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A study of the needs of Jewish teen-agers concerning their Jewishness and of techniques of meeting them in a Jewish Community Center

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

A STUDY OF THE NEEDS OF JEWISH TEEN-AGERS CONCERNING THEIR JEWISHNESS AND OF TECHNIQUES OF MEETING THEM IN A JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

A Thesis

Submitted By

Stanley Earl Snyder

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND VALUE OF STUDY

In social group work the group itself is utilized by the individual with the help of the worker, as a primary means of personality growth, change, and development.[1] Jewish Center workers are concerned with the healthy growth of the Jewish person by providing him with positive Jewish experiences in a group situation. These experiences can have their greatest usefulness if the group workers have insights into the needs of their clientele.[2]

The purpose of this study is to ascertain some of the emotional, educational, and social needs expressed by Jewish teen-agers concerning their Jewishness and to find out how these needs are being met in one Jewish Community Center. It seeks answers to the following questions: What needs do Jewish teen-agers have in the area of Jewish content programming? What knowledge do the youngsters have of the causes of anti-Semitism? How would they react to an anti-Semitic incident? Do they feel threatened by negative behavior on the part of a Jewish person in a group of Jews and non-Jews? Do they feel responsible to both the Jewish and the total communities in the area of communal philanthropy? What steps have been taken by the agency to help the youngsters with

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1 Harleigh-Trecker, Social Group Work, p. 9

2 Isidore, Chein and Jacob Hurwitz, The Reactions of Jewish Boys to Various Aspects of Being Jewish, p. 1

their Jewishness?

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study will attempt to show some of these needs as articulated by thirty-five boys and girls aged fourteen to seventeen. These boys and girls represent half the active teen-age membership of one Jewish Community Center. By active the writer means a boy or girl who comes to the building at least once a week.

The study was conducted at the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association Community Center of Brockton, Massachusetts in the first three months of 1951. This center has a full time staff of three, consisting of one executive director, one youth activities director, and one physical education director. There is no program director or adult activities director and these functions are performed by the executive director. There is one part-time paid worker leading two groups; he is not professionally trained in social group work. There are five volunteers none of whom have professional training. There is one second year student of the Boston University School of Social Work doing his field work at this agency.

There are four clubs whose members are in the age group studied, fourteen to seventeen. Two are affiliated with a national organization, Young Judaea, and two are not. One center club is for high school seniors, and the other center club is for high school sophomores. Both are co-ed clubs.

One Young Judaea club is for high school freshmen and sophomore boys, and the other is for high school freshmen and sophomore girls. They are both led by volunteers. The center club for sophomores is led by the field work student. Each of these clubs is represented on the center Youth Council. Professional leadership is given to the council by the youth activities director and the field work student. The council sponsors mass activities for the youth membership of the agency.

The subjects were chosen at random by the writer and include members of all four clubs. Some of the subjects were members of both the center club for sophomores and a Young Judaea club.

The study will also show how some of the teen-agers' needs are being met by this center, and will make recommendations concerning programming to meet unsatisfied needs.

METHODS OF PROCEDURE

The principal instrument used in the study was a questionnaire.[3] It consisted of thirteen questions which required the subject to make a choice and give a reason for his choice. Four of the questions were related to interest in Jewish content in their "every-day" life. The choices required were: to choose to celebrate or not to celebrate Jewish holidays in their clubs, to desire more or less Jewish symbols and observances of Jewish holidays in their homes, to discuss a Jewish or non-Jewish topic in their club, to discuss a

3 Infra, Appendix, p. 31, 32

Jewish or non-Jewish topic in public school. These items may be described as "content" items.

Four of the questions involved a choice of program interests. The choices required were: selecting their favorite Jewish holiday, of choosing subjects of interest to them connected with Jewish life or Jewish contributions to society, of choosing the type of Jewish organizations they would prefer to join and support, and their desire for or against Jewish content programming. These questions may be regarded as revealing the interests of the teen-agers. The conclusions derived at after analyzing the answers are essential in planning future programs to meet the needs of the youngsters.

Three questions dealt with reactions to anti-Semitism. The subjects were required to give reasons for what they thought were the real causes of anti-Semitism and to give their reactions during anti-Semitic outbursts. These questions may be described as showing the subject's "feelings" in regard to his minority status.

One question involved a choice between Jewish and general welfare. The subject was required to state how he would divide a given sum between a Jewish welfare organization and general welfare.

This questionnaire was followed by an individual interview. The function of the interview was aimed at securing some indications of thinking and feeling with regard to a broader coverage of topics than was feasible through the

questionnaire.

The author investigated the programming of the teen-age clubs and the agency's mass activities to determine how the needs of the teen-agers in the area of their Jewishness were being met. Club leaders, the youth activities director, and the executive director were interviewed.

LIMITATIONS

A study of this type has certain limitations. In the limited time available, the author had no means of discovering the parent-child relationships of the boy or girl being interviewed, so that the effect of this relationship on the young person's attitude toward his Jewishness could not be discerned. If the youngster had an individual problem of adjustment this might have colored his attitude toward his Jewishness.

Also the findings of this study are applicable only to the situation studied.

CHAPTER II

THE NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS IN GENERAL

Adolescence is usually the last period of dependence because after adulthood is reached society generally expects the individual to take care of himself.[1] It is a period during which the individual is unsure whether he is a child or an adult. At certain times he feels and needs to be treated like a child and at other times he feels like and needs to be treated like an adult. He has needs to be both dependent and independent and these needs may be in conflict. This imbalance is illustrated by the way he fluctuates, one minute accepting and carrying through a responsibility and the next avoiding or failing to carry the responsibility he has assumed. The need for the development of skill in the use of the hands and the body is present in adolescents. They need the anonymity of large mass activity to escape for a time the conflicts within them. They also need the individualization which the small intimate group provides as a help in facing reality.[2]

From fourteen to twenty-one the adolescent must do four things. He must decide upon a vocation and do some work in preparation for it; he must achieve an emancipation from his parents and family; he must bring about a satisfactory rela-

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1 O. English and Gerald Pearson, Emotional Problems of Living, p. 279

2 Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, Social Group Work Practice, p. 108

tionship with the opposite sex and begin to make some solution of his love life; he must accomplish an integration of his personality for mature responsibility.

It is important that adolescents of both sexes prepare to do some kind of specific work. The choice of career should be made with some consideration for the economic resources of the family. The student who deprives himself of opportunities for socialization and recreation by taking on a too ambitious educational program and a too time and energy consuming work program may so draw upon his emotional and physical resources as to make it impossible for him ever to enjoy the fruits of his sacrifice, and so leave him with a feeling of bitterness. In addition to making plans for a vocation, the adolescent girl prepares herself for marriage.

The emancipation process is at best a difficult one for both the child and his parents. In fact, some psychologists refer to it as a "war of independence" in which the parents fight to retain authority and prestige in the eyes of the child and the child fights for his liberty. Giving the adolescent various responsibilities within his capabilities can help him to emancipate for it enables him to prove to himself, to his parents, and to the community that he is able to assume these responsibilities. It also prepares him for mature functioning when he reaches adulthood.

Adolescents of both sexes need to become accustomed to each other through association in work and play in order that

they may know each other and give each other the benefit of their emotional resources. Courtship, marriage, marriage adjustment, parenthood, and responsibility in community life lie ahead of adolescents. A great deal of practice is needed to equip the individual to handle these matters, and this practice needs to be carried out during adolescence.

The adolescent needs to be helped to see the necessity for participation in the life of the community, the nation, and of the world, and thus become a part of the world in which he lives. He needs not only to be taught of himself and of his own development but to be tolerant of people individually, tolerant of their foibles, to refrain from being too critical and too aloof and to have a willingness to take part in community life. People everywhere need to get a feeling of greater willingness to help each other in order to achieve a better feeling of social unity.[3]

The adolescent, as do people of all ages, has a need for a feeling of belonging to the community, the nation, and the world. This is sometimes referred to by sociologists as the "bond" and by social group workers as the "we-feeling".[4]

During adolescence the process of identification of the child with the parent of the same sex spreads out to include his peers, his groups, his group leaders and his teachers.

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3 O. English and Gerald Pearson, op. cit., p. 278

4 Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, Social Group Work Practice, p. 44

Whereas the individual previously obtained most of his values from the family, during adolescence he takes over the values of his peers, his teachers, and his group leaders. This underscores the importance of group leaders and teachers being mature, adult persons who will be good figures of identification for adolescents.[5]

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5 O. English and Gerald Pearson, op. cit., p. 148

CHAPTER III

THE NEEDS OF JEWISH ADOLESCENTS

Jewish adolescents have the same needs as adolescents in general, but they have special needs related to their minority status.

Like his non-Jewish friends the Jewish adolescent needs to have a feeling of belonging to the general community. In addition he needs to have a feeling of belonging to the Jewish community which is a part of the general community. He has a need to relate positively to the Jewish group and to his Jewishness as a means of promoting his happiness as a Jew. Such a positive relationship to his own group will enable him to relate positively to the general society of which he and his group are a part. He will be able to exhibit what Kurt Lewin called "balanced behavior." By balanced behavior Lewin meant neither de-emphasizing nor overemphasizing one's Jewishness and the ability to live and mingle happily and confidently with both the minority (Jewish) and the majority group. Of the importance of relationship to the group Lewin wrote:

> The group to which an individual belongs is the ground on which he stands, which gives him or denies him social status, gives or denies him security and help... The firmness and clearness of this ground determines what the individual wishes to do, what he can do, and how he will do it.[1]

The minority group, like the family situation and the

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1 Kurt Lewin, Resolving Social Conflicts, p. 174

general social milieu, is part of the individual's psychological environment. The individual and his psychological environment cannot be treated as separate entities, but must be considered to be dynamically one field.

The Jew who does not attain this feeling of belonging can become what sociologists call the "marginal man", a person who is uncertain of the group to which he belongs, who is on the boundary between the minority group and the majority group, but really in neither. In his uncertainty as to which group he belongs to the marginal man is like the adolescent who is uncertain about whether he is an adult or a child. Having no spiritual or cultural home he feels alienated and alone.[2]

Jewish adolescents need to know about the cultural heritage of the Jewish people. This need is associated with the need for a sense of belongingness. The latter is a deep-seated primary need that is felt by all people for "...man is motivated by a yearning to belong to things, to man, to God, and this yearning makes him want to have possessions, both spiritual and material."[3]

Knowledge of his cultural heritage is part of the spiritual possessions of the Jew and can aid him to relate positively to the Jewish group.

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2 Kurt Lewin, ibid., p. 180

3 Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, Social Group Work Practice, p. 19

In order to make an adjustment to society in general and to live a happy life, the Jewish adolescent needs to know the causes of anti-Semitism. For if he does not know that the causes are outside of himself and are external to the Jewish group, he may react to the frustrations of anti-Semitism by indulging in self-blame, self-pity, and self-hatred. He may also react by becoming fearful of or antagonistic towards non-Jews, and he may, consequently, be unable to relate well to non-Jews. That this is an important need may be evidenced from the myriad of books, novels, pamphlets, and articles written on the subject. It might also be a need of non-Jews in a democratic country since anti-minority prejudice is a threat to democracy.[4]

What then are the causes of anti-Semitism? A listing of them is important at this time in order to see how aware of them the young people involved in this study show themselves to be and thus to see if this need has been met or if it still exists in their cases.

Anti-Semitism is only one type of anti-minority prejudice. There exists in this country prejudice against Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Italians as well as against Jews. Anti-Semitism is prejudice against Jews.

Dollard and his collaborators write in "Frustration and Aggression" that anti-Semitism is "aggression due to frustra-

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4 "An Attack on Bigotry in U. S. Folkways", Commission on Community Interrelations of the American Jewish Congress, 1947

tion that has been displaced from the actual frustrator onto the Jewish group which is used as a scapegoat."[5]

Steinberg writes, "Like other mass prejudices, anti-Semitism is a product of indoctrination."[6] It is transmitted to children in the home by parents, in the religious schools by teachers, and in the churches by clergymen. Sometimes it is taught consciously to children, in other cases it is expressed within the hearing of children and they unconsciously pick up these attitudes from their elders.

Steinberg also states that "economic adversity is a prime breeding ground for anti-Semitism."[7] Every society contains individuals who enjoy special privileges and receive extraordinary benefits from it. "In times of depression, especially, it is to their interest to divert the aggression of the people frustrated by the depression away from themselves and onto the Jews."[8]

According to Steinberg anti-Semitism is "A form of xenophobia, a dislike of the unlike, based on ignorance and giving rise to fear. It is a product of manipulation and design and can be the result of a tactic calculatingly adopted and executed by demogogues to further their own ends."[9]

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5 John Dollard et al., Frustration and Aggression, p. 152

6 Milton Steinberg, A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem, p. 45

7 Milton Steinberg, ibid., p. 49

8 Milton Steinberg, ibid., p. 50

9 Milton Steinberg, ibid., p. 55

Lewin points out that anti-Semitism is affected very little one way or the other by either good or bad behavior on the part of Jews. He writes:

> There is nothing more erroneous than the belief of many Jews that there would be no anti-Semitism if only every Jew behaved properly...Anti-Semitism cannot be stopped by the good behavior of the individual Jew, because it is not an individual, but a social problem.[10]

The Jewish adolescent has a need to understand the relationship of his minority group to the total community. Such an understanding will enable him to relate to both communities and to be clear about his responsibilities to them.[11] This is related to the general adolescent need to be helped to participate in the life of the community.[12]

Because of the adolescent tendency to identify with group leaders, the Jewish adolescent can be helped to relate positively to his Jewishness by being exposed to a teacher or a group leader, who has a positive attitude towards his own Jewishness.[13]

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10 Kurt Lewin, Resolving Social Conflict, p. 162

11 Kurt Lewin, op. cit., p. 147

12 O. English and Gerald Pearson, Emotional Problems of Living, p. 278

13 Kurt Lewin, op. cit., p. 178

CHAPTER IV

THE FUNCTION OF THE JEWISH CENTER

The Jewish Community Center is an institution developed and maintained by American Jews for the satisfaction of certain needs which they experience as Jews. These needs include informal education, health, recreation, and leisure-time activity, and are spiritual, cultural and social in nature. Some of the needs stem from the fact that the Jews constitute an ancestral, cultural and religious group. Others stem from the minority status of the Jewish group.[1]

Consequently, Jewish content programming has a primary and fundamental role in the Center. It is the reason for which the Center exists. The term "Jewish content" embraces the totality of Jewish spiritual-cultural interests and needs.[2]

The Jewish Center is an agency for Jewish identification on a level that is relatively free from idealogical, factional, and social barriers within the Jewish community. At the same time, the Center's program provides a richer base for identification than a mere biological one.

The Jewish Center is an agency of Jewish integration which can contribute to the development of "sense of community" among the diverse elements in the local Jewish community.

The Jewish Center is an agency of personality development. It seeks to promote the growth, happiness and self-expression of the individual. It is concerned with the happi-

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1 Oscar Janowsky, The JWB Survey, p. 268
2 Oscar Janowsky, ibid., p. 273

ness of the individual, and primarily with his happiness as a Jew. It attempts to give free reign to the creative drives of the individual. The group work process is the principal method used to reach these goals. It aims to assist the individual to attain a feeling of belongingness to the Jewish community and through it to the total community. It is the job of the social group worker in the Jewish Center to help meet this need by guiding its membership to its Jewish orientation.[3]

The Jewish Center aims to serve as an influence in integrating the individual Jew and the Jewish group into the total community. By emphasizing Jewish content it prepares its clientele for intelligent participation in intercultural activities. For intercultural cooperation is meaningless for the Jew unless he understands and appreciates his specialized culture and its proper place in the total American scene.[4]

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3 Oscar Janowsky, ibid., p. 281

4 Oscar Janowsky, ibid., p. 284

CHAPTER V

THE NEEDS EXPRESSED BY THE TEEN-AGERS AND WAYS THEY ARE MET IN THE CENTER

An analysis of the answers given by the young people shows that both needs and interests were articulated. Before proceeding with such an analysis clarity might be increased by defining what is meant by such terms as "need" and "interest." Harleigh Trecker does so in "Social Group Work."

> An interest is a tendency to concentrate attention on an object, an idea, an activity, or a situation. Interests are expressed verbally or overtly and frequently near the surface of our consciousness.
> Need in a psychological sense refers to something we desire in the way of a personality characteristic, human experience or relationship with our fellows.[1]

An interest, then, is something of which one is aware and can, therefore, articulate. On the other hand, a need may be either conscious or unconscious. One might be aware of some of his needs and unaware of others.

A Jewish youth might express an interest in Zionism; he might be aware of a need to know more about his people; he might not be aware of a need to feel a sense of belonging to his group.

Interests and needs may be very close and thus easy to translate the one into the other. An interest in the Hebrew language might reveal a need to identify with the Jewish group. An interest in fighting anti-Semitism might represent a need for acceptance by the Jewish group since this group is carrying on such a fight. It might also indicate a need for

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1 Harleigh Trecker, Social Group Work, p. 113

acceptance by the majority group which is denied or made incomplete by the existence of anti-Semitism.

NEED TO BELONG

Thirty-two subjects say they favor having their club celebrate Jewish holidays. Most of the reasons (71 per cent) given for affirmative answers fall into two categories which are (1) appropriateness, and (2) a desire to spread knowledge of Jewish customs.

Some of the reasons based on the appropriateness of a club celebrating Jewish holidays follow:

> In Young Judaea that is one of our ideals.
>
> Young Judaea is a Jewish club with Jewish kids.
>
> As Jews we should participate in our own customs.
>
> It is a purpose of Jewish organizations.
>
> The club consists of Jewish members.

The answers indicate that the youngsters recognize their Jewishness and feel the need to relate to it and thus attain a feeling of belongingness. When an individual joins a group, one of the values he wants to get from the experience is this feeling of belongingness.[2] These youngsters evidence this need not only in relation to their club but also in relation to their minority group.

Some of the answers in the second category are quoted below:

> To give a better understanding to Jewish youth of customs and traditions of holidays

2 Grace Coyle, Group Work With American Youth, p. 85

> The members would become more familiar with the holidays
>
> It would help us to understand Jewish tradition and what kind of a religion we have
>
> If we celebrate these holidays together it would leave a good impression on our minds
>
> To know the importance of Jewish customs that have been brought to us during the many thousands of years of our race
>
> Because it means something - you know you are Jewish

Answers such as these indicate a need to know about one's group and through it to know about oneself as a member of the group.

Other evidence of the need to belong may be gleaned from the questions dealing with discussion of Jewish topics in the subject's club at the Jewish center and also in the subject's class at public school. In both cases the great majority of subjects say they would like to discuss Jewish topics. The actual score was 90 per cent in the club setting and 80 per cent in the class setting. Some of the reasons given by those who favor discussing a Jewish topic in their club follow:

> I'm a Jew and I like to learn as much about my people as I can
>
> It is good to find out about the Jews as well as knowing other things
>
> To acquaint us with our own kind
>
> To bring into the meeting a sense of realism of what life in Israel is like in both past and present

I think every good Jew should know something about his ancestors, life in Israel, etc.

Some of the reasons for affirmative answers to the question of discussing a Jewish topic in a public school class also reveal the deep-seated need for acceptance by the Jewish group.

We and others should be informed about Jewish topics

Because I'm not ashamed of being a Jew

It gives the Jew a feeling of pride

As mentioned above, a deep-seated need to belong to the general group as well as the minority group is revealed by these young people. Running through many of the questionnaires and brought out later in interviews is a general pattern of a desire to interpret the Jewish minority group to the general majority group.

Most Gentiles are misled by parents and other sources and should be told the facts

I think it would help eliminate the bit of prejudice there still exists

There are so many boys and girls who are against our religion - I think some Jewish topics might make them more broadminded and closer to us as friends

To acquaint non-Jews with us

Jewish things should not be confined to just our people, but our problems should be explained to people of other nationalities

To show non-Jews what goes on in the life of a Jewish person all over the world

So we can show our non-Jewish friends a few things about us that might change their minds about us

The subject's need to belong is demonstrated also by the answers to the interest finder questions. Twenty-one youngsters (60 per cent) express an interest in Israel and Zionism. This may reflect the need of the Jewish-American to identify with the Jewish state, to have a homeland, to have the moral support of a friendly country of origin even as does the Italian-American and the Irish-American. Twenty-three subjects (65 per cent) state that they are interested in fighting anti-Semitism.

Nineteen teen-agers (55 per cent) say that they would like to know more about great men who are Jewish. They feel that the status enjoyed by these men may reflect beneficially upon them as members of the same minority group and may aid them in gaining acceptance from members of the majority group.

Closely related to the need to belong to the general group is the need to feel secure in the general community. The teen-agers were asked if they feel threatened when a Jew is loud and boisterous in the presence of non-Jews and Jews including themselves. A secure person will not feel threatened in such a situation for he will know that he is not boisterous and therefore cannot be justly censured.

A person who does not feel secure in the general community will be threatened by this situation because he will feel that the members of the majority group will connect him with the boisterous one.

Fourteen of the subjects (40 per cent) say that they do

feel threatened when they find themselves in this situation. Some of their reasons follow:

> Some people judge all of us by the action of one
>
> It makes a bad impression in the minds of the non-Jews. They would set the (boisterous) Jew as an example of most other Jews
>
> Other people can only notice the bad in our religion if they want
>
> It gives a poor impression to others, and since we have a bad name now, why make it worse
>
> I do feel threatened but I shouldn't - if a non-Jew is loud the other Gentiles don't feel threatened in the presence of Jews
>
> I have the feeling that everyone is saying "those Jews are a noisy bunch"

Twenty-one subjects (60 per cent) say that they do not feel threatened in this set of circumstances. However, three of these state that they do feel "embarrassed" but"not threatened". Some of the reasons for not feeling threatened follow:

> I feel slightly embarrassed but there are non-Jewish boys and girls who are just as boisterous, so I pass it off
>
> There are all kinds of people of all kinds of faiths
>
> If he is told to be quiet and doesn't, it's his own fault if he makes a fool of himself
>
> Non-Jews have the same qualities
>
> At our age I don't think it really matters because almost all of us are quite noisy
>
> If a person is loud or boisterous he is making a fool of himself, not of his race or nationality
>
> We are all individuals - we can't be responsible for someone else's actions

NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING OF CAUSES OF ANTI-SEMITISM

None of the youngsters show themselves to be cognisant of the important causes of anti-Semitism although they are aware of some of its origins. They view the problem on a more superficial level. Perhaps, this is due to their youth and lack of experience, but more likely it is due to a lack of education in this area. This would seem to be a need that has not been met effectively. Many of the teen-agers feel that anti-Jewish prejudice is caused by a lack of knowledge of Jews on the part of non-Jews. "If they only knew more about us, they would not have this anti-Jewish feeling." This is a good description of the opinion expressed by many subjects.

> People are not informed as to our social customs and affairs - ignorance breeds hate
>
> The people haven't got a clear view of the Jewish people
>
> Other people don't know what a Jew is and are afraid to learn
>
> Not knowing enough about Jews

Some of the teen-agers feel that anti-Semitism is caused by jealousy of Jews on the part of non-Jews.

> Jealousy and pure ignorance is the root of all discrimination
>
> Jealousy because Jews are so much better off (in a sense) than non-Jews - they go to college and are mostly well off financially in this city
>
> Anti-Semites are probably unconsciously jealous of a Jew because they think he has money
>
> The other races are a bit jealous of us because so many famous people are Jewish

It is interesting to note that these Jewish youngsters have picked up the stereotyped idea that all Jews are rich. This idea is one of the falsehoods spread by anti-Semites and yet it apparently is believed by some of these teen-agers. One reason for it may be that they live in a small city where many of the Jews, although not all, are in the middle and upper-middle income brackets.

It is also interesting, although not significant, that one person based the jealousy on the number of famous Jews rather than on the alleged financial standing of Jews.

Some of the subjects say that religious differences or non-Jewish religious teachers cause anti-Jewish prejudice.

> The non-Jewish people are made to feel that their religion is tops
>
> An improper knowledge of the fundamentals that make up religion - people fail to realize that we are all made by the same creator
>
> RELIGION! All through the ages religious differences have separated people and given a few people tremendous power and control over people - these people that have the power use it to teach people to hate Jews or other sects, therefore, I am against religion

It is interesting to note that many of the youngsters relate the question, "What do you think are the real causes of anti-Semitism" to their own age group and give what they think are the reasons for anti-Semitic attitudes held by teen-age non-Jews. They feel that the latter are prejudiced because they were taught to be either by their parents or their clergymen.

> The belief among many Christian people that Jesus was killed by the Jews - it is a matter of "following the herd" - many people don't know why they are prejudiced, but they have listened to their mothers and fathers, etc.
>
> Christian parents cause it - they don't teach the correct teachings to their children
>
> Intolerant non-Jewish boys and girls because they come from families that are not tolerant
>
> I think people are very narrow-minded - when non-Jewish children are being brought up as good citizens by the schools, many of their minds are changed towards our religion because of their elders and their church

Only one subject feels that Jews play a part in causing the prejudice against themselves. "Making an issue of unimportant subjects such as little cracks."

All of the subjects say that they have experienced anti-Semitism in one form or another. When asked how they feel a hypothetical personal anti-Semitic incident should be handled, thirty-three subjects say that they think it should be ignored. Some of their answers follow:

> Although a great many people on the bus would be disturbed, I don't think anything should be done about it there and then - if the man was ignorant enough to make the remark he would be too ignorant to listen to anything that one could say
>
> You should let it pass because if an issue is made of it, you will probably hear twice as many remarks
>
> Of course it would be very embarrassing and to tell you the truth I wouldn't know what to do because anyone as ignorant as that certainly wouldn't take correction
>
> Ignored - causing trouble certainly would not change the opinion of the person who made the remark - however, if I spent enough time with

this person I would try to make him realize the contribution of the Jew to society

I think it should be ignored by all - if the person who made the remark sees that everyone is ignoring it, perhaps he'll feel ashamed

Everyone has the right to say what he wants and I would just leave them

Two of the teen-agers say that they would attempt to reason with the person who made the prejudiced remark in an attempt to change his opinion of Jews.

Ask him his reason for his remark and try to prove to him he is wrong

If he made it to me or my friends, I think I would want to know why and set him straight - if he made it to someone else, I don't think I should butt in

All of the teen-agers focus on the person making the remark and none of them show an awareness of the necessity for counteracting the effects of his words upon the other people on the bus. They would ignore him or in a few cases reason with him, but none of them seem concerned with those who overhear him.

In addition, the teen-agers are obviously insecure when confronted with such an incident. This is to be expected since they have never received adequate preparation for meeting one. To meet this need of its membership is a real challenge for the Jewish Center movement.

NEED TO UNDERSTAND RELATIONSHIP OF MINORITY GROUP TO GENERAL COMMUNITY

In order to relate both to his own group and to the gen-

eral society a member of a minority needs to have an understanding of the relationship between his group and the majority group.[3] In the case of the Jewish person, he needs to be clear about his responsibilities to both the Jewish and the general communities. An example is his responsibility to contribute to communal funds like the United Jewish Appeal and the Community Chest.

Twenty-one (60 per cent) of the teen-agers say they would divide five dollars evenly between a Jewish cause, like the United Jewish Appeal, and a cause not specifically Jewish, like the Community Chest.

> Although I am Jewish I am an American and believe in one as much as in the other
>
> I believe each is equally important
>
> Each cause has a specific reason and each reason I think is just as important
>
> Jewish organizations aren't the only ones that need aid - the Center is receiving money from the Community Chest
>
> They both help good causes
>
> Both are used for the betterment of people
>
> If I give an equal amount to a non-Jewish cause and they know I was Jewish I should think it would make them feel very low if they were anti-Semites
>
> I am Jewish and, therefore, want to help my people, but I am also an American and want to help others, too.

Seven (20 per cent) of the teen-agers say they would give three dollars to the Jewish cause and two dollars to

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3 Kurt Lewin, op. cit., p. 147

the general cause.

Charity begins at home

Help our own cause more

Helping the Jewish Appeal is more important than Community Chest

Of the remaining subjects, five would give four to five dollars to the United Jewish Appeal because "Christians don't give to Jewish causes", while two would give three dollars to the Community Chest because "Jewish agencies benefit from the Chest."

TECHNIQUES OF MEETING THESE NEEDS IN ONE JEWISH CENTER

Certain techniques and program media are being used in the Center of which the teen-agers studied are members. These methods are employed to meet the needs of the youngsters concerning their Jewishness.

For the sake of clarity it might be well to discuss first the means used to aid identification with the Jewish community.

One method is the use of Jewish names for the clubs. The term "Jewish" here includes Hebrew and Yiddish language, English terms referring to the Jewish people, like Judaean or Israeli, and prominent men of past and present like Theodore Herzl or Chaim Weizmann. Three of the clubs have Jewish names; the one that does not traditionally takes the year of graduation from high school as its name. This year it is called Club '51; last year it was Club '50, etc. The names were selected by the members of the clubs with the exception of Club '51.

Another means is the discussion of Jewish topics in the clubs. One of them had two such discussions, one of which stimulated similar discussion in another club, because a girl who belonged to both gave a report of the discussion at the meeting of the second group. This second group has held a few discussions of Jewish topics, a third has mentioned Jewish matters briefly at most meetings but has held no intense discussions. The fourth club has held no such discussions.

Still another method is celebrating Jewish holidays in the agency. One club held a Latke party to celebrate Chanmukah. Members of two other clubs attended.

Another technique is the inclusion of Hebrew songs and dances in the program of three clubs.

In addition to the club activities the agency also has mass activities which can help to meet the need under discussion. To celebrate the holiday of Purim a carnival is held under the sponsorship of the Youth Council. This is a money-raising affair and a portion of the proceeds goes to the Bet Hanoar, the House of Youth, in Jerusalem which is known in this country as the Jerusalem 'Y'. The decision to make this allocation was taken by the Youth Council after a thorough discussion.

As a means of observing Jewish Music Month a performance of Hebrew songs and dances was given by a group of teen-agers. Also involved were younger children and adults. As a result of this event, the teen-agers involved decided to form a folk

dance group and they gave it a Hebrew name, Noarim, meaning Youth.

A last item of evidence which may have an indirect effect in promoting a sense of belonging in the young people is the fact that the agency closes on the Jewish sabbath and on all Jewish holidays for which such action is appropriate.

Indirect steps are taken which help to meet the need of the youngsters for a feeling of belonging to the general community. By helping to relate them to the Jewish community, the agency aids in establishing a firm, clear social ground upon which they can stand. Clearness about and confidence in the firmness of their "social ground" helps them to attain a positive relationship with the general community.[4]

The fact that the agency closes on all civic holidays may have an influence in furthering the accomplishment of such a relationship.

No inter-faith activities were carried on by teen-agers at this agency.

It must be recognized, however, that since attaining a complete sense of belonging to the general community implies a feeling of acceptance by the majority group, the need under discussion must be met to some extent by agencies of and individuals in the majority group.

How is the need to know the real causes of anti-Semitism being met in this agency? Discussions around this problem

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4 Kurt Lewin, op. cit., p. 174

and around anti-minority prejudice in general are held very infrequently by the clubs. Often such a discussion will be held only after it has been provoked by an incident of which the members are aware. One club discussed this matter after just such a stimulus, but none of the other clubs have attempted to deal with the issue.

None of the clubs are programming in the area of giving money to communal funds like the United Jewish Appeal and the Community Chest. However, the Young Judaea clubs raise money which they send to Israel through the national organization.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This survey has studied the needs of thirty-five adolescents between the ages of fourteen and seventeen who are members of a Jewish Community Center. It has focused on their needs concerning their Jewishness. The survey has also studied the ways in which these needs are being met in the Jewish Center to which the adolescents belong. It has sought to answer to the following questions. What needs do Jewish teen-agers have in the area of Jewish content programming? What knowledge do the youngsters have of the causes of anti-Semitism? How would they react to an anti-Semitic incident? Do they feel threatened by negative behavior on the part of a Jewish person in a group of Jews and non-Jews? Do they feel responsible to both the Jewish and the total communities in the area of communal philanthropy? What steps have been taken by the agency to help the youngsters with their Jewishness?

NEEDS IN THE AREA OF JEWISH CONTENT PROGRAMMING

The principal method by which the Jewish Center meets the needs of teen-agers concerning their Jewishness is the use of Jewish content programming. This type of programming takes many forms some of which are celebration of Jewish holidays, discussion of topics of interest to Jews, dancing Jewish dances, singing Hebrew and Yiddish songs, and raising money for agencies of the Jewish communities in Israel,

America, and throughout the world. Such programming is designed to provide the youngsters with positive Jewish experiences so that they will be helped to relate positively to their Jewishness.

The youngsters were questioned about various aspects of Jewish content programming. Seventy-one percent of the teenagers state that they would like to celebrate Jewish holidays at their club meetings. Ninety percent say they would like to discuss Jewish topics at club meetings. Sixty percent of the youngsters indicate an interest in Israel, and Zionism, sixty-five percent in fighting anti-Semitism, and fifty-five percent in learning about important Jewish personalities.

These figures would indicate that the youngsters feel a need for Jewish programming and are interested in it. The figures also point out the need of the youngsters to feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish group. Through a feeling of belonging they can relate positively to their Jewishness and feel secure as a Jew and as a person in both the Jewish and the total communities. Such an inner security allows them to exhibit the "balanced behavior" of which Lewin wrote and enables them to "live happily and mingle confidently with both Jewish and non-Jewish groups."[1]

KNOWLEDGE OF CAUSES OF ANTI-SEMITISM

The teen-agers list as causes of anti-Semitism lack of knowledge, jealousy, religious differences, and the teachings

1 Kurt Lewin, Resolving Social Conflicts, p. 170

of parents, religious teachers and the clergy.

The youngsters are aware that anti-Semitism is, as Steinberg says, "a product of indoctrination", and that it is taught to children in the home, in the religious school, and in the church."[2] The teen-agers exhibit no knowledge of anti-Semitism being what Dollard and his collaborators call "displacement of aggression in response to frustration from the actual frustration to a scapegoat group."[3]

Only one youngster mentions the behavior of Jews as being a cause of anti-Semitism so that ninety-seven percent of the subjects appear to be aware of the fact the behavior of Jews does not influence anti-Semitism very much one way or the other. As Lewin puts it, "History amply shows that 'good behavior' on the part of the Jew is by no means an insurance against anti-Semitism."[4]

It is important that Jewish youngsters (and Jews of all ages as well) know that anti-Jewish prejudice is not caused by Jews because if they do not know this, they may feel that Jews are inferior people or that they are somehow to blame for the prejudice. This latter type of thinking might lead to self-hatred or to being fearful of or antagonistic to non-Jews. On the other hand, since the real causes of anti-

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2 Milton Steinberg, A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem, p. 45

3 John Dollard et al., Frustration and Aggression, p. 152

4 Kurt Lewin, op. cit., p. 182

Semitism are external to the Jewish group, a knowledge of them will help the Jewish youngster to relate positively to his Jewishness and to society in general.

Since the youngsters apparantly know only a few of the causes of anti-Semitism, the writer recommends that the causes of anti-Semitism be taught to these teen-agers either in their clubs or in their religious schools.

REACTIONS TO AN ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENT

When asked how they would react to a hypothetical anti-Semitic incident on a bus, ninety-four percent of the teen-agers say that they would ignore the person making the prejudiced remarks. They feel that a person who would make a prejudiced remark in a public place is "ignorant" and would be "too ignorant to listen" to any attempt to reason with him. Some of the youngsters feel that making an issue of the remarks would only cause the person to make more of them. Others feel that ignoring the person making anti-Semitic remarks may cause that person to "feel ashamed". The teen-agers focused on the person making the prejudiced remark and seem to be aware of the fact that such a person is probably too prejudiced to be changed by a brief discussion.

Members of minority groups experience prejudice against their minority many times during their lifetimes. Every one of the teen-agers say that he has encountered anti-Semitism in one form or another. The answers of the teen-agers are

probably based, in part at least, on their own experiences with prejudice.

Since these youngsters have never received any formal preparation for meeting an anti-Semitic incident, the writer recommends such preparation be given. The technique of socio-drama might be utilized in this preparation.

FEELINGS CONCERNING NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR BY JEWS

The youngsters were asked if they feel threatened when a Jew is loud and boisterous in the presence of non-Jews and Jews. Sixty percent of the subjects say they do not feel threatened in such a situation. The reasons given indicate that they feel such behavior is "an individual matter" and that there are "all kinds of people in all kinds of faiths and nationalities."

The teen-agers who do not feel threatened in the situation described give an indication of a greater feeling of security and self-confidence concerning their Jewishness than those who do feel threatened. The latter feel that the boisterous person is setting a "bad example" and that non-Jews will consider all Jews to be like him. They fear that non-Jews think of them as boisterous and, therefore, they feel threatened by clamorous behavior on the part of another Jew.

Those who do not feel threatened are closer to the feeling of security which is necessary to enable them to mingle in both the Jewish and the general communities. This security

allows the Jewish teen-ager to feel sufficiently accepted by the general community, to have ambitions about his future and to work to attain his ambitions. Without this feeling of acceptance the teen-ager might not work towards his goals and might rationalize that he does not have a chance in our society, or else he might attempt to assimilate into the majority group and become what sociologists call a "marginal man" uncertain of whether he belongs to the minority or the majority group.

COMMUNAL PHILANTHROPY

English and Pearson state, "The adolescent needs to be helped to see the necessity for participation in the life of the community, of the nation, and of the world, and thus become a part of the world in which he lives."[5] The Jewish adolescent has to be helped to see the necessity for participation in the life of the Jewish community in addition to the above. He needs to be clear about his responsibilities to both the Jewish and the general communities.

Communal philanthropy is part of the Jewish teen-agers responsibilities to both communities. The subjects were asked how they would divide five dollars between a Jewish cause and a general cause. Sixty percent of them say that they would give equal amounts to both causes because "they are equally important". Fourteen percent of the subjects

5 O. English and Gerald Pearson, Emotional Problems of Living, p. 278

say that they would give four dollars or more to the Jewish philanthropy because they feel that it must appeal to a smaller number of contributors.

The writer recommends that these youngsters be helped to see their responsibilities to both the Jewish and the total community. This can be done by motivating clubs to carry on fund raising projects on behalf of both communities.

AGENCY STEPS TO HELP THE YOUNGSTERS WITH THEIR JEWISHNESS

The agency provides programming on both the club and the mass activity levels. Techniques used are discussion, Hebrew singing and dancing, parties celebrating Jewish holidays, a carnival which celebrates a Jewish holiday and raises money for a youth center in Jerusalem, and a mass activity in commemoration of Jewish Music Month. Three of the four teen-ager clubs have Jewish names and the fourth club uses a traditional name. The agency is closed on the Jewish Sabbath and on Jewish holidays.

This programming aims to give the youngsters a feeling, a belonging, of acceptance, and of being wanted by the Jewish community. The project of raising money for the youth center helps the teen-agers to see their responsibility to the Jewish community.

The club that has the greatest amount of Jewish content programming is led by the field work student. He has a positive attitude towards his Jewishness and brings to the agency a good background of Jewish cultural knowledge and a

deep interest in Jewish as well as general affairs. This may be an indication of the role that identification plays in social group work. The youngsters in this club identified with the leader and expressed an interest in Jewish programming. The fact that fifty-five percent of the subjects expressed an interest in learning about important Jewish personalities may be additional evidence of the spread of their identifications from their parents to the Jewish figures of importance.

Because of the role that identification plays in group work, the writer recommends that group leaders in Jewish Centers be persons who take a mature, positive attitude toward their Jewishness. The youngsters would then be exposed to a good figure for identification and would be helped to arrive at a positive relationship to their Jewishness.

Approved:
Richard K. Conant
Richard K. Conant
Dean

APPENDIX "A"

SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS

1. Do you think your club should celebrate Jewish holidays?

   Yes_____ No_____

   Why?

2. Which Jewish holiday do you like best?_____

   Why?

3. Would you like to see more Jewish symbols and more observing of Jewish holidays in your home? Yes____ No____

   Why?

4. When your club has a discussion, do you like to discuss a Jewish topic? Yes_____ No_____

   Why?

5. In a public school class, would you like to discuss a Jewish topic? Yes_____ No_____

   Why?

6. The following are subjects of interest to some Jews. Check the ones that interest you enough so that you would want to join an organization or learn more about them in a club or a class.

Israel and Zionism	Jewish History
Jewish Religion	Hebrew Language
Fighting Anti-Semitism	Yiddish Language
Jewish Literature	Jewish Sports Heroes
Jewish Music	Great Men Who Are Jewish
Jewish Art	Other Subjects (name them)

   Why?

7. Following are some types of organizations in the Jewish community. Check the ones you would prefer to join and support.

Zionist (Helping Israel)
Religious (Synagogue and Temple)
Defense (Fighting Anti-Semitism)
Recreational ('Y' Center)
Educational (Hebrew school, Sunday school)
Welfare (Helping poor Jews and new Americans)
Fund Raising (United Jewish Appeal)
Social (Club or fraternity)
Other _____ _____

_____ _____

Why?

8. What do you think are the real causes of anti-Semitism and why?

9. Suppose you were on a bus with a group of your friends and some man made an anti-Semitic remark loud enough for everyone on the bus to hear. How do you feel that this remark should be handled?

Why?

10. Do you feel threatened when a Jew is loud and boisterous in the presence of non-Jews and Jews including yourself?

Yes_____ No_____

Why?

11. How would you divide five dollars between a Jewish cause (such as the United Jewish Appeal) and a cause that is not specifically Jewish (such as the Community Chest)?

Why?

12. How do you feel about Jewish programming (such as Israeli dancing and Zionist movies) in a 'Y' Center?

Why?

13. What does being Jewish mean to you?

    Why?

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