special programs.60 Among the latter were a school orchestra and extensive theater and art projects.61

57 Information for Friends, pp. 24-25.
59 Melmlan, Ibid., and Information for Friends, pp. 24-25.
60 Dushkin, "The Aims of the Founders."
61 Dushkin, "The Aims of the Founders."
According to Dushkin, the Hebrew Secondary School was also the first to inaugurate a weekly assembly.62 Actually, each week there were two assemblies on Friday, one after the other. The first was for the lower grades and the second was for the older ones. There were lectures delivered by guests at these assemblies on many different subjects like the Jewish holidays, problems in the Bible, education, historical places, and careers. There were assemblies devoted to art and concerts.63 At one time representatives of Palestine political parties spoke at the assemblies on consecutive weeks and presented their own party's philosophy.64

Even the school's tsedakah program was tied into the weekly assembly. The school set up a single school fund which was directed into two separate funds: The Jewish National Fund and a fund for communal needs. Two thirds of the money collected went into the Jewish National Fund and one-third to the other community needs like orphanages, support for the poor and for refugees, education for abandoned children, etc. Monies which were designated

62 Dushkin, "The Aims of the Founders."
64 Dr. Yisrael Mehlman, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, June 16, 1968.
for the communal fund were divided into three parts: local needs, national needs and Diaspora needs. Every student took a monthly obligation to pay a pledge which he had promised. Each class selected a representative who served on a council. The council visited institutions, decided where the money was most needed, and presented its proposals for the entire students body's approval at the weekly assembly.65

An unusual project which was necessitated by the siege of Jerusalem during the 1948 War for Independence gives interesting testimony about the spirit of the school's teachers and pupils. An article entitled "A Unique Experiment in Education" stated:

An experiment probably unique in the annals of school education was tried out in Jerusalem during the 28 days' shelling of the city after May 15.

It arose out of the risks attached to keeping the schools open and of the eventual decision of the Board of Education to close them while the shelling lasted...

The experiment in question was initiated at the Hebrew University's Experimental Secondary School at Beth Hakerem, at the head of which is Dr. E. Rieger... Although aimed at maintaining, even if only to a limited extent, some continuity in the teaching at the school, its main purpose was actually to provide the pupils with some form of useful occupation and to keep them off the streets. Accepting the fact that the pupils could not come to school, the School Committee devised a system of

65 Eliezer Rieger, Hebrew Education in Palestine: Part One - General Principles and Trends (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing Co., 1940), pp. 117-120.
correspondence courses whereby they could be kept busy at home...

The experiment was tried out in Forms 1, 2, and 3 (age group 12-15)... with programmes of work... drawn up which were calculated to require about three hours of study a day. These programmes were stencilled, and at the beginning of each week the pupils were expected to call for them at the "depots" in their neighborhood (there were no less than twenty of these "depots" all over Jerusalem), and at the same time to hand in their work for the previous week and to receive their corrected papers of a week earlier. There was nothing compulsory of any kind - and pupils were free to join in it or not, as they pleased; but with few exceptions and these exceptions were for the most part in the case of pupils who lived in particularly dangerous areas - all of them took advantage of it ....

The McNair Commission

In 1945 the Waad Leumi asked the Mandate Government to appoint a commission of inquiry into the Hebrew school system. The objects for which the inquiry was asked were: a) to find means to improve the financial situation of education, b) to remedy the legal status of the system which suffered from the lack of statutory recognition, c) to place on a firm basis the status of the teachers, their terms of service, salaries and pensions. As a result of this request a "Commission of Enquiry into the System of Education of the Jewish Community in Palestine"

66 "A Unique Experiment in Education" (unpublished, anonymous article, 1948), Archives of the Hebrew University, File 2275, Year 1948.

67 Memorandum of a Meeting on Oct. 2, 1946 at the Department of Education of Knesseth Yisrael, Archives of the State of Israel, Joseph Bentwich Files, File 678.

68 Ibid.
chaired by Arnold McNair arrived in October 1945. 69 The
McNair Commission carried out an extensive investigation
both by visiting many of the country's educational insti-
tutions and by taking expert testimony. Rieger was noted
to be one of the main witnesses before the McNair Commis-
sion. 70 The result of the Commission's work was a list of
recommendations, 71 most of which were not acted upon because
of the Mandate's departure from Palestine in 1948. One
institution which the Commission's report did affect was
the Department of Education of the Hebrew University.
With respect to the University the Commission reported:

In our opinion, great as are the services which
the University is already rendering to the Jewish
people... there is no greater service that could
be rendered by it to them now than to expand its
concern with ... its own Department of Education,
and, in this way, to take the lead in a big forward
movement for the improvement of the quality of
teachers in the Jewish schools in Palestine. The
effect of the participation of the University in
this movement is not to be measured merely quanti-
tatively. We are not asking the University to
undertake the training of every teacher in the
Jewish schools. That is not, as we conceive it, the
function of the University. There are, however, in
the schools many classes that should be taught, and
many kinds of instruction that should be given, by
University trained teachers, particularly in the
secondary schools and the higher forms of the ele-
mentary schools, and in certain specialist subjects.

69 British Colonial Office, The System of Education of
the Jewish Community in Palestine: Report of the Commission
of Enquiry Appointed by the Secretary of State for the Col-
onies in 1945 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946),

70 David Senator, letter, Feb. 24, 1946, Jerusalem, to
Dr. Walter Zander in London, Hebrew University Archives,
Rieger Personal File.

71 McNair Report, pp. 96-97.
If the University can ensure the necessary output of teachers for these purposes, we are confident that its influence will have a fertilising effect over the whole field of Jewish education. We realise that if the University is prepared to accept the task, a considerable increase in its expenditure will be involved, and we have made provision for this by recommending that the Government should make the necessary grants both to assist the University toward meeting the maintenance of students who are unable to undertake a course of training without financial assistance. 72

More specifically, it was recommended that the Government provide funds for additional staff for the Hebrew University Department of Education. These funds would be used to increase the number of lecturers and tutors and to increase the staff at the Beth ha-Kerem Secondary School. The monies would also be used to provide scholarships and grants for intending teachers and for students when enroll in the Secondary School. 73

The McNair Commission report was officially issued on March 26, 1946, 74 and at the end of May of the same year the Director of the Department of Education, de Bunsen, wrote to Rieger to implement some of its proposals. Two items which he handled immediately were the granting of scholarships to students of the Hebrew University and the Hebrew Secondary School. Six grants were made to students

72 Ibid., p. 63.
73 Ibid., p. 67.
74 Ibid., p. 99.
who planned to study education at the University, and twenty scholarships were made available to Hebrew Secondary School pupils.75

One of the last acts of the Palestine Government prior to its withdrawal from the country was to make a grant of 14,500L.P. (about $36,000) to the Education Department of the Hebrew University.76 This grant came as the culmination to negotiations on the subject which had been in progress between the University and the Government since the publication of the McNair Report in 1946. It would make it possible for the University to increase its output of trained teachers for secondary schools by expanding its staff and facilities.77 One of the conditions of the grant was that the University should contribute an amount equal to that being contributed by the Government, in order to guarantee the Teachers Training Department for the next few years.78


76 "Note for Press Release," (July 4, 1948), Hebrew University Archives, File 2275, Year 1948. Hereinafter referred to as PR.

77 Ibid. Actually, this was the only recommendation of the McNair Commission which was put into effect.

ment first made this stipulation the University found it difficult to accept a new financial commitment because of the unstable situation in Palestine. However, through Rieger and Dushkin's efforts (Rieger in Jerusalem and Dushkin in New York) the University turned to the National Council of Jewish Women who agreed to underwrite the cost of the University's share in the program. 79

Actually, the National Council of Jewish Women took its first step to aid the Department of Education of the Hebrew University in October 1947 when it set aside a minimum of $10,000 for this purpose. 80 When the departing Mandate Government established its offer at a total of $36,000 dollars for the Department, the National Council of Jewish Women increased its pledge to $12,000 dollars a year for three years totaling $36,000. 81 This was the first grant ever received from the Government by the University Department of Education. 82


80 Mrs. Joseph M. Welt, National President of the National Council of Jewish Women, letter, Nov. 3, 1947, New York, to Dr. Leo Schwarz, Executive Director of the American Friends of the Hebrew University, Hebrew University Archives, File 2275, Year 1947.

81 National Council of Jewish Women, Council's Israel Education Project - a Primer (September 1950).

82 P.R.
Rieger did not stop, however, with insuring the National Council of Jewish Women's participation in maintaining the University Department of Education budget. Alexander Dushkin said:

In 1948 Dr. Rieger performed an amazing deed - he went to New York and with the help of Dr. Senator convinced a non-Zionist women's organization - the National Council of Jewish Women to take the responsibility for the entire budget of the Department of Education of the University. This created a strong budgetary foundation for the Department. 83

83 Alexander M. Dushkin, In Memoriam for Professor Eliezer Rieger (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1954), p. 16.
There were a number of important educational ideas which Eliezer Rieger expressed and emphasized during his years of work at the Hebrew University. Many of them were an outgrowth of or enhanced by his connection with the University, and all had implications for the educational world outside of it. His central areas of interest during this time were Palestine and Diaspora education and teaching Hebrew language. One of the concrete results of Rieger's interests was his organization and creation of three educational symposia and an educational conference. The symposia, which were co-sponsored by the Hebrew University, the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi and the Histadruth ha-Morim, were "Hebrew Expression and Teaching Hebrew Literature in the Secondary School" in 1941, "Adult Education in Palestine and and Hebrew Education Abroad," in 1943, and "Vocational and Pre-Vocational Training in Palestine," in 1945.¹

¹ Eliezer Rieger, "Mavo," Haskalath ha-Am we-ha-Hinniukh ha-Ivri ba-Tefutsot: Symposiyum (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1944), p. 3. Hereinafter referred to as ES.
Rieger also called together the "Foundation Conference of the World Union for Jewish Education in the Diaspora," in 1947.\(^2\) Besides this he wrote articles and delivered lectures which were of importance in their particular subject areas.

**Palestine and Diaspora Education**

The nature and relationship of Diaspora Jewish education to Palestinian education was a problem that had been developing in Rieger's mind over many years. For example, in a speech in 1939 he stated:

> Because the position of Palestine is unique, it is very likely that its Hebrew educational system will become a clearing house for educational aspirations, an important centre for Diaspora Jewry for the import and export of ideas.\(^3\)

Later, in 1942, Rieger further developed this idea in a speech delivered in South Africa. He said:

> Palestine is the creation of the Diaspora, and the Diaspora in its turn is influenced by Palestine... But all this depends upon the fruitfulness of Jewish life in the Diaspora - if we refuse to content ourselves with the Kaddish and the Bar Mitzvah and even with offerings for Palestine. We must avail ourselves of the most pedagogical methods in order to instill a love of Judaism and a sense of responsibility for the fate of the Jewish people in the children of the Diaspora. This is sine qua non. If we succeed in implanting such loyalties in early life, we shall then

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\(^2\) See below, pp. 174-180.

\(^3\) Eliezer Rieger, *Education and a Free Society in Palestine* (Tel Aviv: Palestine Literary Service (Mimeo), 1940), p. 2.
be able to go on and induce them to take up the study of Hebrew and of Jewish history in a systematic way. And having brought them so far, we shall see them considering the needs of the Jewish people in the Diaspora when choosing their vocations in life. We must instill in the Diaspora children a love of... Jewish life in general. We must interest them in the upbuilding of Eretz Israel to such an extent that they will be ready not only to contribute funds, but to take an active personal share in its development by giving it the benefit of their thinking, so that the culture of Palestine may be enriched with the best ideas that may be conceived in the Diaspora.4

Rieger returned to the Hebrew University from his experiences in South Africa with a new proposal whose implications for Diaspora education were legion, and which helped to create the climate which eventually led to the 1947 World Conference on Jewish Education. In its broad outlines it envisaged the creation of an educational center at the Hebrew University run by a special board, the object of which would be to centralize and co-ordinate Jewish educational efforts all over the world, to receive and give further training to future teachers coming from abroad, and to train teachers and supervisors from abroad. The board would enter communication with Jewish educational boards in South Africa, the United States and Great Britain, and try to assemble all the material available on the problems of Jewish education and their solutions. Further, it would attempt to meet the needs of students from

Indeed, a committee for Diaspora education was organized within the framework of the University which besides Rieger included S.D. Goitein and L. Roth. It was this committee in 1945 which adopted Dr. Goitein's proposal and suggested that a standard Hebrew examination for the world be created and administered through the Hebrew University. The Hebrew examination was to be similar to that of the Cambridge Proficiency Examination. The goals of this examination, however, would be to check knowledge of the Hebrew language, literature and way of life.

In September of 1943 Rieger organized a symposium on Jewish education abroad and its relationship to Palestine education. It was his purpose by means of this symposium to awaken Palestine educators to the problems of Diaspora education. For the first time Rieger proposed at the symposium that a system of Basic Hebrew, on the model of Basic English, be developed in order to facilitate the teaching of Hebrew abroad. Rieger stated that the Hebrew University could play a very significant role in Hebrew culture in the Diaspora by training young Palestine-

5 Eliezer Rieger, Jerusalem, letter, Mar. 8, 1943, to Mr. Harry Herber, Chairman of the South African Board of Jewish Education in Johannesburg, Hebrew University Archives, File 2275, Year 1943.

6 Minutes of a meeting of the Hebrew University Committee for Education in the Diaspora, Feb. 18, 1945, Hebrew University Archives, File 2275, Year 1945.

7 ES.


9 See below, pp. 111-115.
ians who would attend a special course of about three years for Hebrew cultural work in the Diaspora. Dr. Rieger proposed a scheme whereby six hundred young people would come to the University from English speaking countries for such special training.10

At this symposium Rieger called for a new approach to Anglo-American Judaism for the betterment of the total Jewish situation and not just that of Palestine. He said:

"... Our approach to it [Anglo-American Judaism] has been too practical. Like the alchemists who were interested in chemistry only to find gold, we have also sought gold there... In the meantime chemistry has stopped seeking gold and has turned to scientific work for its own sake. After an extended period of intense investigations it had begun to uncover discoveries and inventions whose actual monetary worth in our time is many times larger than that of gold. We in the field of Zionist education have to follow these chemists. We must work diligently for Hebrew education in the Diaspora for its own sake - and not just for gold - and it is very very possible that a great treasure will be uncovered whose worth is greater than that of gold.11"

In 1946 Eliezer Rieger conceived the idea of calling a world conference of Jewish educators in Palestine to discuss the common problems of Jewish education. He wrote to Dushkin to ask that he join him and Leon Roth in calling for such a conference in July of 1947.12 Rieger felt

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10 News Bulletin, p. 3.
11 ES, p. 92.
that it was important for educational ideas to begin to
cross fertilize under the auspices of the Hebrew University.
The very fact that people came from the major countries
of the Diaspora for the World Conference in indicative
of the great awareness of Diaspora educators of the need
to enhance Jewish education especially in terms of Hebrew
content and form. Dr. Shlomo Dev Geitein believed that
the major opportunity which the conference offered was
for Israel to meet world and American educators. No final
answers were found, but at least Israel teachers and prin-
cipals began to realize the enormity of the problems of
world Jewish education for the first time. Geitein pointed
out that to the time of the conference there had been lit-
tle contact between Israel and American education, for
most people did not have the opportunity to travel abroad.13
This most important result of the conference was alluded
to at the beginning of Dr. Geitein's address at the confer-
ence:

Permit an experienced man of education and science
in Palestine to express his thanks and deep appre-
ciation to our friends from the diaspora. I do not
know if you, from abroad, learned a lot here; we,
the Palestinians, however, acquired an invaluable
possession. We have heard and read a great deal a-
bout the condition of education in the diaspora, but
only at this conference did the great Anglo-Saxon dias-
pora become a reality for us, a reality which is not
always pleasing, but a reality whose possibilities

13 Dr. S.D. Geitein, personal interview with the author,
Eliezer Rieger delivered the inaugural address at the conference entitled "The Problem of Hebrew Education in the Diaspora." In it Rieger pointed out that Hebrew education in the Diaspora is a difficult topic because of its many internal contradictions. The Jews in the Diaspora are a member of a minority group and at the same time strive to take part in the majority culture. Therefore, it was the education of the majority culture which became important and the Jewish education which became an appendage. Rieger felt that Jewish education in the Diaspora would not confuse the children by offering them a dual-loyalty or second culture, but rather it would offer them a sense of satisfaction arising in them because of their awareness of their own differences from the monotony prevailing among the majority culture.

14 S.D. Goitein, "Teudoth ha-Universitah ha-Ivriat al Yediath ha-Ivri Livney ha-Tefutseth," ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri ba-Tefutseth ha-Golah, hereinafter referred to by its English title Jewish Education in the Diaspora), ed. Eliezer Rieger (Jerusalem: The University Press, 1948), p. 112. Goitein's article is hereinafter referred to as University Certificate. It is evident from Jewish Education in the Diaspora that approximately ten educators came to the conference from the United States.


16 Ibid., p. 152.

17 Ibid.
Rieger called for:

... an insistent Jewish education which will impose upon our students sufficiently serious obligations. And if I am asked why such Hebrew education has not succeeded in one place or another, I suggest that each such case be scrutinized. It will be found mostly that failure had been caused because the demands were constricted to academic form, whereas the obligations of such learning can be undertaken only in a suitable social climate, whether natural or artificial.\(^{18}\)

Rieger called for Jewish education to foster a knowledge of Hebrew and to establish a network of day schools. There must also be a systematic attempt made to provide adult education. Objective criteria and unified standards must be established in Jewish education throughout the world, and a new pool of young teachers must be created. A basis must also be created for a special branch of comparative Hebrew education. These are all steps which Rieger felt should be propounded by the world conference.\(^{19}\)

An outgrowth of the world conference was the establishment of the Jerusalem Examination. Since 1945 Dr. Goitein had been attempting to create a Hebrew University certificate for proficiency in Hebrew based on the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English.\(^{20}\) The purpose of the examination was to establish a minimum level of proficiency in Hebrew towards which a student could work and to stimulate people by the creation of a goal to study

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18 Ibid., pp. 152-153.
20 University Certificate, p. 112.
the Hebrew language. On the other hand, this examination would force the University to become aware of the needs of the Diaspora. The nature and form of the examination were crystalized through deliberation at the conference. It was to include two parts: 1) questions on the required reading list and 2) translation, composition and questions on the use of the language and practical grammar. The reading list was to be drawn from the Bible, the oral law and Siddur, medieval literature and contemporary and modern literature. Finally, the conference called for the establishment of the Hebrew proficiency examination by the Hebrew University without delay and officially offered its cooperation to bring it into being and to maintain it.

21 Ibid., p. 113.
22 Ibid., p. 118.
23 Ibid., p. 119.
24 "Decisions of the First World Conference for Jewish Education in the Diaspora," Jewish Education in the Diaspora, ed. Eliezer Rieger (Jerusalem: The University Press, 1943), p. 167. Dr. A.P. Gannes, Director of the Department of Education and Culture of the Jewish Agency - American Section, reports (Gannes, New York, letter, Jan. 14, 1970, to the author) that approximately 900 people in the United States and Canada have participated in the Jerusalem Examination since its inception. This figure includes those who are expected to participate in 1970.

From its inception to the present Dr. Abraham I. Katsh, currently President of Dropsie University has served as chairman of the Jerusalem Examination in the United States.

Because of the World Conference Jewish educators from around the globe gathered in Jerusalem for the first time in world history. This in itself demonstrated the centrality of Israel in Jewish cultural and educational life. Moreover, it was indicative of a common interest in and concern with the problems of Jewish education on a global scale. It gave some impetus to an "educational" bridge between Israel and the Diaspora.
There were a number of other decisions made at the conference for the improvement of world Jewish education. First, in order to encourage and improve education in the Diaspora, the conference created the World Union for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. An executive council was elected and Eliezer Rieger was selected to head this council and thereby to serve as the president of the organization. The conference called for the establishment of day schools as the best institution for providing a Jewish education in the Diaspora. The language of instruction was to be Hebrew at least in the Judaic subjects. In addition, the new Union asked that the World Zionist Organization devote energy and funds to the problem of education in the Diaspora. The conference encouraged students from abroad to come to Palestine for a year of study, and students from Palestine to travel to the Diaspora to help raise the cultural and educational level.

Once the conference was concluded Eliezer Rieger organized the office of the new World Union for Jewish Education.

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tion in the Diaspora in Jerusalem. Dr. Nathan Morris of England was invited to be the director of the World Union in 1948. A great deal, however, was not accomplished. An attempt was made to establish contact with Jewish educational agencies throughout the world, but for the most part the initial energy was devoted to publishing the proceedings of the conference itself. The text *Jewish Education in the Diaspora* was published in the summer of 1948.

The World Union, however, was not able to accomplish its real work beyond the publication of this book and broke up in 1949 because of the lack of funds. The University continued to work for Jewish education in the Diaspora in three ways. First, it maintained the Jerusalem Examination and awarded all those who passed it a Jerusalem certificate. Second, it maintained research and instruction in matters pertaining to Jewish education in the Diaspora, and third, the University began to attract many students from abroad for study and for research.

30 Yehudith Eynath, Secretary for the World Union for Jewish Education in the Diaspora and currently assistant to the Rector of the Hebrew University, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 27, 1968.


32 Yisrael Mehlman, "Jewish Education in the Diaspora in Our Times," appendix to Dr. Aharon Berman, Toldoth ha-Hinnukh (Tel Aviv: Chichick Press, 1968), p. 221.

33 Ibid., see also Dushkin Interview for more information. In 1949 the Department of Education and Culture for the Diaspora of the Jewish Agency was created. According to Yisrael Mehlman, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, June 16, 1968, this department was the heir of the spirit and groundwork which had been established by the World Union for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. Nathan Morris became the director of the new department of
As was previously noted, one of the major contributions of the World Conference on Jewish Education was that it brought together from around the world Jewish educators to discuss and compare experiences. Many papers and lectures were delivered at the conference by national and world leaders which (once compiled in the text *Jewish Education in the Diaspora*) presented a statement about conditions, activities and challenges in Jewish education around the globe.

Two of the papers delivered (Rieger's and Geitein's) have already been discussed, but there were many others that are also worth noting. For the most part, the papers could be divided into four general categories. These are: goals and trends, teacher training, educational problems in various countries, and adult education.

There were three papers delivered on the first sub-heading of goals and trends. The first was that of Dr. A.M. Dushkin which was titled *Mataroth u-Megamoth be-Hinnukh ha-Ivri ba-Tefutseth*. 33a

In his address Dr. Dushkin outlined the foundations he felt necessary for the establishment of goals for Diaspora education. First, he stated that Jewish education in the Diaspora, like any other type of education, must prepare the individual for a complete life. A complete life for a Jew is possible

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33a A.M. Dushkin, "Mataroth u-Megamoth be-Hinnukh ha-Ivri ba-Tefutseth" (Goals and Trends in Hebrew Education in the Diaspora), *Jewish Education in the Diaspora*, pp. 11-20.
only if the individual accepts his Jewishness willingly and relates to the world about him as a Jew. The Jew will have to relate to his world as a Jew in four different ways: to his family and to his home, to the community of Jews, to his non-Jewish neighbors, and to himself. The best preparation for this complete life is a complete Jewish education which can only be offered by day schools. There must be a movement throughout the world to establish day schools. Dushkin believed that only a minority of Jewish children would receive day school educations and that the supplementary Jewish schools must not be neglected. An important warning which was stated by Dushkin at this time was, "Diaspora education need not and should not distinguish between nationalism and religion."33b

Most important is the point that the main thrust of Jewish education must come from the Jewish life style which flows from the tradition and from Jewish experience. Even in language instruction Dushkin believes that the religion as well as national experience should be stressed. In addition, Jewish experience must include the concept of Aliyah to Erets Yisrael. There must be encouragement to go on periodic pilgrimages to Palestine for every Jew. There must also be a means of drawing Jews to the concept of permanent settlement. Care must be taken, however, not to negate the Diaspora as a reason for Aliyah. Rather, individuals must be brought to Aliyah as a

33b Ibid., p. 13.
means of their own self-realization.

Finally, Dushkin believes that Jewish education in the Diaspora must prepare the individual for a strong communal life as a Jew. He must also be sensitized to whatever antisemitism that he is going to face in the general community.

In his article Mataroth u-Megamoth be-Hinnukh ha-Ivri,33c S. Assaf of Jerusalem reacted to Dushkin's address. He pointed out that one-third of the Jewish people, the most Jewish third, had been destroyed. Those who remain are more assimilated than those who were destroyed. This creates a renewed imperative for modern Jewish education. Assaf makes his crucial point when he states: "It must be established that the tradition, its development and preservation, is not only the possession of the religious Jew. Just as the Torah is the possession of the entire people and is not the possession of only those who adhere to it, so too is the tradition a possession of the entire people. Indeed, aside from its religious aspect the tradition is also the nation's culture, the culture of generations... Without tradition there is no culture."33d Education in the Diaspora must not

33c S. Assaf, "Mataroth u-Megamoth be-Hinnukh ha-Ivri ba-Tefutsoth" (Goals and Trends in Hebrew Education), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 20-24.

33d Ibid., p. 21.
only teach about the tradition, but must make it a living thing which plays a concrete part in the students' lives. More specifically, Assaf believed that secular Judaism based only on nationalism will lead to assimilation.

Finally, D. Levin of Tel Aviv reacted to the same subject in his address "Mataroth u-Megamoth be-Hinnukh ha-Ivri ba-Tefutsot". Levin pointed out that throughout our history we have had to react to the problem of Diaspora education. A Jew cannot lead a full, normal Jewish life in the Diaspora. His life must be an abnormal one, and it is therefore incumbent upon educators in the Diaspora to plant this dissatisfaction with the Diaspora in the hearts of their educators and to prepare them to make Aliyah. This is the foremost goal of all Diaspora education in Levin's opinion.

The second area with which the conference dealt was that of teacher training. The fact that teacher training was not an isolated problem in Diaspora Jewish education, but rather one related to all of Jewish education was pointed out by M. Feinstein of New York in his article "Hakhsharat Merim ba-Golah." Indeed, as elementary education has weakened so too has teacher education, for the elementary and secondary

33e D. Levin, "Mataroth u-Megamoth be-Hinnukh ha-Ivri ba-Tefutsot" (Goals and Trends in Hebrew Education in the Diaspora), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 25-37.

33f M. Feinstein, "Hakhsharat Merim ba-Golah" (Teacher Training in the Diaspora), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 37-46.
schools provide candidates for the teachers' college. There are few students who desire to study at a secular college and a Hebrew teachers college at the same time because of the burden of work. The result is that there are only eight hundred students enrolled in the United States (in 1942) with the major portion of them being women. Most of the women accept teaching assignments in elementary schools which creates a special problem for the high schools in finding personnel.

S. Pellač of New York asks the question, "What must be the preparation of the Hebrew teachers in the Diaspora?" He responds by stating that we must plant in the hearts of our prospective teachers an uneasiness with the Diaspora and a desire to make Aliyah and to encourage students to make Aliyah. Second, the Hebrew teacher must be dedicated to the Hebrew language and to its rejuvenation. In order to know of the totality of Jewish life the teacher must be familiar with Jewish experience as related in Hebrew literature. A teacher must know the sources of Jewish knowledge. Most important, however, is to find means to convince our talented students to enter Jewish education as their full time profession, and to properly prepare them for it. Pellač made the following suggestions to accomplish this: Hebrew teaching must be made a respected profession, every type of possible help

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338 S. Pellač. "Hakhsharath Merim ba-Golah" (Teacher Training), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 47-52.
and aid must be offered to prospective teachers in teachers colleges, Hebrew summer camps must be established for teachers college students to make them more fluent in Hebrew language, a year of service in Palestine must be demanded from each student in our teachers colleges, teacher exchanges between Palestine and the Diaspora must be established, summer courses and national pedagogic conferences must be organized, and educational journals to stimulate thought should be published.

Z. Gotlieb, on the other hand, spoke directly to the problems of teacher training which existed in England. He pointed out that there were two types of Jews in England: refugees from Eastern Europe who spoke Yiddish, kept the commandments and demanded a maximum Jewish education, and assimilated English Jews who sought only a minimum Jewish education. There were also two types of teachers, one suitable to each group. Nathan Morris created a new type of teachers seminar in London which sought to accept both types of teacher and to create a new teaching personality. A major change which had already occurred was the adoption of the Erets-Yisrael Hebrew accent instead of the Ashkenazi pronunciation. Gotlieb was also convinced that Jewish education in the Diaspora as well as teacher training would not be successful without a strong foundation in Torah and tradition. He, too, felt that

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33h Z. Gotlieb, "Hakhsharath Morim" (Teacher Training), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 53-56.
it was important, however, for each teacher to visit Palestine once he had completed his required studies in the Diaspora.

Another important contribution of the conference arose out of the reports and suggestions made by speakers about the problems of education in the different lands of the Diaspora which they represented. For example, Z. Scharfstein delivered a paper entitled *Baayoth ha-Hinnukh ha-Yehudi be-Artseth ha-Berith*.\(^{331}\) First, he pointed out that most Jewish education in the United States is supplementary and that there was at that time real growth in the number of synagogue schools being established. One of the major reasons, according to Scharfstein was the move to the suburbs. The future for Jewish education is bleak in the United States. The greatest tragedy of Jewish education is its lack of a foundation and an environment. Scharfstein concluded that all educational improvements instituted will not be worth much within the limited hour schedule of the afternoon or Sunday school. The inclination to remove Hebrew from the American curriculum will only add to the poor educational situation which exists. All education must be permeated with the ideal

\(^{331}\) Z. Scharfstein, "*Baayoth ha-Hinnukh ha-Yehudi be-Artseth ha-Berith*" (Problems of Jewish Education in the United States), *Jewish Education in the Diaspora*, pp. 63-70.
of the rejuvenation of the Jewish people on their own land. Jewish education cannot be limited to the school but must influence the child's life outside of it, too, and must be carried into the home.

Dr. A. I. Katsh also delivered an address on the problems of Jewish education in America. In his paper Dr. Katsh pointed out that there is steady growth in the number of Jewish students attending universities in the United States. Adolescent Jewish youth finds it difficult to grasp how it is different from non-Jewish youth and from the general environment, although it knows that there is a difference. In the face of this problem many are prepared to sever their Jewish ties. It is Jewish education which will provide the Jewish adolescent with the ability to know about his people and about himself. There are a number of students who strongly favor either Zionism or assimilation but most have no stand at all. The reason for this is the almost complete lack of knowledge about Jewish values. Katsh points out that while Jewish students lack interest in themselves as members of a minority group, they express real interest and concern in other minorities like the negroes. Because of this basic lack of knowledge of the

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33J A. I. Katsh, "Baayoth ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri shel ha-Near ha-Lomed ha-Mitbager be-Amerika" (Problems of Hebrew Education of Adolescent Student Youth in America), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 84-93.
essence of Judaism, Jewish youth often feels that the majority opinion, when in contradiction to the Jewish, is correct. There were many groups formed to educate university Jewish youth. Among them were Menerah, Inter-Varsity Zionist Organization, Avukah and Hillel. An interesting and important institution which was described by Dr. Katsh was the New York University Jewish Culture Foundation. The goal of the foundation was threefold: to educate the Jewish student community about the Jewish people, to maintain a complete Judaica and Hebraica library, and to conduct a series of courses in Hebrew language and Jewish studies for non-Jews as well as Jews.

Dr. Katsh noted a number of positive results which have already been achieved in the United States. New York University's program, the various Judaica and Hebrew departments at other universities, and the Hebrew language courses in New York's public high schools are all examples of advances. Study in these Judaica departments by non-Jews is likely, also, to reduce anti-semitism. Palestine education can be a good influence and help to advance Diaspora education. Jewish and non-Jewish teachers who visit Palestine are sure to be inspired. Palestine must also serve as a source of textbooks for Jewish youth in America. There should be an exchange of students between Palestine and America, and teachers from Erets Yisrael should come to
America to teach in Jewish schools. Numbers of non-Jewish teachers should be invited to visit Palestine. Most important, summer schools, camps and trips should be arranged for student youth to visit Palestine. This will create a group of Jewish leaders for the United States and pioneers for Palestine.

Lack of unity in administration was one of the major problems of Jewish education in England. This was stated in an article by Y. Fishman of London. Since the Second World War, however, a central Jewish education committee had been organized. The committee published texts and supervised Jewish schools in the entire country. There were only five day schools in England in 1947. There had been six others, but they were destroyed during the war. The greatest problem, however, was how to prepare qualified Hebrew teachers for England. From the time of the Balfour Declaration Palestine has played an important role in England's Jewish schools. This emphasis was still very evident.

Y. Fink spoke of the condition of Jewish education in France. He called Jewish education in his country

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33k Y. Fishman, "Al Mats'v ha-Hinnukh ha-Yehudi be-Angliya" (On the Condition of Jewish Education in England), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 80-81.

33l Y. Fink, "Baayoth ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri be-Tsarfat" (The Problems of Jewish Education in France), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 129-133.
a spiritual desert with almost no signs of life. Fink remarked that others had spoken of day schools or supplementary schools. In France there were no types of Jewish schools. In Paris there was but one school in which students live and study. The goal of the school was to prepare its students for aliya. There were about 3600 Jewish war orphans in France. They were cared for by fourteen different organizations, and they, therefore, had no unified program. There were some positive signs in France, too. The first Hebrew summer camp had been opened as well as the first Hebrew nursery school. For the most part, however, the established French Jewish community did not have the desire to open schools.

Jewish education in Australia was discussed by A. M. Freedman.33 In 1947 the Jewish population in Australia equaled just 6 per cent of the total population. Compounding the problem of being such a small minority were the factors that most Jewish parents were indifferent to their Judaism and were satisfied with a minimal program. In addition, the state schools were very demanding on the children's time, and there was a great need for qualified teachers. All

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33 A. M. Freedman, "ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri be-Australiya" (Jewish Education in Australia), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 134-138.
the major cities of Australia have still not achieved organized systems of Jewish education. There were different types of schools in existence. A few required attendance five days a week. Others (the majority with 90% of the children) held classes only one day a week. There were even those which offered an hour or an hour and a half of class after services on the Sabbath. In addition, by 1947 three nursery schools and one day school had been established. Moreover, forty minutes of religious instruction was provided in the state schools by the organized Jewish community. Law permits each organized religion to offer this program.

The situation of Jewish education in South Africa was presented by S. Rappaport of Johannesburg. Like in other Diaspora lands the goal of Jewish education in South Africa is to prepare the Jewish child to live as a Jew in a non-Jewish environment. In 1947 there were about 100,000 Jews in South Africa. Unfortunately, however, the community and its schools suffer because almost none of the literature produced in Palestine reached South Africa. Also, only forty-three per cent of Jewish children receive some Jewish education. This figure includes those who receive only private instruction. Almost all the schools were supplementary.

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33n S. Rappaport, "Ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri be-Darem Afrika" (Jewish Education in South Africa), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 138-141.
ones in which four to six hours of instruction were provided. Few schools used the Sefardi pronunciation of the Hebrew because there was great emphasis on Hebrew as a language of prayer. The major methodology used in Hebrew instruction was the translation method. A favorable occurrence at this time, however, was the new interest in conversational Hebrew and growth of many conversational Hebrew groups among adults. There are Hebrew departments in the Universities of Capetown and Johannesburg which have a total of eighty students enrolled. Hebrew is offered in the general high schools and a university matriculation examination can be taken in it. A problem in founding day schools in South Africa was that there were two official state languages and Hebrew, thereby, became a third language. There was also the same persistent problem of other countries of finding qualified Jewish teachers.

The condition of Jewish education in Hungary was described by A. Gelrot.33o Once the war was concluded eight thousand young people remained in Budapest. One half of them studied in Jewish schools which were organized by the Jewish community. After liberation from the Nazis Jewish education was turned over to the Zionists. The time which had previously been devoted to "religious studies" was now

33o A. Gelrot, "ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri be-Hungariyah" (Jewish Education in Hungary), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 141-143.
used for Hebrew language studies. There was a great deal of success recognized by virtue of this change. Most students could express themselves in Hebrew after two years. The program was officially recognized by the Hungarian government. Most teachers in the Hungarian system have good backgrounds but lack teaching experience. The most pressing problem is the lack of suitable Hebrew text books which meet the new demands. The Hungarian delegation requested that the conference find the means to solve this pressing problem.

A description of Jewish education in French North Africa was also given at the conference. There were in 1947 about one half million Jews living in three main centers: Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis. The Alliance has a series of schools in Morocco and Tunis. There is great poverty in these communities. Most families live in ignorance with very little education and provide little for their children. On the other hand, assimilation has become a problem among the upper classes. The Zionist movement began to gain importance in these communities only during the Second World War. As this continues it is bound to have educational significance. Many North African Jews will want to immigrate to Palestine. Teachers will have to prepare themselves

33p A. Zavi, "Ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri biTafon Afrika ha-Tsarfatith" (Jewish Education in French North Africa), *Jewish Education in the Diaspora*, pp. 146-148.
in Palestine and return to these lands. Moreover, students should be brought to Palestine to have their general education.

The conference learned that there was almost no Jewish education existing in Czechoslovakia. There were 42,000 Jews living in that country at the time. The Jewish educational system was not rebuilt after the destruction of the World War because there was not sufficient human talent left to initiate the task and because the government did not permit minorities to open their own schools. Judaism is recognized only as a religion and not as a nationality. The state does not permit the church or any religious group to maintain schools. After the war there were 3,000 youth in the country. A good percentage of them were orphans or half-orphans. Most of the Jewish youth belonged to one of the Zionist youth movements and were educated to be halutsim. Sixteen hundred made Aliyah in two years. The youth groups maintain discussion and study groups, youth houses and summer camps. There are a few Talmudey Torah and Yishivoth but the level of instruction is very poor.

A final theme of the conference which should be noted is adult education. There were three papers delivered on

33q Z. Amiad, "Al ha-Hinnukh be-Tshekoslovakiyah" (On Jewish Education in Czechoslovakia), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 148-150.
this topic by Ernst Simon, M. Halevi of New York and Y. Halpern of London. In his paper, Simon spoke of education as an ongoing process and noted that our educational goal is the development of the individual and creating a connection between him and his people and tradition of the past and of the future. Jewish education protects against adult assimilation. Zionism, Simon felt, has given added impetus to adult education. However, there are only few adults, in Simon's opinion, who participate in Jewish education. This will continue to be the case as long as Judaism is considered only a religion. A major problem is the lack of material in Hebrew and other languages on an adult level and available to adults. Rather than publishing translated Hebrew texts, Simon suggested the publication of texts in Hebrew with all types of notes in the language of the country.

Halevi described the condition of adult education in the United States. There is little adult education in the United States. Its value has not been understood. Adults feel no obligation to continue their own self-education. Unfortunately, one sees that children having the most intense

33r Ernst Simon, "ha-Hinnukh ha-Ivri le-Mevugarim" (Jewish Education for Adults), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 148-150.

33s M. Halevi, "Hinnukh le-Mevugarim" (Adult Education), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 159-162.
Jewish education, come from homes where parents have good Jewish educations and continue their interest through reading and study. Most of the students who attend American teachers seminars, that is, those who are candidates for the rabbinate or teaching, come from the homes of rabbis and the like. The condition of adult Jewish education has a major effect on all of Jewish education. There are signs that there is a renewed interest in Jewish education for adults. Various agencies and synagogues have started lecture series, and organizations like the Jewish Welfare Board and Hadassah are taking more active educational roles.

Finally, Y. Halpern of London spoke of adult Jewish education in England. There is a new interest in the world about adult education, but Halpern noted that this interest was not new for Jews. Judaism expected a man to continue to learn throughout his entire life. By virtue of the spiritual power this continuous learning provided the Jewish people can be revived from their recent calamities. During the war most money for Jewish education was spent on the elementary level because these young children were taken from their homes and scattered throughout the entire country. Adolescent and adult education was neglected.

33t Y. Halpern, "Hinnukh la-Mevugarim" (Adult Education), Jewish Education in the Diaspora, pp. 159-162.
When the war ended attempts were made in England to strengthen these education areas, however, the people did not appear to be willing to participate. Persistent work has overcome the problem and by 1947 sixty study groups had been established throughout the country. Summer camps and winter retreats were organized. A willingness to study and learn the Hebrew languages began to become apparent. Halpern expressed the hope that courses could be extended to include Jewish history and contemporary Judaism.
Besides the question of world Jewish education another major concern for Eliezer Rieger during his years at the Hebrew University was that of vocational education in Palestine. He stated his ideas about the importance of this educational area when he said:

Since... our industries have only scant mineral resources at their disposal, and since their exports must meet competition in the world markets, only a very high standard of production can enable us to maintain an economic foothold in Israel and to enlarge the country's capacity for absorbing immigration. The goal is attainable only through the highest possible achievements in vocational education and by efficient workmanship, resourcefulness, precision, and dependability.34

As a result of his interest in this subject Rieger directed a research study under the auspices of the Hebrew University and the Waad Leumi into the needs and problems of vocational education. The findings of the study were published by Rieger in 1945 under the title Vocational Training in the

the Jewish Agency.

Dushkin gives similar evidence in his statement on Rieger in In Memoriam for Professor Eliezer Rieger (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1954). According to him both he and Rieger maintained the University's contact with Diaspora education by inviting a series of guest lecturers to take part in their courses. This idea was continued when the National Council of Jewish Education funded a fellowship for this purpose in honor of Dr. Dushkin's seventieth birthday.

Jewish Community in Palestine. 35

In this work Rieger attempted to present vocational training as one of the main levers in the practical implementation of Zionism. 36 He saw a need for vocational education to train people for jobs once they return from the army, to integrate the poorer oriental communities economically into the Yishuv, and to increase the power of the country to absorb new immigration. 37

In Rieger's opinion pre-vocational education also had an important role to play. The tendency in Palestine was to delay vocational education as long as possible. 38

35 Eliezer Rieger, Vocational Training in the Jewish Community in Palestine (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1945). Hereinafter referred to as Vocational Training. The research study was funded by the ESCO foundation in New York. Rieger collaborated with a committee of experts in the preparation of the study. The committee consisted of M. Feldstein, supervisor of Manual Training in the Waad Leumi Department of Education, L. Malinevsky, director of the Vocational Guidance Bureau of Tel Aviv, and M. Altenham who had formerly been Presiding Judge of the Industrial Arbitration Board, Dessau.

36 Ibid., p. 3.

37 Ibid., pp. 3-4. Rieger commented that some of the immediate results of his vocational education study were the establishment of the Shevach School for metalwork by the Tel Aviv Municipality, the Amal School for industrial chemistry in Jerusalem by the General Federation of Labor, a Building School for surgical instrument making in Safed by the General Federation of Labor.

38 By 1963 a program of pre-vocational education had been introduced into the seventh and eighth grades of the elementary schools. For further information see Joseph Bentwich, Education in Israel (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1965), pp. 67, 84-85, 139.
Rieger, however, felt that postponement caused harm mostly to the children of working class families. They were the first to drop out of school because of the need to help support their families, and they needed vocational education the most. Establishment of a good pre-vocational program in the seventh and eighth grades might give these children renewed interest in school and a desire to continue their education.\(^{39}\) Rieger felt that for pre-vocational instruction to be meaningful it must last at least eight hours a week.\(^{40}\) There should be two three-hour sessions in workshops, one hour spent on theoretical instruction (study of materials) and one hour for mechanical training. It was not necessary, in Rieger's opinion, to lengthen the hours of instruction of the school week in order to incorporate this enriched program. Combining subject areas into more compact units would save time, and parts of the pre-vocational lessons could be integrated into and correlated with the science and mathematics programs.\(^{41}\) Moreover, Rieger suggested that central workshops be set up

\(^{39}\) Vocational Training, pp. 27-28.

\(^{40}\) The practice of the day was to give three hours of vocational instruction a week.

\(^{41}\) Vocational Training, pp. 27-28.
in each individual school. 42

In this text Rieger suggested that vocational education needs a series of guidance bureaus which will test young people and help direct them into suitable careers. This vocational guidance must become an integral part of pre-vocational training while the students are still enrolled in the upper grades of the elementary schools. In addition to publicizing opportunities, testing and placement, the bureaus should be prepared to follow up the students who have started on courses to see if they are progressing properly. 43

There were a number of other suggestions which Rieger made for the improvement of vocational education in Palestine. First, he suggested that a section for vocational training be set up in the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi under a specially appointed assistant director responsible only to the director. He would have inspectors working under him. In this way vocational training would not be a mere appendage of the general educational system but would be able to develop programs on its own. Rieger felt that the Department of Education must establish close cooperation with economic bodies, such as the Manufacturers' Association and the Chambers of Commerce which have practi-

42 Ibid., pp. 32-35.
43 Ibid., pp. 57-59. The Hadassah Vocational Guidance Bureau was set up in 1946. It was the first to deal not only with the problem of vocational education but also with pre-vocational education.
cal experiences in training apprentices for industry and commerce. Also, the Hebrew University's Department of Education had an important role to play. It should undertake to prepare examinations suited to local conditions and found adequate from the point of view of scientific reliability. The University should also assist in the objective evaluation of results obtained at the bureaus and in the collection of statistical material. Moreover, it should train vocational advisors. 44

**Teaching Hebrew Language**

Another important subject of interest to Eliezer Rieger during his years at the University and one to which he contributed a number of articles and books was that of Hebrew language instruction both in Erets Yisrael and abroad. His first major contribution in this area was his spelling vocabulary Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod and its accompanying spelling books which were completed while he was an inspector of schools. 45 His ideas about Hebrew language and literature instruction, however, continued to de-

45 *See above*, pp. 104-114.
velop at the University, and were publicized through a symposium he helped to organize. The symposium took place in July 1941 and was called to discuss Oral and Written Expression and the Teaching of Literature in the Secondary Schools.46

Rieger's lecture at this symposium dealt with the problems of both written and oral expression in secondary schools.47 Good Hebrew instruction is crucial, in Rieger's opinion, for "Hebrew expression, expression in the mother tongue, more than all other subjects - represents the entirety of all education. If expression is not proper, it is a sign that the psychological process of the expression is not proper."48 Expression is only an accompanying form of contact and for this reason all teachers, not just the Hebrew teacher, must pay close attention to it. Rieger believed that the best way to encourage good expression was to limit the nature of expression exercises. Instead of providing broad, general topics for discussion and composition, the teacher should direct his students to more specific and structured thought. The best educational technique for this was the short expression exercise. Four


47 Eliezer Rieger, "Written and Oral Hebrew Expression in the Secondary Schools," Ibid.

48 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
suggested exercises which he proposed were: 1) complete a story in one's own words, 2) description of a picture, 3) write a judgment of a court case, 4) write a short telegram. Short expression exercises should be used more in the younger grades. Actual compositions can be stressed at the upper levels of the secondary school.

However, as a note of caution he added:

... It is desirable that we set our minds to the necessity of a change in values in our approach to the composition. The psychological laws which hold for short expression exercises are also applicable for the writing of composition. For compositions it is also necessary that the topic will be within the scope of ability and area of interest of the student. Composition subjects must also be limited, and must not embrace the entire world.

Instead of giving a question about the value of books, it is better to give a topic about the worth of one book which the student has read and which has impressed him; and it is possibly even better to let him write about one of the characters active in the book...

In summation, for Rieger the improvement of written and oral expression was really the improvement of thought in the younger generation. Thought and content, he felt, were the support of all expression. It was not just a single matter of speaking or writing - but by means of expression improving the thought process of all the children.

49 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
50 Ibid., p. 10.
51 Ibid., p. 13.
Rieger was not only concerned with proper expression in Hebrew but also with the proper phonetic pronunciation of the language. Good phonetic pronunciation had two important values. First, it would make the speaker understood even if he makes a number of grammatical mistakes. Second, one who is accustomed to hearing proper pronunciation will understand more of fluent speech even if his vocabulary is limited. As a result, Rieger concluded that it is important to begin the study of Hebrew language with exercises in proper pronunciation. Students will never acquire a good accent in a new language unless they acquire it at the beginning of their instruction. In order to do this they must be directed to pay attention to all the sounds which the teacher makes and to learn to imitate them. Moreover, from the very first lesson the students must become accustomed to pronouncing short sentences and not just words. The combination of words—the sentence is the unit of pronunciation rather than the word.


53 Ibid., p. 5.

54 Ibid., p. 6.
Therefore, "Only by means of the flow of the language, by the rise and fall of the voice, and by the variagated melody between the words, can pronunciation be executed."^55

Rieger stressed the desirability of teaching a language within its cultural setting. In fact, it is worthwhile to include material in the texts themselves in simplified form which will teach about the country and the culture. Material should be used even if it is not necessarily on the linguistic level of the students. This type of material helps to vary and make the language lesson more interesting and meaningful. It gives perspective to the study of the language. Even if one feels that this kind of material cannot be presented in the language itself, then special classes in the students' mother tongue should be arranged.\textsuperscript{56} Moreover, Rieger emphasized the importance of the use of audio-visual aids in language instruction. He spoke of use of the record player, and most interestingly, of using the wire-recorder for help in improving accent. His criticism

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{56} Eliezer Rieger, "Homer Limudi we-Emtsaim Metedologyim be-Hebraith Lashon," Megiloth, No. 5 (Sheval 5711), p. 180. Hereinafter referred to as \textit{Homer}. 
of the wire-recorder was that it was still too expensive, but it was an invaluable tool, for students would be able to hear their own mistakes.\textsuperscript{57}

The learner must be directed through three midway points on his way to learning Hebrew language: a) speech (includes listening), b) reading and c) writing. It would be harmful to divide the student's efforts in these three directions at once. The first must be to help the student acquire a level of Hebrew speaking ability. This in turn will serve as a motivation and guide for achieving the second and third midway points.\textsuperscript{58} Rieger declared:

Our program must be: to teach Hebrew speaking to all our students, Hebrew reading - to most of them, and writing - to those who excel. There is reason to believe that in this way the number of students who will learn to read and write will be greater than it is now. It is only natural that students who have learned to speak will have a greater desire to learn how to read, and perhaps even how to write.\textsuperscript{59}

In his book \textit{Modern Hebrew}\textsuperscript{60} which was published in English Rieger constructed a case for the importance of establishing functional grammar as the basis of Hebrew langu-

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., pp. 183-185. Rieger also felt that the new field of television might eventually be useful in the field of language instruction.

\textsuperscript{58} Eliezer Rieger, "Teaching Hebrew to Beginners: What and How to Teach" (unpublished radio broadcast made on Kol Yisrael, Feb. 8, 1950), p. 5.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{60} Eliezer Rieger, \textit{Modern Hebrew} (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953).
age instruction. The basis of this grammar would not be some logical system but rather those errors which were determined by research to be most frequent in everyday usage. He believed:

If one has a list, say, of the 200 or 300 most common mistakes in spoken and written Hebrew, one has a guide as to what should be taught. One can divide this number over a specified number of years and concentrate each year on correcting a given number of errors. In an intensive course all this material can be covered in a number of months. If students acquire correct usage in regard to these 200 or 300 points they will have benefitted more than they would by years of formal grammar. Frequency counts of errors have another importance as well. By studying the distribution of the errors, the teacher can discover the areas, which present the greatest difficulty and center his efforts on them.

Rieger compiled a list of 225 most common errors which he included in the text of Modern Hebrew.

In his text Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod Rieger constructed a frequency word list based on written material. In

61 Ibid., p. 29.
62 Ibid., pp. 29-30.
63 Ibid., p. 40. Rieger’s list was compiled with the help of students in the Department of Education of the Hebrew University from 1936-1949. Each student spent a week listening to speech around him and wrote down all the errors he could detect. In the actual work of compiling the lists in the text Rieger was assisted by Samuel Kneller.
64 See above, pp. 106-114.
Modern Hebrew Rieger called for a "Vocabulary of Essential Hebrew" or "Basic Hebrew" which would help to make Hebrew a truly international language for all the communities in the Diaspora.65 Rieger stated:

Just as the list of most frequent words can serve as a more efficient means of teaching reading, so the list of basic words can serve as the best means of teaching conversation. The two lists complement one another. The basic list contains words which do not have a high frequency in written material but which are very common in speech, and it differs from the frequency list in one very important respect. The frequency list gives the words which occur most frequently in the written material investigated, and the views of the investigator have no influence whatever on the order of the words in the list. The basic list on the other hand gives words which are most vital for purposes of oral communication. The two lists naturally show a high degree of correspondence but there are many important differences between them. The basic list by its very nature cannot be as objective as the frequency list.66

The Vocabulary of Essential Hebrew which Rieger composed was made up of three different elements: basic words,

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65 Rieger, Modern Hebrew, p. 69. C.K. Ogden in his Basic Dictionary (1939) attempted to construct a list of the most essential words of the spoken rather than the written language in English. His primary purpose, according to Rieger, was to make English an international language. Rieger admits that his work in Hebrew was greatly influenced by Ogden's idea.

66 Ibid. The frequency list and the basic word list which Rieger constructed differ in the following respects: 1) The basic word list does not include synonyms even if they have a high frequency, 2) The words in the basic list are used in as broad a sense as possible and are often used to cover words closely related in meaning, 3) Certain words are eliminated from the basic list because it is possible to substitute other more common words for them, 4) The basic vocabulary does not give abbreviations and the grammar is simplified as far as possible, 5) The basic list, like the frequency list, helps the learner by focusing his attention on the central meaning of each word, 6) The basic list presents the root.
most frequent words and cognates. More specifically, the Vocabulary of Essential Hebrew included 1029 words: 1) 807 basic words of varying frequencies, 2) words of high frequency not among the basic words, and 3) 24 cognates.

Rieger warned against the fanatical adoption of a mnemonistic approach to language instruction. In his opinion, only those who are deceived by the absolute value of a new system or who have interest in a publication firm can be so one-sided.

He pointed out that the Aural-Oral approach to language instruction is good, but that it tends to overemphasize the spoken word and listening. Although he believed that language instruction should begin with aural-oral training, he did not feel that reading and writing should be neglected or relegated to a position of minor importance. On the other hand, the spoken word is so important that Rieger felt Diaspora Hebrew teachers must be required to spend at least a year in Israel to study the living language and that teacher placement should be dependent on this study. Moreover, Hebrew colleges and

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67 Ibid., pp. 73-75. Rieger felt that while cognates had long been used in modern foreign language instruction they had been overlooked in Hebrew. The Israel milieu and Yiddish offer a number of important cognates.

68 Ibid., p. 75.

69 Homer, pp. 181-182.
Rabbinical schools should include oral sections in their Hebrew examinations. 70

Rieger combined his developing ideas about language instruction into what he called the "Jerusalem Method" of language instruction. 71 Dynamic eclecticism, the combination of motivation and different techniques suited to the age and ability of the learners, was at its base. Rieger stated:

Only an eclectic approach - one which selects from various methods what is best suited to the age of the learner, his I.Q., his stage of progress and his purpose in learning a foreign language - can take full advantage of the advances in educational theory and experimentation. 72

Rieger was careful to point out that repetition alone in learning brings no improvement but that motivation is also vital here, too. 73 The Jerusalem Method used the

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70 Derakhim, pp. 136-139. One of the methods of language instruction which impressed Rieger was that of the United States Army. In "Critical Problems" he said: "I for one am by no means one of the detractors of the United States Army method of teaching languages. On the contrary, I am inclined to think that we can learn much from the method, especially in terms of stimulation of the students, of extraordinary concentration of their time and energy, and of the aural-oral approach." The Army method emphasized the direct or natural method of language instruction, and by use of many audio-visual techniques prepared men in a foreign language in a relatively short period of time. For more information on this subject see Modern Hebrew, pp. 135-138.


72 Ibid., p. 145.

73 Ibid., pp. 146-147.
sentence as its basic unit rather than presenting isolated words to the learner. In addition, it called for a system of self-administered examinations so that the students could measure their own progress. The Jerusalem Method is eclectic in that it is based on both the aural-oral approach and a translation approach which uses bi-lingual texts. The amount of translation is decreased as the student is able to free himself from his mother tongue.

In Rieger's own words:

The primary aim of the Jerusalem Method is to create the proper psychological "tension" in the student. The dynamic organization of the instructional material is designed to arouse the interest of the students from the very start. The reading matter is presented in the form of a narrative portraying life and experiences in modern Israel. Conversations and discussions are expanded on certain incidents in the story with the result that the entire reading matter of the text, in spite of its variety, is organically related and gives the impression of a unified whole.

The essence of the Jerusalem Method is this variety within unity - varied material forming part of a unified meaningful whole.

Based on the ideas that he outlined in Modern Hebrew, Rieger constructed a text for beginning students of Heb-

74 Ibid., p. 152.
75 Ibid., pp. 152-153.
76 Ibid., p. 153. Actually, Rieger called this a modified translation approach.
77 Ibid., p. 150.
rew language called *Everyday Hebrew*. The textbook consisted of twenty units all of which were incorporated into one general theme: the new life in Israel. Each unit consisted of a story, conversation and song in an attempt to provide a meaningful background of Israeli life and experience. There is very little formal grammar taught, but rather an attempt is made to have the student practice using the correct forms. The book used the modified translation approach with both Hebrew and English translations appearing, and provided a series of self-tests for the students.

**Teaching Arabic and History**

Another subject which interested Eliezer Rieger during his years at the University was that of teaching Arabic in the Hebrew secondary schools. In Rieger's opinion Arabic was not being taught successfully at all. Part of the

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78 Eliezer Rieger, *Everyday Hebrew* (Jerusalem: The Youth and Hechalutz Department of the World Zionist Organization, 1954). This text was sponsored by the National Board and the Education Committee of Hadassah, the Zionist Women's Organization in America. In fact, Rieger reports in the book's preface that Hadassah women were the students who participated in the experimental class in which the text was tested.

79 Ibid., Rieger felt that the text could become self instructive if records ever became available.
problem in the instruction of Arabic is that there are really three different languages: the classical, the formal used by the newspapers and radio, and the folk tongue. The Hebrew students could not be expected to master them all. Rieger noted that there had been three goals in the instruction of Arabic in the Hebrew schools: 1) civic - practical goal - ability to carry on daily affairs with the Arabs and knowledge of their customs and experience, 2) cultural - literary goal - acquisition of the best of Arabic thought, experiences and culture in the fields of literature, religion and belief, 3) educational - discipline goal - studying Arabic like Latin grammar in order to sharpen one's mind. The only goal which Rieger felt was legitimate and which he thought could truly be realized for most students was the civic - practical one of learning spoken Arabic.

Rieger discerned three levels of methodology necessary for teaching spoken Arabic to the Hebrew student. The first is to be found in the upper levels of elementary schools. The goals during these years should be to teach a few hundred practical idioms and phrases. The teacher

81 Ibid., p. 409.
82 Ibid., pp. 410-411.
must take time at this stage to deal with the customs and life experiences of the Arabs as a background. The second level has its place in the first years of secondary education (for 14-16 year olds), and the third is for the two highest grades of secondary education for students of the humanistic trend alone. On the second level the emphasis must still be on spoken Arabic, but it can be more advanced spoken Arabic which comes closer to the practical-literary language. At the conclusion of this segment it is desired that a student be able to understand the language of an intelligent Arab and also understand the essence of what he hears on Arabic radio broadcasts. In the first two levels about two hours a week must be devoted to Arabic but this must be increased to four to five hours a week on the third level. At this stage the emphasis passes from the spoken language to that of reading, writing and modern literature. 83

In 1952 Rieger published a two volume secondary school text entitled A History of the Jews in Modern Times. 84 His

83 Ibid., pp. 411-414. It is interesting to note that Rieger suggested that at the two initial levels of Arabic instruction the children should transliterate the words into their copybooks and not spend time learning Arabic script.

goal in these volumes was:

to emphasize political, social and economic problems, and not to deal, except tangentially, with the problems of literature, science and art. Everyone who looks into our history - knows the Jewish history books overflow with information about spiritual culture, and that the political, economic and social material is very thin. In this book I have tried to turn from this path. 85

Rieger enriched both of the volumes as educational texts by concluding each with a chapter called "Sources and Documents" in which he includes original source material for the student reader.

85 Ibid., p. 1.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Director General: A New Structure for Israel Education

The Trend System of Education

The Code of the Education System of Keneseth Yisrael of 1940 stated in section 10: "As to basic ideas inspiring the methods of education and curricula development of the schools, the Va'ad Leumi recognizes three "Trends," with equal rights, in education, hereinafter denominated General Schools, Mizrachi Schools and Labour Schools. The educational institutions of the three Trends, shall together form the Education system." The term "Education Trend" meant an education based on a specific religious or social ideology and way of life. In order to ensure that everything which took place within particular schools was in consonance with their Trend, special inspectors, teachers and principals were hired who accepted the Trend ideology.

1 Ruth Stanner, The Legal Basis of Education in Israel (Jerusalem: The Ministry of Education and Culture, 1963), p. 75. Ruth Stanner is legal adviser to the Ministry of Education and Culture. This text contains a lengthy article on the legal structure of education in Palestine and Israel as well as the texts of most of the education laws. All legal references in this dissertation will be made according to the Stanner text. For additional information on the same subject see also, Ruth Stanner, Diney Hinnukh (Jerusalem: The Ministry of Education and Culture, 1966).

2 Ibid., p. 7.
Ruth Stanner commented, "In point of fact, these Trends were supported directly by political parties of the Jewish population in Palestine."\(^3\)

The Trend system developed naturally at the beginning of this century. The first division was between the general schools and those of the orthodox.\(^4\) The general school emphasized Bible but taught no prayer and offered Talmud only as an elective. Classes were usually conducted without students covering their heads. Not all parents were satisfied with this type of education, and many sent their children to orthodox schools like a Heder or Talmud-Torah.\(^5\) The orthodox Mizrahi organization slowly acquired schools in Palestine and at the Zionist Conference in 1920 reached an agreement with the Zionist Organization with regard to the inspection of its educational institutions. It was recognized that the Mizrahi would have

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\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Joseph Bentwich, ha-Hinnukh biMdinath Yisrael (Tel Aviv: Chichick Publishers, 1960), p. 35. Hereinafter referred to as EI.
\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 35-38.
considerable autonomy over its own schools.\textsuperscript{6}

The labor schools trace their beginnings to the early twenties, when labor settlements were being established, especially in the Valley of Jezreel.\textsuperscript{7} In 1923 the Histadruth ha-Ovdim organized all its agricultural settlement schools in order to seek recognition and support from the Zionist organization as did the Mizrahi schools.\textsuperscript{8} Its requests were at first turned down not for ideological differences but simply because the necessary funds to keep pace with the educational expansion of the Yishuv did not exist. The Histadruth was therefore forced to subsidize its schools alone.

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid. It was established that in conjunction with a Director of Education an inspector would be appointed for orthodox schools, and that Mizrahi would have representation on any education committee. According to Yosef Luria it was decided that Mizrahi and its chief inspector would establish an Orthodox Inspection Committee which would have complete autonomy over all internal matters in the schools which are under its inspection. (For more information see, Y. Luria, ha-Hinnukh be-Erets Yisrael, 1921, p. 8.) Joseph Bentwich believed it could be assumed that this was a pre-condition for Mizrahi's joining the Zionist Administration. The importance of this agreement can be seen in a statement by Rabbi Fishman, Minister of Religion in 1951 as quoted in the "Transcript of the Conference on the Critical Problems of Education in Israel" (unpublished transcript of a conference held in New York, April 24, 1949), p. 20; hereinafter referred to as Transcript: "The autonomy which we now have is the prerequisite of our participation. This autonomy is the condition for unity in education; without it, it becomes a forbidden act; without it, according to the proper interpreters of Jewish law there is no kosher school... Discontinuation of autonomy will lead to disunity and a clash of ideas."

\textsuperscript{7} Noah Nardi, "Transcript," p. 21.

\textsuperscript{8} EI, p. 37.
at first. Finally, in 1926 the labor schools were recognized as part of the Zionist school system. However, their administration still remained partly outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Education for about another twelve years. The reason for this difference was that these schools received support but also added their own monies to a fund called the Merkaz le-Hinmukh (often simply called the Merkaz) which covered their total expenses.

In 1929 the Trend system was made official at the 16th Zionist Congress. The existing Hebrew schools were attached to the General Zionist party even though there had never been a connection between the two. The supervisory committee of each Trend not only had educational autonomy, but also administrative autonomy. Principals and teachers, for example, were first appointed by the committee and only later needed the approval of the Department of Education. Each Trend would open its own schools without checking first with a central authority. In fact, there were three different systems of education existing in a loose federation.

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10 Ibid., p. 22.
11 Ibid., p. 33.
12 Ibid., p. 39.
The nature of the educational system was a topic of great concern throughout the entire Mandate period for there were those who felt that it had serious structural weaknesses. A. Arnon, for example, pointed out that the Yishuv, unlike most democratic societies, had not developed a unified school. Rather, the system of education was based on class structure and had definite separatist tendencies within the society. He attributed this mostly to the political and financial weakness of the country. 13

The McNair Commission 14 in its report pointed out what it felt to be five serious weaknesses of the education system. First, it cautioned about the great danger in permitting political parties to influence curriculum and teaching in the schools. 15 Second,

A reluctance to entrust sufficient power to any individual renders a proper location of responsibility impossible. Instead of individual personal responsibility, which is the essential factor in strong and efficient administration, we find a system of checks and balances created to satisfy mutual lack of confidence. The three Trend School Councils weaken the responsibility of the Department and its Director. There is, instead of a single Director having authority to administer upon

14 See above, pp. 164-169.
general principles prescribed to him, a directorate consisting of a Director and three Trend Chief Inspectors, each of whom can, in the event of disagreement, bring a matter affecting the schools of his Trend before the Executive Committee.16

In addition, because there are three Trends, and inspectors check only their own schools, the system is deprived of the benefit of comparative observation of schools of various types.17 Another important weakness is that the Department of Education's powers are inadequate to control the Trends or parents' groups from initiating new but unnecessary schools.18 It stated:

A group of like-minded parents, with more enthusiasm than prudence, can open a new school and obtain the support of one of the Trends without any previous enquiry by the Va'ad Leumi's Department of Education into such questions as whether the number of children warrants a new school, whether they could reasonably be sent to an existing school, how the cost of the school is to be met, and whether there are other educational needs possessing a higher priority. Sooner or later the Va'ad Leumi is virtually compelled to take over the new school, and it is to the interest of all the Trends that it should do so. This practice renders impossible the planning of an educational policy by a central authority and is contrary to the principles of sound finance.19

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
A final defect in the system listed in the McNair report was that it does not give adequate attention to local education authorities. 

In response to these problems Eliezer Rieger called for the establishment of a unified school system which would draw upon the ideas of all three Trends. From the General Zionist Trend it would adopt the tradition of non-partisanship. Non-partisanship, according to Rieger, expresses itself in the emphasis which is placed upon the similarity between the various points of view while partisanship stresses the differences. The Labor Trend must add its dedication for the realization of Zionism. The unified schools must learn to find, as have the Labor Trend schools, teachers who will be willing to go to the villages and not remain in city schools. It must also draw upon the Mizrahi Trend for a religious sense, especially with regard to national institutions like holidays and festivals.

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20 Ibid., p.17.

21 Eliezer Rieger, "Hanahoth le-Technith Beth Sefer Abid," Hed ha-Hinukh, XII, No. 12-13 (1933), pp. 220-221. Rieger commented, however, on just what the place of religion should be in his proposed unified school system. He said: "We are able - and in my opinion must remain neutral in the education of our children in one aspect: from the aspect of the ceremonial, dogmatic religion, from the aspect of the maintenance of these same few commandments which have no connection of necessity between them and between the needs of our national lives in the new land of Israel. The school must not enter this area of religious life, because especially in this area there are many differences of opinion in the Yishuv. The area of deeds of commission must be left by the school for the home, and the home will develop them or restrict them according to its own opinion."
Rieger suggested that if the Mizrahi does not desire unified education, it would be worthwhile to leave that Trend undisturbed and to place the initiative for the creation of a unified school upon the General Trend and the Labor Trend. Two important reasons he listed for this amalgamation were that a real civil war will develop between these two camps as they compete for children to populate their schools, and many of those who send their children to General Schools strongly identify with the Labor Party. 22

A statement made by Y. Holzberg, inspector of the Mizrahi Trend, is indicative of how those who supported or were involved in the Trends reacted to the proposals about a unified education system. He said:

... the desire of the General Zionists, since they are on the center, between Labor and the "Mizrahi," is to be the decisive power and to force the other Trends with the power of state compulsion to accept their school. There is no doubt, in my opinion, that this unified school will be the most dangerous political school; for just as it is a school for only part of the people and speaks about itself as the school of the entire nation it hopes to subjugate to itself the entire nation. It is exactly this desire of the General Zionist to speak about their school as though it were the united school which reveals all the partisanship of the General school and also the partisanship of the unified school. 23

In September of 1949, more than a year after the estab-

22 Ibid., pp. 219-220.
lishment of the State, the compulsory Education Law was passed by the Keneseth. In the last definition of the first section of the law it became clear that the basic administrative structure of the Trend system from the Waad Leumi period was retained with the addition of a fourth Trend, that of Agudath Yisrael. The law states the definition:

recognized Trend means any of the four Trends existing in Jewish education, namely - (a) the General Trend; (b) the Labor Trend; (c) the Mizrahi Trend; (d) Agudath Israel Trend.

Section ten of the same law spelled out the parents' right to choose a Trend for their children. This section states:

(a) Parents discharging the duty imposed on them under section 3 to register a child or adolescent may, at the time of registration, declare that they wish the child or adolescent to attend an educational institution for elementary education belonging to a certain recognized Trend or that they wish him to attend some other educational institution for elementary education. When no such declaration is made, the parents shall be deemed to have declared that they wish the child or adolescent to attend the official educational institution for elementary education which is nearest to the place of residence of the child or adolescent.

(b) The Minister may, by order, require a local education authority or several local education authorities jointly to open and maintain, at the wish of the parents of children or adolescents resident in the area or areas of jurisdiction of such local education authority or authorities, an official educational institution for elementary education of a certain recognized Trend or another official educational institution for elementary education.

24 For the complete text of this law see Stanner, op. cit., pp. 150-162.

25 Ibid., p. 152.

26 Ibid., p. 161.
Thus, the first Parliament of the State of Israel gave a legal seal to the division of the Jewish system of education into political Trends as had been the case under the Waad Leumi. The one difference was that a fourth Trend, that of Agudath Yisrael, was given legal status. It was believed by many, however, that giving autonomy in educational matters would prevent a great debate and a conflict between the different cultures. 27 This, unfortunately, was not the case, for it was soon learned that the Trends were struggling with each other to enlist new students. Joseph Bentwich described the situation as follows:

The majority of the new immigrants - from North Africa, Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Persia, etc. - knew nothing about Trends, and at first had no idea what school to choose. Many parents chose a Labour school, not out of Socialist convictions, but for fear they might otherwise not be given employment by the local Labour Bureau. Parents who chose a Mizrahi (religious) school were usually religious themselves, but were often influenced by slanderous tales about immorality of teachers in General schools. As a result, in almost every camp or immigrant settlement, two, three, or even four schools were opened, often in violent competition. The infection spread to the established settlements as well. Schools previously single were split into two, often with two halves sharing the same - partitioned - building. Scarcely a month passed without some newspaper sensation about stormy clashes, even leading up to violence, in this or that village or settlement. 28

Since most of the new immigrants, especially those from Moslem countries were religious, the religious parties


demanded that their children have a religious education. The Yemenite children were felt to be the special reserve of the religious Trend whether they lived in villages or in Maabereoth (immigrant camps). It was stated: "The religious ministers claim that the Histadruth Trend of education will bring the Yemenite children to atheism, and they demand to give the children of the Yemenites a religious and traditional education...."30

In order to ameliorate the conditions it was decided to divide the schools in the immigrant settlements between two combined Trends, religious and free. This agreement was based on the assumption that a double system, instead of a four-sided one, would reduce the immigrants' consternation in selecting a school. Histadruth ha-Ovdim, on the other hand, claimed that religion was not a monopoly and established a religious sub-Trend as part of its educational Trend.31 The crises continued until it was brought to a head on February 14, 1951. At that time compromises proposed by David Remez, Minister of Education and Culture, were tabled, amidst the demands of the General Zionist and Progressive parties for the abolition of the Trend system of education.32

Ben-Gurion, the Prime-Minister, who himself had stated as

29 Ha-Aretz, Jan. 9, 1951, p. 1.
30 Ibid.
part of the debate, "I am not divulging any secret if I state that I have always regarded the Trend system as most unfortunate,"33 said:

... the Government sees this as an expression of no-confidence and resigns. Today I will inform the President that he will have to place the responsibility of forming a government upon someone. If he will not be able... to, this Government will continue to govern and will suggest new elections.34

The new elections were held later in the year, and as a result a new coalition formed between Mapai, the General Zionists, the Progressive party and Mizrahi was presented before the Keneseth at the end of December 1952.35 The new government's program included the following statement on education:

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33 Bentwich, Education in Israel, p. 41. It is important to note that not all of Ben-Gurion's Mapai party was in favor of a unified State education program. See Ha-Aretz, July 6, 1951, p. 1. In this article it is reported that once Ben-Gurion proposed a unified education proposal be made part of the party platform a coalition arose against this idea. The Mapai party platform which was spelled out later in the month (Ha-Aretz, July 18, 1951, p. 5) called for: "A State Education for All. The Mapai party is in favor of a state education for all the children of Israel. Education is founded on the following principles: 1. all elementary schools will be subject only to the authority of the office of education of the State, 2. required minimum will be incumbent upon all elementary schools... 3. the parents' right to choose a type of education which will disregard the required minimum will be recognized, 4. an education for work and for pioneering life will be implanted in... every... school..., 5. the children of religious parents will be assured religious life patterns in the school."

34 Divrey ha-Keneseth, Feb. 14, 1951, p. 1109.

A government committee will arrange during 1952-1953 a program for state education in all elementary schools, which will be put into effect no later than the beginning of the new school year 1953-1954.

The program will be based on the following principles: (1) the eradication of any connection of the schools to political parties, (2) the establishment of an obligatory minimum [curriculum] to be enforced for all schools, (3) the promise of a religious education for all the children of parents who desire it, (4) recognition of the right of parents to direct and broaden education under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and without affecting the required minimum.36

Rieger's Appointment as Director General

In the month of October 1951 after Ramez's resignation, Ben Zion Dinur, one time head of the Hebrew Teachers Seminar in Beth ha-Kerem and a professor at the Hebrew University, accepted the education portfolio offered by Ben-Gurion.37 Dinur wanted to help bring about the necessary reforms required for a state education law and the establishment of a new curriculum.38 A short time after his appointment and with no connection to the political changes, Dr. B. Ben Yehuda, Director General of the Ministry of Education and Culture, resigned.39 Dinur immediately sought to appoint Rieger to this position. Dinur knew that Rieger had wide

36 Ibid.
38 Ben Zion Dinur, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 19, 1968.
39 EI, p. 70. See also, Ha-Aretz, Oct. 16, 1953, p. 4.
administrative experience, had spoken for and formulated programs for state education, and was an extremely loyal person. Indeed, Rieger had been the educator who coined the term "State Education."  

Rieger did not accept the position without hesitation. There were many, both in the government and outside of it, who opposed him. It was known that he was a strong individual who stood for state education and a minimum curriculum so that those parties who opposed these ideas did not want him to be appointed.  

Dr. Joseph Luria had once proposed Rieger to be his successor as the Director of the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi but there had been strong opposition from the Histadruth ha-Morim. They were afraid of his resoluteness and of his "American" ideas. Upon Luria's death Rieger had been rejected. The Histadruth ha-Morim once again strongly opposed Rieger's appointment. Aviezer Yellin, head of the organization, wrote to Dinur demanding that Rieger's candidacy for the position of Director General be dropped for what he claimed was "... the good of the

40 Dinur, Interview.  
42 Ibid.  
43 Ibid.
entire educational endeavor in Israel." Representatives of the organization even came in person to Dinur to complain about Rieger's appointment. They threatened to refuse to recognize him as Director General, to which Dinur responded, "I recognize him. Perhaps you want to start a strike - if you please." Not wanting to be rejected, Rieger requested that Dinur remove his candidacy if it looked as though it would not pass. Rieger, however, was approved and an agreement was reached whereby he would serve for an initial period of two years. Upon being informed and congratulated about his official appointment Rieger responded, "I have always been an adventurer. It is possible to do a great deal in two years, and now there is a chance. I will try my luck." Bentwich remarked, "And, indeed, in two years a revolution took place. On this point, it is impossible to distinguish between Rieger's work and that of Professor Dinur; they were united and attached one to another."

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44 Aviezer Yellin, head of the Histadruth ha-Morim, letter, Oct. 31, 1951, Jerusalem, to Ben Zion (Dinaburg) Dinur, Minister of Education and Culture, Archives of the Histadruth ha-Morim, Tel Aviv, File 3/122.
45 Dinur, Interview.
46 Ibid.
47 Ben Zion (Dinaburg) Dinur, letter, Nov. 8, 1951, Jerusalem, to the Rector of the Hebrew University, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.
48 Ben Zion Dinur, letter, Dec. 6, 1951, Jerusalem, to Eliezer Rieger, Archives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, File 454, Portfolio 306.
49 Bentwich, "Eliezer Rieger."
50 Ibid.
A new spirit was felt immediately in the Ministry of Education and Culture. Dinur and Rieger would rise early to work; by 7:30 A.M. they and their assistants were already sitting in their office, and there was a constant tension... Rieger had already become sick at the beginning of 1952... [and] Dinur also became ill... But the two of them, the Minister and his chief aid, quickened the pace, as though they felt that the time given them was measured and limited.\textsuperscript{51}

The State Education Law of 1953

The State Education Law of 1953 was not formulated by Dinur and Rieger in a regular manner. Generally, constantly revised memoranda would be circulated by the Ministry to the various office of the Government in order to learn of their reactions. Because, however, this law was going to bring about such a great change in the educational system which was at that time based on political ideologies, it was formulated in the Ministry of Education entirely.\textsuperscript{52}

There were a number of reasons, however, why the State Education Law was able to pass in 1953 and do away with the Trends. As late as the 1939-1940 school year the General Zionist Trend had enrolled 53\% of all students, Mizrahi 34\% and the Labor Trend 8\%.\textsuperscript{53} By 1953 a drastic change had occurred. The General Zionists accounted for only 28\% of the total student population, Mizrahi and Agudath Israel 26\%.

\textsuperscript{51} EI, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{52} Ruth Stanner, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 20, 1968. Ruth Stanner remarked that the State Education Law was really born and came to fruition in the minds of Professors Dinur and Rieger. It was written fifteen times before it took its final form.

\textsuperscript{53} Eliezer Rieger, Hebrew Education in Palestine: Aims and Curricula (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing Co., 1940), p. 145.
combined, and Histadruth ha-Ovdim 43.3%. 54 The Histadruth had become the largest single school Trend. If a national system were to be created its image would be the dominant one. Moreover, curricula differences and the nature of the faculty had begun to blur between the General Zionist and the Histadruth schools as they competed for more students. Moreover, according to Bentwich, the objective basis for the separate existence of these two Trends had almost disappeared. 55

On the other hand, the religious parties were more ready to accept the proposed State Education Law because they were promised that religious schools with religious teachers, and a religious branch of the Department of Education would be maintained. The religious schools, however, would have no connection with a religious party and would have a unified religious curriculum. 56

The Law was completed in its final form in June 1953 and placed before the Kneseth at that time. 57 The Law officially passed in the Kneseth on August 12, 1953. 58 The major ob-

54 Israel Government Yearbook, 5713, p. 86.
55 EI, pp. 72-73.
56 Ibid., p. 73. The Agudath Yisrael schools refused to accept a 75% minimal curriculum and to participate. Therefore, the Mizrahi schools became the State Religious Schools.
57 Israel Government Yearbook, 5713, p. 88 and p. 100. See also Bentwich, Education in Israel, p. 31, and the McNair Commission Report, p. 14. Preparation had also been completed at that time for a revised curriculum, the first real revision since 1923.
jectives of the State Education Law were to abolish the Trends and to clearly establish state control over the schools.

The first definition in the Law stated:

'State' education means education provided by the State on the basis of the curriculum, without any attachment to a party or communal body or any other organization outside the Government, and under the supervision of the Minister or a person authorized by him in that behalf.59

In addition, there were two other new and important legal concepts. First, "religious education" was defined as "... state education, with the distinction that its institutions are religious as to their way of life, curriculum, teachers and inspectors."60 Second, the Minister of Education had the right to prescribe a supplementary program which could comprise no more than twenty-five per cent of the lesson hours of a school.61 In the case of religious State-educational institutions, the supplementary program included "... the study of the written and oral religious law and aimed at a religious way of life, and includes religious observance and a religious atmosphere within the institution."62 This type of religious education was to be offered "... in an official educational institution which in the school year 5713 belonged to the Mizrahi

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
Trend or Agudath Israel Trend or the religious section of the Labour Trend.... 63

There were two sections of the State Education Law of 1953 which dealt with removing all propaganda from the schools. This, of course, was related to removing the Trend influence from the schools. Section 19 of the Law provides: "A teacher, or any other employee at an educational institution, shall not conduct propaganda for a party or other political organization among the pupils of an educational institution." 64 Moreover, the Law stipulates that the Minister is charged with "... the prevention of any political party or, propaganda, in any form whatsoever, in an educational institution, whether by the teachers and employees of the institution or by outsiders." 65

According to both Bentwich and Dinur, the greatest change which came about in the Ministry of Education and Culture was an internal one which took place even before the State Education Law was completely formulated. Instead of having a chief inspector for each Trend, Rieger re-defined the areas of responsibility and created the new position of Assistant Director General. Rieger appointed

63 Ibid., p. 169.
64 Ibid., p. 173.
65 Ibid., p. 179.
the chief Trend inspectors to these new positions which had responsibilities involving all Trends and not a particular one. For example, there were assistant directors in charge of areas like elementary education, secondary education, budget and office operation, and Arab education. The Director General and these assistants became the administration of the Ministry and held weekly meetings to discuss problems. 66

The passage of the State Education Law in 1953 caused immediate administrative problems for the Ministry of Education. Now that authority passed from the chief inspectors of each Trend to the Ministry, decisions had to be made as to what would be the best system of administering the school programs. Questions which were debated at length were: Should centralization or decentralization be adopted as the method of organization or should a system be developed that would combine both of these methods? In the middle of October 1953 it was finally decided within the Ministry of Education to adopt an administrative system based on decentralization. 67 District inspectors were appointed for six

66 EI, p. 76. See also Bentwich and Dinur, Interviews, and Israel Government Yearbook, 5713, p. 96, and 5714, p. 109.

different regions: Jerusalem, ha-Darom (South), Tel Aviv, ha-Merkaz (Center), Haifa, and ha-Tsafon (North). These inspectors would operate within their own districts of the system of education but were still responsible to the Ministry of Education in Jerusalem.

Another structural change in the education system which was carried out by the Ministry of Education preceding the 5714 school year as a result of the State Education Law was the reorganization of schools. Approximately two hundred schools were closed or combined with neighboring institutions resulting in about ninety combined institutions. In addition, "Towns were divided into zones, and parents were required to register only in the

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68 EI, p. 76.

69 Yisraeli, op. cit., pp. 4-5. Among the tasks of the district inspectors were: 1) inspection of all State and State Religious educational institutions; 2) registration of children and proper attendance; 3) negotiations with regional authorities and everything dealing with maintaining the institutions; 4) organization of schools for opening; 5) execution of inspectors' recommendations; 6) language instruction for adults; 7) nutritional activities; 8) inspection of special education institutions and recognized institutions (supervised and as a rule supported by the Government - but not official); 8) youth lounges, sports fields and buildings; 9) examinations.

State School or Religious State School in their zone.\textsuperscript{71}

Within the Ministry of Education Eliezer Rieger had been the individual who motivated the final writing of a new curriculum for the elementary schools.\textsuperscript{72} Dr. Ben Yehuda had appointed nineteen different committees in 1948 to develop material for all the different subjects that a curriculum would involve.\textsuperscript{73}

During a speech in November 1951 Rieger declared:

One of the most pressing tasks is the preparation of a minimal curriculum common to the schools of the four Trends, which will include common elements to a measure of \( \frac{2}{3} \) or \( \frac{3}{4} \). These programs will have to take into account not only differences between the Trends, but also the nuance and difference between the city and the village, and between the children of an established settlement and the children of Olim [new immigrants].\textsuperscript{74}

In 1952 Rieger appointed an editorial committee for the purpose of culling all the material gathered and constructing a final curriculum. Once the State Education Law was

\textsuperscript{71} Bentwich, \textit{Education in Israel}, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{72} Avner Yisraeli, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 23, 1968.

\textsuperscript{73} Eliezer Rieger, "Introduction," \textit{Curriculum for the Elementary State and the State Religious School} (Jerusalem: 1954). A few examples of the type of committees which were appointed are: geography, language, grammar, history, arithmetic - geometry-algebra, nature, agriculture, etc.

\textsuperscript{74} Eliezer Rieger, \textit{The Background and Problems of Education in Israel} (Jerusalem: Information Service of the State of Israel, 1952), p. 21.
passed, new significance was added to the curriculum writing, and two sub-committees, one for grades one to four and one for grades five to eight, were appointed. The curriculum which was developed superseded four different curricula which existed in Israel: the City-School Curriculum, which was published by the Department of Education of the Palestine Zionist Executive in 1923; the Mizrahi School Curriculum which was published in 1932 by the Department of Education of the Jewish Agency; "Kavvim" curricular notes published by the Histadruth ha-Ovdim from 1937 to 1949; a curriculum published in 1927 by the Department of Education of the Mandate Government for Arab schools. According to Dushkin, Rieger and Dinur had attempted to establish a single minimum curriculum for all schools, but they eventually had to concede and incorporate different outlines in the curriculum for the State schools and the State Religious.

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Rieger, Curriculum Introduction.
Dinur pointed out that the new curriculum was drawn up in consonance with the State Education Law and provided for a seventy-five per cent minimum obligatory program and a twenty-five per cent supplementary program. The curriculum designated what were the essential elements of a particular subject but also listed its maximal content if a school desired to add to the subject in a supplementary program.

76 Alexander M. Dushkin, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 12 and June 13, 1968. For example, for grade two both State and State Religious schools offered twenty-four hours of classroom instruction. However, not only were the hour schedules different for the two types of school (e.g. State School: Bible stories - 5 lessons, language, Moledeth studies about the land of Israel itself and nature - 6, art and work - 5, arithmetic - 4, physical education - 2, group activity - 2; State Religious School: Torah and prayer - 11, language, laws, Moledeth and nature - 4, art and work - 3, arithmetic - 4, physical education - 2) but the materials studied within the same subject areas were often different. It is important to note that the format of the curriculum demonstrates the inter-relatedness of the two programs. They were listed as parallel programs on facing pages of the curriculum so that one could easily see the differences and similarities.


78 Ibid.
Illness and Death

The work load which Rieger assumed as Director General was immense because of the challenges and problems of creating the State Education Law. His appointment at just this time offered him the opportunity to take part in bringing to fruition many of the educational innovations for which he had worked all his life. Unfortunately, a few months after his appointment it was discovered that Rieger was ill. In March 1952 it was announced that Rieger was being flown to England for an immediate operation.79 Before leaving for England, Rieger said to his friend Dinur:

It is life's fate. Just now when the thing for which I have yearned all my life is being realized, and I am being given an opportunity to participate in my life's dreams, I become ill... What a tragic synchronization.80

When he returned from the operation, his family was informed that he was suffering from cancer and that he had but about a year to live.81 As Bentwich has pointed out, the illness quickened Rieger's pace as though he realized that there was much to accomplish but little time left.82 He continued to teach at the University and to conduct the overwhelming business of guiding the State Education Law and its implementation through countless committee meetings. He eventually


80 Ben Zion Dinur, In Memoriam for Professor Eliezer Rieger (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1954), p. 8.

81 Mrs. Rivkah Rieger Kaplan, taped personal interview with the author, New York, Nov. 29, 1967.

82 See above, p. 245.
lost his voice but continued his activities by whispering into a microphone while at his desk or at a meeting.\textsuperscript{83}

On June 30, 1953 Rieger wrote to Dinur resigning his position as Director General. He explained that his two year agreement had expired and that he had to return to a full time position at the Hebrew University.\textsuperscript{84} Though he realized that Rieger had a terminal illness\textsuperscript{85} Dinur wrote to him:

I was sorry to receive your letter of the 17\textsuperscript{th} of Tammuz, in which you announced to me your decision to return to a full position at the University in the academic year 1953-1954.

You yourself know how great will be the loss and how overwhelming will be the difficulties in the Ministry of Education and Culture because of your leaving, especially in this period when we stand at the beginning of the execution of the State Education Law. Great will be my sorrow, if you, whose help was so important, purposeful and unending in the establishment of the framework for the great reforms, will not participate in the essence of its realization... Our joint work was for me not only a pleasure but also one of the sources of trust and strength in the realization of the great tasks before which we stood.

\textsuperscript{83} Dushkin and Stanner, Interview. Ruth Stanner remembers that Rieger did not miss more than one or two committee meetings in progressing the Law to its passage.

\textsuperscript{84} Eliezer Rieger, letter, to Ben Zion Dinur, Jerusalem, June 30, 1953, Archives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Jerusalem, File 454, Portfolio 306. See also, Eliezer Rieger, letter, to the administration of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, July 1, 1953, Archives of the Hebrew University, Rieger Personal File.

\textsuperscript{85} Dinur, Interview.
Indeed, the reasons which you cited for your resignation were so impressive that I decided that I will be forced to acquiesce to them, and therefore I will be appreciative of your decision to acquiesce to my request to continue in your work at least until Passover, 1954. In the meantime the work can be so arranged that a portion of the work which until now has been incumbent upon you can be given to one of the assistants, and other technical arrangements will be made that will lighten, as much as possible, the work load. And during this time, in the light of easing of work conditions, you may consider the matter anew.

Rieger agreed to Dinur's request and received permission from the Hebrew University to continue his leave of absence. The last months of his life were therefore ones in which he still played an important part in bringing about his life's dreams. He continued to work at a tireless pace, and when he became too ill to leave his bed he continued his work at home. Eliezer Rieger died on April 19, 1954.

86 Ben Zion Dinur, letter to Eliezer Rieger, Jerusalem, Sept. 16, 1953, Archives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Jerusalem, File 454, Portfolio 806.

87 Eliezer Rieger, letter to Professor B. Mazar, President of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Oct. 9, 1953, Hebrew University Archives, Rieger Personal File.
CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

Eliezer Rieger's life spanned more than half a century and was lived in Europe and in Israel. As a young man he was instrumental in creating the ha-Shomer ha-Tsair movement in Vienna during the First World War and in helping it to spread to Galicia and Poland. He was the first president of ha-Shomer ha-Tsair. The new movement "... demanded of Jewish youth Zionism, a new society, a new ethic and immigration to Eretz Yisrael... Hundreds of young people left their schools and immigrated to Palestine in order to form the foundation of the Third Aliyah." In April of 1919 Rieger attended the first Conference of Congressional Polish Scouting and unified this movement with the one in Galicia. As president Rieger oversaw the growth and development of the

1 Dr. Shlomo Herowitz, taped personal interview with the author, Haifa, June 2, 1968. See also "A Meeting of the Shomer Leadership," Ha-Shomer, II (Aug, 1917), p. 9.

2 Eliezer Rieger, Hebrew Education in Palestine: Principles and Trends (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing Co., 1940), pp. 146-147. Hereinafter referred to as HE.

movement. He encouraged intensification of Hebrew studies and the study of Jewish history and Zionism. For him the essence of ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir was education - educating Jewish youth to be pioneers in Erets Yisrael.  

Eliezer Rieger was a charismatic individual who attracted the loyalty and best efforts of others. He was a gifted speaker who could turn a phrase and excite an audience. The beauty of his Hebrew speeches was a cause for wide admiration. He was a strong personality with an unusual ability to organize and administer activities, and he was dedicated to the ideas of Zionism, education, the promise of youth and pioneering. However, it would be unfair to claim that the course of this Jewish youth movement in Vienna and Galicia (and later in Palestine) would have been very different were it not for his involvement. He helped guide the movement as its president, and he most certainly made an important contribution to the movement's ideas and growth. Indeed, he made his own original contributions at first by calling his friends together in Vienna to initiate youth activities and later in helping to spell out a program of action and the group's ideas. Rieger em-

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phasized that the essence of the organization must be the rejuvenation of the Jewish people, and that this required an education for youth which included not only intellectual educational activities but also pioneering, work and action.\textsuperscript{5}

The objective foundations which he spelled out for the movement were the idealism of youth, social justice materialized in Palestine, Zionism, and idealistic bravery and pioneering.\textsuperscript{6} However, Rieger's role in ha-Shomer ha-Tsair would best be viewed as that of a catalyst. The needs and conditions of the period existed. His ideas and activities were but one of the factors which led to the movement's development. On the other hand, a man of his abilities and talents was needed to bring together and organize all that was taking place, and he was on the spot.

Eliezer Rieger's major contributions were made when he served as an educator in Palestine and Israel. He went on Aliyah in 1920, and for the first years of life in Erets Yisrael he dedicated himself to teaching in secondary schools and to working for the Keren Kayemeth and the rebuilding of the land. In 1923 Rieger published his first text, \textit{The History of Modern Times}.\textsuperscript{7} One of the major problems he

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5} "A Meeting of the Shomer Leadership," \textit{Ha-Shomer}, II (Aug. 1919), p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{6} "Convention of Shomer Leaders," \textit{Nowy Dziennik}, III (April 19, 1920), pp. 3-4.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Eliezer Rieger, \textit{The History of Modern Times} (Tel Aviv: Kohelet Publishing Co., 1924).
\end{itemize}
faced as a history teacher in secondary Hebrew schools was that there was no history text which existed in the Hebrew language. Rieger's text was the first to be published in Palestine in Hebrew, and thus was a pioneering endeavor of great importance. 8

In 1923 Eliezer Rieger helped to create and served as chairman of a new organization called the Movement for Totsereth ha-Arets. 9 At this period most products were imported into Palestine from overseas, even agricultural products. Rieger believed that Palestine would never be able to develop properly if it did not encourage home grown produce and home made products. People in Palestine were skeptical about buying home made items, and Rieger saw the development of Palestinian industry as an educational challenge. School children must be trained to be not only good consumers but also good producers. 10 They must learn to be dedicated to a high level of expert craftsmanship and to suffering some deprivation in order to create new markets for local industry. Under Rieger’s direction Totsereth ha-Arets exhibitions were organized in Tel Aviv in 1923 and 1925 which later grew into the Yerid Hamizrah. 11 The concept of

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8 The text continued to be used for decades.

9 Alexander Ezer, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 19, 1968.

10 HE., pp. 258-264.

11 Ezer, Interview.
Totsereth ha-Arets has stood the test of time. If today in America we can find a wide variety of Israeli products and foods in Gimbel's, Macy's and Wanamaker's, it is due primarily to the visionaries like Eliezer Rieger who conceived the idea of Totsereth ha-Arets at the beginning of the twenties.

In 1924/1925 Eliezer Rieger traveled to the United States as part of a three member Palestine Youth Delegation. This was the first youth delegation ever dispatched by the Keren Kayemeth and its purpose was to interest the Jewish youth of America in financially supporting the Jewish National Fund.12 Realizing that a Zionist appeal would not be well received by indifferent teenagers, Rieger had the delegation devote itself to educating American youth to identify with the land of Palestine.13 The delegation succeeded in making the Jewish National Fund a year round project for youth groups and for Hebrew school children. A program was instituted whereby children kept blue boxes at home and returned them to their schools for periodic collections.14

Rieger's work for the Keren Kayemeth continued once


he returned to Palestine. He was elected to the executive committee of the Palestine Teachers Council for the Jewish National Fund at its foundation convention. He outlined various educational proposals which emphasized the idea that Keren Kayemeth must become the central public activity which the school should demand of the child. In this way he will be able to concentrate on it and make it a part of his being.

Joseph Bentwich came into closest contact with Rieger during the time in which he served as an inspector in the Waad Leumi's Department of Education. This was a time of great rigidity in the Yishuv in general and in education in particular. Education had been transferred from the Jewish Agency to the Waad Leumi, and the budget had been slashed. Dr. Joseph Luria was then head of the Department of Education. He was answerable to three bodies: the executive committee of the Waad Leumi, its board of education, and the Waad Leumi itself. The division of authority among these three bodies was none too clear, but the real power was actually in the hands of the Trends on the one hand, and the Teachers' Federation (Histadruth ha-Morim) on the other. Within this structure Dr. Luria tried vali-

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16 Ibid., p. 228. In 1926/1927 Rieger served as editor of the Keren Kayemeth journal Hannear We-Haaretz.
antly but vainly to effect positive change. But every real reform failed immediately because of the clash of interests or because of simple conservatism. Bentwich continues:

It was in this atmosphere that Rieger appeared like a ray of light... [His] essence was his manner of thought. More than any other man in the Yishuv at this time he presented education before us as a science. Most of the administrative questions of education must be resolved not by a vote of teachers - even if they are very experienced - or by community leaders, but rather by experimentation. Experiments had already been carried out in one land or another in many fields. There is also established practice, and we must function according to it, at least at first, and not continue with methods that have proven to be outdated. Also, in all other questions we must learn from what is done in other countries, and we would do well to follow their lead unless there is a special reason which causes us to differ.

Bentwich points out that this educational point of view which now is shared by everyone, then appeared to be revolutionary. Opponents immediately arose who accused Rieger of wanting to copy the Gevim or who claimed that education is an art and not a science. On the other hand, Joseph Bentwich feels that one must not think of Rieger only as a man of science. He was gifted with a fine educational intuition, and beneath his cold surface beat the heart of a proud and sensitive Jew. Bentwich also realized that Rieger always subjugated his feelings to a thoughtful, objective discipline. Therefore, he was usually right, and even those

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18 Ibid.
who opposed him at first later recognized their mistakes. Bentwich states, "The problem was that the voice of the opponents at this time was louder; and the immediate result was that Rieger acquired enemies on every side."20

Some of the ideas which Rieger spoke out for constantly were the teaching of Zionism in a social studies framework, the incorporation of Tetsereth ha-Arets education, and the restructuring of the concept of the inspectorate so that inspectors were specialists in curriculum areas rather than Trend inspectors responsible for all of education in a particular school. In addition, Rieger called for the supervision of educational institutions which were not officially part of the Waad Leumi's system.21 All of these ideas were obviously sound educationally and important for the development of the system of education in Palestine. Their gradual adoption throughout the ensuing years was due in part to the fact that a forceful educator like Rieger was their precursor and constant staunch supporter.

The educational spirit which Rieger implanted during his years with the Waad Leumi Department of Education was perhaps his most important contribution. Education must be structured, thought out, modern and scientific. It was

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
this spirit that many reacted to negatively, but it is this spirit which Rieger continued to nurture throughout his entire career. Rieger did not change the course of Palestine education by virtue of his actual work as an inspector, but he impregnated it with new ideas and a different approach.

It must be remembered that according to Alexander Dushkin, Rieger, as Inspector of Secondary Schools, played a crucial role in creating the atmosphere which led to the creation of the Hebrew University Department of Education. More specifically, Dr. Dushkin said:

... He was one of the essential builders of the Department. The establishment of the Department of Education in 1935 was a result of the demand he made when he was supervisor of the network of secondary schools of the Waad Leumi (... Dr. Joseph Luria, Director in those days joined him). They claimed that the theoretical studies which the Hebrew University provided to its students was not sufficient to insure good instruction in the secondary schools, and they required for the award of an academic instruction permit the addition of pedagogic training. In those days this demand was not so simple nor accepted and without the practical demand from the "powers" [Rieger and Luria] it is doubtful if the initiators of the Department... would have succeeded in introducing this "work" subject into the scientific sanctuary of the University.22

In addition, Rieger was instrumental in bringing the Hebrew Scout Association under the sponsorship of the Department of Education. This is an arrangement which lasts to this day, and has provided the scouts with a firm founda-

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21 See above, pp. 79-80.

tion of financial and educational support and the opportunity to maintain itself as a non-affiliated, non-political youth movement. Rieger served as the unified scout movement's first president.

In 1940 Rieger published his major educational work *Hebrew Education in Palestine*, which was a result of his thoughts, experience, and insight as a member of the Waad Leumi's Department of Education. It was in this text that Rieger carefully spelled out the concept of pioneering, which he felt should be the central aim of all of Hebrew education. Moreover, he sharply criticized the Trend system of education and encouraged its abolition. He called for the establishment of a minimal curriculum, and the elimination of all political propaganda from the schools. Realizing that a complete amalgamation of the Trend systems might be impossible he suggested the union of the Histadruth ha-Ovdim schools and the General Zionist schools within the framework of the new term he coined, "State Education." His proposals were not only sound but also prophetic for they outlined the structure Hebrew education was to take in Israel thirteen to fifteen years hence and forward.

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23 Yosef Meyuhas, taped personal interview with the author, Jerusalem, May 22, 1968.

24 Eliezer Rieger, *Hebrew Education in Palestine: Aims and Curriculum* (Tel Aviv, Dvir Publishing Co., 1940) Herein-after referred to as AC. See also HE.
In summation of the years that Rieger spent as part of the Waad Leumi Department of Education, Joseph Bentwich has said:

When Dr. Luria died at the end of 1937 Rieger was suggested as a candidate to be education director. It is said that Dr. Luria admired Rieger and wanted to appoint him while he was still alive. Opponents immediately arose... Rieger felt that he no longer had a place in the Department of Education, and in 1940 transferred to the University. In this way Rieger's career in the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi ended. Did it end in failure? Yes! It was not Rieger's failure so much as it was that of the Yishuv and its institutions. Had Rieger been selected at that time to be director when he was at the height of his physical and intellectual powers, and had he brought about then his program for the establishment of State Education, and the reforms in school organization, in curricula, in teacher training, etc. etc., which are written in his book, it is possible that we would have saved 15 years of Trend strife with all the educational havoc which it involves. There is also reason to believe that the system of education instead of being lowly and neglected, a weak link in the building of the State, would already merit a position of honor, and would attract the best of our youth to its ranks.

Therefore, we failed, but Rieger did not. Already in 1935, after his proposals struck deaf ears, he decided that creating a real example was more important than making speeches....

The "real example" which Rieger set out to create was the Hebrew Secondary School in Beth ha-Kerem. The two partners in the formation of this new school were Eliezer Rieger and Alexander Dushkin. Their purpose was to enlist the energies of the Department of Education of the Waad Leumi and the Hebrew University in the establishment of an
experimental secondary school which would serve as a training school for future teachers studying in the Hebrew University Department of Education. It was the founders' belief that a future teacher must have practical experiences in the form of observation and practice teaching under the guidance of an expert in addition to theoretical education course work. The new secondary school offered this possibility and in this way influenced a generation of new teachers in Israel by preparing them better for their pedagogic work. In addition, the Hebrew Secondary School exposed young teachers to an experimental institution in which the latest techniques were tested and different and new ideas were applied.

One of the most original and controversial ideas which was adopted as a founding principle of the school was its establishment as a six-year secondary school. It was the first school of this type in all of Palestine, and set the pattern for others to follow. Rieger was among the first and most persistent to speak out for a six-six pattern of education because he believed it coincided more realistically with the nature of the adolescent. Two decades of debate followed, but Rieger's influence and that of the Hebrew Secondary School can be seen in the fact that the education reform passed by the Knesseth in July 1968.

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finally adopted the six-six pattern of education as the basic structure of Israel education. 27

The Hebrew Secondary School under Dushkin and Rieger’s direction introduced a number of education innovations which throughout the years have been widely accepted. First, Rieger instituted new courses of study in the school in 1947 beyond the usual realistic and humanistic ones offered by most secondary schools. He conceived of literary and social-studies - humanistic courses and mathematics - physics and mathematics - biology - realistic courses. 28 In addition, he introduced civics courses about the nature of Israel society and government, and literature courses structured on thematic units. 29 The school was also the first to introduce a club program, a shiur ha-mehanekh (home room advisory period), weekly assemblies and an organized and recognized student government. 30 Dr. Dushkin has remarked that these programs hardly seem extraordinary at the present,

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28 Eliezer Rieger, letter, Jan. 6, 1947, Jerusalem, to Dr. M. Soleveitchick, personal files of Professor Ben Zion Dinur.

29 Joseph Bentwich, "Report on the Hebrew Secondary School," Archives of the State of Israel, Joseph Bentwich Files/Beth Hakerem folder, File 678. A thematic unit is a course of study in which all the material used relates to a specific theme.

30 Dushkin, "The Aims of the Founders."
but that is only because they have achieved almost universal adoption in Israel. 31

An important area of educational work for Eliezer Rieger was in the field of Hebrew language instruction. He made a pioneering contribution by composing the first Hebrew frequency word list, published in his text Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod. 32 Based on this frequency count he authored a book on the methodology of spelling instruction, Horat ha-Ketiv, 33 and a series of spelling texts for the elementary grades which was used in Israel for about two decades. Moreover, in his book Modern Hebrew 34 Rieger was the first to construct a Vocabulary of Essential Hebrew based on the format of Basic English. In addition, he pointed the way to new approaches in Hebrew language instruction by calling for functional grammar to be its basis. He composed the first list of the most common errors of usage in spoken Hebrew to serve as a basis for this functional grammar.

31 Alexander Dushkin, taped personal interviews with the author, Jerusalem, May 12 and June 13, 1968.
32 Eliezer Rieger, Otsar Milloth ha-Yesod (Jerusalem: The Hebrew Teachers Seminar, 1935).
33 Eliezer Rieger and Menahem Arnon, Horat ha-Ketiv (Tel Aviv: The Department of Education of Keneseth Yisrael, 1935).
During his years at the Hebrew University as chairman of its Department of Education Rieger waged an uphill struggle to bring about the acceptance of education as a fully accredited academic subject. Under his direction it was accepted as a secondary *hug* (subject area) in 1944 and as a major subject (*hug rashi*) in 1950. In addition, he helped to put the Department of Education on a firm financial foundation by enlisting the support of the National Council of Jewish Women to underwrite its budget. In this way he was able to accept a large grant offered by the departing Mandate Government and to establish an on-going means of financial support for education work at the University. One of Rieger's central concerns during his years at the Hebrew University was the state of Jewish education throughout the world. Indeed, he was instrumental in calling for a symposium (1943) and a world conference (1947) on this subject. The World Union of Jewish Education in the Diaspora was formed at the World Conference and Rieger was elected its president. However, because of the lack of funds the World Union could not accomplish anything besides the publication of a volume on the papers delivered at the

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37 Minutes of a Meeting of the Liberal Arts Faculty of the Hebrew University, Nov. 22, 1950, Hebrew University Archives, File 2275, Year 1950.
World Conference, the establishment of the Jerusalem Examination proposed by Dr. S.D. Goitein and the maintenance of research, instruction and lectures in matters pertaining to Jewish education in the Diaspora at the Hebrew University. Rieger's major contribution in calling for and carrying out this World Conference was that it offered Israel educators the important opportunity to meet world Jewish educators and to become aware of their problems. He awoke among Israel educators a care and concern for Diaspora Jewish educational problems and helped to demonstrate Israel's responsibility to the Diaspora. As Dr. Goitein said:

... but only at this conference did the great anglo-saxon diaspora become a reality for us, a reality which is not always pleasing, but a reality whose possibilities are unlimited.

This serious concern for Diaspora education in the State of Israel has continued to the present. The Department of Education and Culture for the Diaspora of the Jewish Agency was established a year after the World Union, and was the heir of the spirit and groundwork which the World Union had established. Most recently, the Hebrew University founded a center for Jewish education in the Diaspora which is evidence of the growth of the idea initiated at the World Con-

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38 Dushkin, Interview, see also, Yisrael Mehlman, "Jewish Education in the Diaspora in Our Times," appendix to Dr. Aharon Berman, Toldoth ha-Hinnukh (Tel Aviv: Chichick Press, 1968), p. 221.


Rieger demonstrated great foresightedness in terms of his quest for a global effort to improve Jewish education. His dream was brought to a state of realization years later when Dr. Nahum Goldman together with other Diaspora leaders organized the World Council of Jewish Education.

Throughout his entire educational career Eliezer Rieger opposed the Trend system of education and was one of the leading proponents of a unified education program. He, in fact, coined the phrase "State Education." During the last years of his life when he served as Director General of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the State of Israel he made, perhaps, his greatest contribution. Most important was the role he played in the creation of the State Education Law of 1953. As a result of this Law education was removed from political party influence and unified under the State. Schools were reorganized (combined and eliminated where necessary) and a unified curriculum was written. Also, Rieger reorganized the Ministry's administration so that the Trend inspectors became assistant Director Generals responsible for specific administrative duties rather than all of education in their particular Trends. Moreover, he organized the decentralization of administrative

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41 Dushkin, Interview.

responsibilities into six district offices. Both of these structures he initiated exist to the present. It is true that the creation of State Schools and State Religious Schools was but a compromise that still maintains some of the old problems of dividing rather than unifying the populace through education, but it was a compromise which was foreseen by Rieger as a reasonable step in the right direction.43 Rieger always cautioned that the school must be careful not to outstep the bounds of the community's desires, and the sensibilities of the religious section of the community had to be taken into account if an interminable and damaging clash over education was to be avoided. Rieger's constant demand, however, that all propaganda be eliminated from the schools was included in the State Education Law.

Joseph Bentwich has said that the entire matter of State education is to Rieger's credit. Ben-Gurion and Dinur gave the direction and guided the idea politically, but Rieger was the architect who knew how to spell out and to execute the matter. He translated the idea to actuality.44 In addition, with the State Education Law of 1953 "... he achieved his life's goal. Indeed, this Law, like any other law, is not the doing of one man, but the fruit of the efforts

43 HE., p. 92.
44 Bentwich, Interview.
of many people, each one making his own contribution. Nevertheless, it can be said that without Eliezer Rieger this Law would not have been passed, and certainly would not have been put into effect." 45

Alexander Dushkin has said that Eliezer Rieger's work was symbolized by both a microscope and a telescope. 46 He was an educator of great depth and breadth, one who dealt in the minute problems of methodology and of administering a single experimental institution and with the broad problems of world Jewish education and organizing and administering a system of education for the nation. Both of these tools are those of a scientist and of a pioneer, one who looks beyond his own world and deep within it at the same time to discover new frontiers and challenges. As a pioneer he is not frightened by what he finds but rather he is driven to discover new solutions which will answer the emerging problems. Eliezer Rieger was such a pioneer in Jewish education, and the spirit which he engendered must be considered his greatest legacy for the Jewish people.

45 JB.
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