

Palestine in American Jewish Education in the Pre-State Period*

by Barry Chazan

Introduction

The subject of the place of Palestine and Zionism in the pre-1948 American Jewish community has received much attention in recent American Jewish history.¹ Surprisingly, however, research on this subject has usually neglected the Jewish educational context. The neglect of this domain is unfortunate, for there is, in fact, a significant body of primary resources related to the place of Palestine and Zionism in American Jewish education, which would seem to comprise a promising resource for elucidating both educational and general aspects of the relationship between Palestine and American Jewry in the first half of the twentieth century.

The concern in this article is to examine the role of Palestine and Zionism in pre-1948 American Jewish education. First, the predominant ideological stances toward Palestine and Zionism as reflected in curricula and courses of study will be analyzed. Second, the patterns of adjustment of these various curricular stances will be examined in order to determine the emergent mainstream theory and practice of teaching Palestine and Israel in the Jewish school. In both instances the emphasis is on the dynamics of processes in American Jewish education in the context of the broader Jewish and non-Jewish social and educational milieu. In contrast to most of the existing discussions of the role of Israel in American Jewish education, the concern here is analytic and explicative, rather than inspirational, or programmatic.²

Structurally, this analysis has three parts: 1) a categorization of attitudes and approaches to the teaching of Palestine and Zionism in pre-State American Jewish education relevant to five modal curricular stances 2) the delineation of five dynamics and patterns of adjustment which occurred in the period from the 1920s to 1948 vis-à-vis these curricular stances 3) a description of the legacy which pre-1948 American Jewish education bequeathed to the 1950s and 1960s concerning the teaching of Israel.

Curriculum as an Historical Resource

Select curricula and courses of study from early to middle twentieth cen-

ture American Jewish schools constitute an important resource for this analysis; hence a brief explanation of and apology for the importance of curriculum to educational history is in order.

A curriculum usually serves two functions. First, it is an ideological statement about values, beliefs, and behaviors which are regarded as "good," and hence, worthy of transmission to the young. A Jewish school curriculum, then, is a statement by a rabbi, principal, parents, or a national organization regarding the quintessential elements of Judaism; it is a statement about what the desired products of the Jewish school ought to be. Second, a curriculum is a practical educational blueprint whose function is to guide the daily operation of a school. In this case, a curriculum tells the teacher what subjects to teach, what issues to emphasize, which books to use, what methods to employ. Thus, a curriculum is both a reflection of ideas and values, as well as of actual realities, resources, and practices which already exist in the field.

The analysis of curricula and courses of study (here understood in the broad sense as encompassing both formal and informal educational frameworks) of American Jewish schools is important to this investigation for two reasons. First, these documents will reveal conceptions of Palestine and Zionism which were regarded as desirable and worthy of transmission by twentieth century American Jewish educational and communal circles. Second, these curricula will also reflect many of the norms and practices vis-à-vis this issue which existed at the time. Together they comprise important resources for the understanding of the particular educational and social dynamics in question.

The various positions toward Palestine and Zionism reflected in pre-1948 curricula fall into five categories: the traditional-religious; the liberal-religious; the conservative-religious; the culturalist-pluralist; and the Zionist.

The Traditional-Religious

In 1918-19, the Mizrachi Teachers Institute issued a course of study for high school students preparing for the teaching profession (the model was the now-defunct normal school approach to teacher training).³ This curriculum reflects the synthesis of religious and pro-Zionist beliefs which came to characterize Mizrachi:

[our] schools shall educate their pupils in the spirit of our Torah, impart the knowledge of the Hebrew language, and instill in them love for the Jewish nation and its historic ideals [p. 3].

Other parts of the curriculum urge the teaching of: "Jewish national ideals;" "religio-national spirit"; and "Jewish nationalism." The language of instruction in the school is to be Hebrew.

The study of Palestine and Zionism appears in the curriculum within the context of Jewish history, which is subdivided into five units corresponding to the five grades of the school (the subject is called "Erets Yisrael," rather than Palestine in this curriculum). In the fifth grade of the school the subject is given special prominence within the context of a history sub-unit on "Nationalism and Zionism." In its treatment of the subject, the Mizrachi curriculum emphasizes national, historical, and religious themes, and de-emphasizes humanitarian, socialist, or philanthropic dimensions of Palestine and Zionism.

In 1942, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America published *A Model Program for the Talmud Torah* by Leo Jung and Joseph Kaminsky.⁴ This document (intended to be a course of study for a five-day-a-week, 2 hours a day, Jewish supplementary school, whose language of instruction is Hebrew) makes the following general statement about the teaching of Erets Yisrael:

Eretz Yisrael, Zion, and Jerusalem are brought to the fore in the curriculum. They are means of binding us to our past; they express the hope of the future. Pictures of the holy places and of the new life and progress in the rebuilding of the Land, together with excerpts from the old and new literature stressing the duty of every Jew to participate in the rebuilding of Eretz Yisrael and expressing the hope of the redemption of Zion should be brought to the attention of the pupils [pp. 30-31].

The curriculum calls for the integration of the teaching of Erets Yisrael into several curricular areas: history, language, laws and customs, songs. The curriculum urges an emphasis on Israel in the teaching of Hebrew since Hebrew is "the language of the Holy Scripture and of Eretz Yisrael. It is the language of Jews throughout the world" (p. 31). The teaching of history should emphasize the constant love, remembrance, and hope for Zion which has permeated Jewish life. *Mitzvot* and religious concepts related to Erets Yisrael, such as "ge'ulat Erets Yisrael" should be highlighted. The teaching of holidays should include descriptions of the contemporary observances of Jewish holidays in Jerusalem. Music classes should include classical and modern songs related to Erets Yisrael. This curriculum clearly emphasizes Erets Yisrael and conceives of it as an integrated aspect of religious Judaism, thereby implying a pedagogy which injects Israel into the context of almost every subject of the school.

In the same year, Frishberg's *General Curriculum* for a five-day-a-week elementary Talmud Torah appeared, and in 1946 a revised edition of this curriculum was published, with an added section on "Zionism in the Past and Present."⁵ (The curriculum is written in Hebrew and is for a school in which the teaching is in Hebrew.) Here, too, the teaching of Erets Yisrael is not herein proposed as a separate subject, but rather within the context of the other sub-

jects of the curriculum. Among the topics to be dealt with in the teaching of Erets Yisrael are: heroes (Kalischer, R. Samuel Mohliver, Rothschild), events (the first Zionist Congress), places (the first settlements in the new *Yishuv*). Several texts on Erets Yisrael are proposed as instructional resources, including Ben Yehuda's *The History of Zionism*.⁶

In 1946, the Religious Education Committee of Mizrachi began to publish "Gilyonenu," a newsletter devoted to problems of Hebrew religious national education in America. This journal dealt with ideological and practical issues facing the Orthodox religious-national educator at that time. The various issues of the journal reflect the central concern of this branch of Orthodox Jewish education with Erets Yisrael and Zionism, for example: Dr. Levi Bialik's complaints vis-à-vis students' ignorance of historical and contemporary sites in Erets Yisrael⁷ or Pinchas Churgin's contention that the teaching of contemporary Israel should be effected within the context of its roots in the Bible and Jewish religion.⁸

This stance (which was not, of course, the only curricular position toward Erets Yisrael assumed in Orthodox schools)⁹ is unequivocal. Erets Yisrael is regarded as an inherently Jewish religious concept which is inseparable from Jewish Tradition. The modern Zionist movement is important as a continuation of the Jewish link with Erets Yisrael, and as a means for the restoration and, ultimately, redemption of the Holy Land. Moreover, the new cultural creations of the *Yishuv*—especially the renaissance of the Hebrew language—are not to be denied or neglected. Thus, Erets Yisrael is taught in such schools in an integrated manner, within the context of other subject areas. Humanitarian and social dimensions of the new Zionist Movement are not totally neglected; however, they are superseded in importance by historical and religious dimensions. Finally, while these curricula are sparse in the presentation of pedagogic materials and methods for the subject, they reflect a sensitivity to the need for appropriate materials and methods.

The Liberal-Religious

In 1908 Rev. Morris Joseph of London wrote *A Course Book on the Jewish Religion* for the Jewish Chautauqua Society.¹⁰ This book was a general guide for teaching Judaism in confirmation classes, young people's circles, and adult education, organized around twenty lessons. Erets Yisrael, Palestine, or Zionism are nowhere mentioned in this curriculum.

In 1910, Eugene Lehman published *A Curriculum for Jewish Religious Schools* whose overall purpose was "to instill religious and ethical values" while being "based upon the principles of modern pedagogy."¹¹

Palestine and Zionism surface only twice in the curriculum: in Grade 7 (ages 12-13) where several discussions of contemporary Jewish questions, such as "The Jewish State" are proposed, and in Grade 9 when one of the suggested discussion topics within the context of a course on "The Jewish Religion—Its Meaning, Its Demands, and Its Ideals" is Zionism. The thrust of this curriculum is religious-moral, with minimal emphasis on contemporary problems generally, and no systematic study of contemporary Palestine or Zionism.

Henry Berkowitz's *The New Education in Religion* (published in 1913 by the Jewish Chautauqua Society) was concerned with the presentation of a curriculum and approach to Judaism which would be "consistent with contemporary American life and educational principle" and whose purpose would be the "developing of the character of the child and training its spiritual life."¹² The emphasis in the primary level of the curriculum (ages 7-9) is on precepts, prayers, history; in the intermediate level (ages 9-11) the focus is on religion, and in the high school (11-19) the emphasis is on comparative religion, Jewish ethics, prayer, and Jewish history. Unit 22 of the 23-unit high school history program is entitled "Anti-Semitism and Zionism," and it is the only reference in the curriculum to Palestine or Zionism.

In 1919, Rabbi Louis Grossman's *Course of Work for Teachers in Jewish Schools* was published by Hebrew Union College.¹³ This was a manual for teachers which emphasized moral and intellectual growth as the key educational frame. While it reflects a more people and culture-centered orientation than the previous two documents, it makes no reference to Palestine or Zionism and does not make any proposals for inclusion or delineate any subject areas in which these topics might be mentioned.

In 1924, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (hereafter called UAHC) published a *Special Report of the Commission on Jewish Education*, which encompassed a revised curriculum.¹⁴ The general goal of this curriculum was to "awaken religious consciousness." A course on current events was introduced into the curriculum in grade 4, for 30 minutes a week, once a month. In grade 7, a course on "Jews in Many Lands" is prescribed (45 minutes a week). It is likely that discussions of Palestine and Zionism would appear in these two contexts, although it is not specifically cited in the curriculum. The high school curriculum suggests a weekly course on current events for 15 minutes a week (although once again, Palestine and Zionism are not specifically mentioned) and an optional course on "Present Jewish Problems and Movements." The history curriculum for high school includes a required course on Modern Jewish History from Mendelssohn to the present. It is clear that Palestine and Zionism would be likely to surface in these contexts.

A new Reform position is evident in Roland Gittelsohn's *Modern Jewish*

Problems (first edition, 1935).¹⁵ This book presents an analysis and discussion of major issues and problems of contemporary Jewish life for the Jewish high school student (such as antisemitism, intermarriage, assimilation, philanthropy). One unit is devoted to Zionism, and it encompasses the following four sub-topics: the persecution of the Jews of Europe and the response and hope offered by a Jewish state; an analysis of the history and present state of the Zionist Movement; discussion of different schools of Zionism; and a discussion of twenty for-and-against opinions about Zionism.

This program is a significant departure from previous Reform and non-Reform programs of the time in two senses. First, it focuses on the contemporary period and issues, openly dealing with immediate issues of modern Jewish life, including the issue of Zionism. Second, it is student-oriented, and aimed at involving him in discussion of and deliberation on issues. In the context, the unit deals with Zionism and its relationship to the individual lives of the students.

In 1935 and 1937, Abraham Franzblau published curricula for the Jewish school.¹⁶ The 1935 curriculum focuses on Jewish history, and proposes a cyclical pedagogic approach whose emphasis is on the relationship between Jewish history and Jewish life. The first cycle—the biographical—covers ninety-one heroes, including Herzl, Ben Yehuda, Jabotinsky (“Herzl imparted new life and blood into Zionism”; “Jabotinsky was a modern Joshua”). Palestine and Zionism are suggested as discussion topics in the second and third cycles in the context of a unit on “Present Day Jewish Life.” While the curriculum does not provide a structured course of study on Palestine or Zionism, it points to and suggests its inclusion in the many contemporary-oriented subject areas built into the program.

In 1942, Emanuel Gamoran published *A Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School* (one of a series of curriculum revisions periodically published by Gamoran), which was a basic curriculum for a kindergarten-grade 12 supplementary school, meeting two-three hours a week.¹⁷ Beginning in grade 4, a 30 minute (once a month) Current Events Course was introduced (using the current events newspaper put out by the New York bureau, *World Over*). The upper grades concentrated on a more systematic study of Jewish history, Jewish holidays, and literature. In grade 11 courses on “Modern Jewish history through Fiction” were offered. Although the term, Palestine, appears only once in this document (which is admittedly only an 11 page outline), the subject is implicit in several of the subject areas suggested (for example, current events) as well as through several of the books (such as Gittelsohn’s *Modern Jewish Problems*; Jesse Sampter’s *Far Over the Sea*, a translation of selected children’s poems by Bialik; Feuer and Eisenberg’s *Jewish Literature Since the Bible*).

These nine curricular documents reveal two stances vis-à-vis the teaching of Palestine and Zionism. The early curricula (Joseph, Berkowitz, Lehman) reflect a classical notion of Reform Jewish education as education in religion, and hence as devoid of any national or peoplehood dimensions. The second group (Franzblau, Gittlesohn, Gamoran) reflects the continuation of a conception of Jewish education as religious education, albeit with the addition of topics, subjects and programs reflecting an increased concern for Jewish peoplehood, and in that context, with Palestine and Zionism. As the emphasis in the Reform school moved to the contemporary and to the people-oriented, Palestine and Zionism began to appear as both legitimate and central components of modern Jewish life and society.

Conservative-Religious

The United Synagogue of America published *A Curriculum for Jewish Religious Schools* (by Alter Landesman) in 1922.¹⁸ Landesman posited five aims of the religious school, two of which were related to Palestine:

1. to bind the children in love for Judaism and in loyalty to the Jewish people by giving them a knowledge of Jewish history, literature, customs, and religious practices, and the desire to participate in the Jewish communal life;
2. to acquaint the children with the Jewish presence through information concerning the life of the Jews in various lands with special emphasis on the development of Jewish life in modern Palestine [p. 1].

“The Teaching of Palestine” (as it is denoted in the curriculum) occurs in three areas: history, Hebrew, customs and ceremonies. A systematic, chronological study of modern Palestine is part of the history curriculum in the sixth grade with Jesse Sampter’s *Guide to Zionism* (see below) the suggested textbook.

The section on Hebrew urges the teacher to emphasize Hebrew as a modern, conversational language which is “again becoming a living tongue in the land of our ancestors.”

In the lower grades, teachers are advised to develop special units related to Palestine: A Jewish home in Palestine; Jewish schools in Palestine; Customs and Practices of Jews in Many Lands; Life in a Palestinian Colony Run from a Child’s Point of View; Shabbat, Lag B’Omer, Shavuot in Palestine. Several Palestine-oriented themes are proposed for student projects:

- what we think of Palestine
- our prayers regarding Palestine
- old people going to die in Palestine
- what we might do for Palestine

- what I should like to see in Palestine
- the peculiar physical features of Palestine
- what Palestine needs most
- a model Jewish settlement — Tel Abib

In 1932, the United Synagogue of America published Samuel Cohen's doctoral dissertation, entitled *The Progressive Jewish School*.¹⁹ The book includes a lengthy analysis of aims and objectives of the Jewish school, drawing heavily on the terminology and gestalt of character education. "Palestine" is but one of the nine specific objectives of the curriculum:

- Palestine — proper place as source of Jewish inspiration in the past, the cynosure of Jewish hope in the present, and the center of Jewish life in the future
 - vital organic element in Jewish Ideology Association will help give concreteness and reality to Jewish life
 - actual and ideal contact is necessary with Palestinian life and peoples.

Methodologically, the curriculum is based on the progressive integrated-activity curricular approach, in which formal and informal contents and learning situations are integrated. Thus, Palestine and Zionism appear throughout the various areas of the curriculum: Hebrew, history, Bible, social action, for example, "Palestine and its meaning to the Jews as exemplified in pilgrimages and settlements will be taught in the course of preparations for the Hamisha Asar B'Shevat project." It is also suggested that the teaching of Shabbat should include the singing of Palestinian songs and "The teaching of charity and social service should include student participation in flower day or other philanthropic projects."

Louis Katzoff's *Issues in Jewish Education* (1949) is an empirical study of 115 Conservative Jewish schools of the late 1940s and their curricula and attitudes toward Jewish education.²⁰ The volume includes a statement of objectives of the Jewish Congregational School, issued by the Commission on Jewish Education of the United Synagogue in 1946, one of which related to Palestine:

Palestine has always held an important position in the Jewish religion as well as in Jewish life. Events of the last generation have immensely enhanced its importance in present-day Jewish life. Hence, the curriculum should give the children: 1) an appreciation of the role of Eretz Yisrael in the Jewish past 2) an understanding of the significance of Eretz Yisrael for contemporary Jewish life and for the future of the Jewish people 3) a desire to help in the upbuilding and development of the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael and 4) inspiration to nobler personal living which comes from an appreciation of the heroically creative pioneering achievements of the Yishuv [p. 187].

Katzoff's empirical study indicates that this positive emphasis was at least formally accepted as a legitimate part of the curriculum by rabbis and principals. While Palestine was not presented as a separate subject, it was injected in other areas, such as history, current events, extra-curricular activities, with the following themes being emphasized: 1) the need for a Jewish state 2) Palestine as a solution to the problem of Jewish hopelessness 3) its potential as a cultural and religious center for world Jewry 4) its heroic pioneering achievements. At the same time, Katzoff found little emphasis on contemporary life in Palestine in Conservative Jewish schools, and little actual time or effort devoted to the entire subject:

Essentially, Palestine evokes at most a sentimental attachment in the conscience of American Jewry today, but does not affect them in any intrinsic manner. . . . [Palestine] to most Jews is an unknown quantity. . . . Palestine is important, but it is not real in the congregational school [p. 91].

These documents of the Conservative-religious curricular stance reflect a clear pro-Palestine position. Zionism and Palestine are therein regarded as important aspects of the Jewish experience and education, which are viewed historically and religiously. The Palestinian emphasis is evident both in statements of objectives as well as in specific curricular suggestions. This emphasis usually focuses on: religious dimensions of the link to Palestine; the heroic *halutsic* effort; the humanitarian responsibilities of American Jewry for the rebuilding of the land.

The Culturalist-Pluralist

The culturalist-pluralist curricular stance vis-à-vis Palestine and Zionism was a unique creation of American Jewish education in the 1920s-40s. Its ideological teachers were Ahad Ha'am, Mordecai Kaplan, Israel Friedlander, John Dewey, and William Kilpatrick and its power base was the major bureaus of Jewish education throughout the United States.²¹

Jacob Golub and Leo Honor presented a paper at the Seventh Annual Conference of the National Council for Jewish Education (15-17 May 1932), entitled "Principles Underlying the Curriculum of the Jewish School of Tomorrow."²² This paper presents guidelines for a curriculum which would reflect the progressive, culturalist, communal theory of Jewish education. Palestine, they argue, should be an important aspect of the curriculum. It is a vital center and resource for Jews everywhere; it is a great symbol for Jewish life, and it is a source of a new Jewish culture; it is, in their terms, "a homeland." Thus, they call for the inclusion of Palestine in all aspects of the curriculum; especially in history, Hebrew, and social service. Moreover, they propose that the teaching

of Palestine emphasize the duties of all Jews toward it, including financial support; study or pioneering in Palestine for some part of one's life; settlement for those so inclined.

Eddiden presents detailed programming suggestions for such a theory in his article "Teaching Palestine through Pupil Activity" (1933).²³ He emphasizes the culturalist-pluralist contention that the teaching of Palestine is imperative not only for the success of the National Home, but also for the continuation of worthwhile Jewish life in the diaspora. His pedagogy centers on student participation (reading contemporary books about Palestine, singing *halutsic* songs, eating olives and oranges from Erets Yisrael) and on the total injection of Palestine into all aspects of school life.

Chomsky presented a radical version of this approach at the 1932 Conference of the National Council for Jewish Education in which he proposed that the entire curriculum of the weekday elementary school be centered on Palestine.²⁴ He speaks of Palestine as "the silver thread, the life blood which runs throughout the entire fabric of Jewish cultural life":

It is the fountainhead, the base, if not the apex of our experiences, attitudes, and endeavors. It should, therefore, become the dynamic integrating force of our primary curriculum. It is Palestine or Palestinianism that gives meaning to our ceremonial observances, to our worship and prayers, to our language and literature, as well as to much of our present Jewish environment. Why not then make the introduction of Palestine the first step in the process of integrating the child into Jewish life [*Jewish Education*, p. 24]?

Hence, he proceeds to suggest a series of Palestine-centered themes as organizing principles for the early grades. For example, the curriculum in Grade 1 should be based on an imaginary trip to Palestine in which children learn, work, sing, eat, and live in the modern *Yishuv*. In Grade 2, they take a similar sort of trip to Biblical Palestine. In this fashion, Palestine comes to the fore in the lives of the children, and at the same time, it serves as an integrator of the various subjects and dimensions of the school.

The culturalist-pluralist curricular stance was avowedly pro-Palestine and pro-Zionist. It viewed Palestine as an integral part of the Jewish experience, past, present, and future. It focused on cultural, humanitarian, and religious dimensions of Palestine and Zionism. It called for the integration of the teaching of Palestine into all curricular and extra-curricular areas of the school. At the same time, it had clearly defined limits. Palestine was important as a "homeland" in the religious, cultural, and symbolic sense, but America was home. In an editorial in *Jewish Education* (1929), Dushkin urged "Sanity in the teaching of Palestine"; thus, he warned against over-idealizing or over-selling Palestine and Zion lest we inadvertently do more damage than good.²⁵ In 1936, Enzo Sereni appeared before the Eleventh Annual Conference of the National

Council for Jewish Education, and presented an impassioned classical Zionist, negation-of-the-diaspora speech. In response to his remarks, Golub, Chipkin, Honor, and Gamoran heartily agreed with his cultural, historical, and pro-Zion emphases, but they firmly rejected his “shlilat ha-Golah” stance, arguing instead for the possibility of a viable American Jewish civilization.²⁶

Zionist Emphases

Three sources from the early to middle twentieth century delineate what may be denoted as an American Zionist curricular stance.²⁷ Jesse Sampter wrote a course outline on Zionism (for the newly formed School of Zionism of Young Judea and Hadassah),²⁸ made up of seventeen sub-units, beginning with a discussion of the general condition of the current Jewish situation, and concluding with a unit on “Zionism as an ideal of life.”²⁹ There are four recurrent leitmotifs in this curriculum: Zion as an historical Jewish phenomenon, with deep and ancient roots; the precarious state of the modern Jewish world; nationalism as the right response to the current Jewish situation; and Zionism as both a response to the social and political situation of the Jews, as well as an ideal way of life, encompassing morality, dignity, and righteousness.

In February 1939, Leo Honor proposed “A Zionist Program of Jewish Education in America” in *The Zionist Quarterly*.³⁰ He regards Zionism as a means for the resurrection of the Jewish people in Palestine, and also for the revitalization of American Jewish life. Honor chastizes the American Zionist Movement for its inadequacies in the educational field: the non-existence of Zionist-sponsored schools; the lack of support for spoken Hebrew and Jewish culture; the neglect of the effort to create “Zionist lives.” Honor suggests an educational program which would: make homes bi-lingual; have the school become an educational center servicing the entire family; stress Jewish folkways by adding Palestinian dimensions to them (songs, dances); and encourage pilgrimages to Erets Yisrael for pioneering purposes.

In 1947, the American Zionist Youth Commission (a joint agency of the Zionist Organization of America and Hadassah) published a manual for principals and teachers on *Palestine in the Jewish School*, written by Samuel Grand.³¹ The manual is divided into six sections: 1) aims of teaching Palestine 2) Palestine in the curriculum 3) teaching Palestine directly 4) Palestine in holiday celebrations 5) detailed suggestions for Palestine activities and projects 6) Palestine in the arts.

This manual emphasizes the following goals: knowledge about and understanding of the rise of the Zionist Movement and modern Palestine; appreciation of the legitimacy of Palestine and of its vital link to American Jewish life and to the individual American Jew; involvement with the rebuilding of Pales-

tine. This is the first major document to prescribe the teaching of Palestine as a separate subject: "In view of the increasing importance of Palestine in Jewish life, it is essential that it be included as a separate and distinct subject in the curriculum" (p. 14), and it is the most comprehensive curricular statement and program about the teaching of Palestine and Zionism that existed in pre-1948 American Jewish education. At the same time, it reflects the uniquely American and non-Herzlian or Eastern European Zionist position:

In teaching Palestine . . . we want to educate our children to take their place in the up-building of the Jewish Homeland and at the same time to appreciate the significance of the Yishuv for the creative survival of the Jews in America and throughout the world. We must develop in them emotional attitudes towards Palestine, so that they will identify themselves in a personal manner with the arising Homeland, and at the same time see no conflict between Zionism and American democracy.

These, then, are the key curricular stances toward the teaching of Palestine and Zionism which surfaced in American Jewish education from the early 1900s until 1948. What happened to these stances? What were the dynamics and patterns of adjustment of these various curricular positions in pre-State American Jewish schools?

1. *The Zionization of Reform*

The first and most obvious dynamic was the metamorphosis of the Reform curricular stance.³² In the educational sphere, this process was characterized by the movement from curricula which literally excluded reference to Palestine, Zionism, and Jewish peoplehood, to the subsequent introduction of these terms and a constantly increased study of issues related to them. This change is evident in the comparison of the 1924 UAHC Curriculum, the Franzblau curricula of 1935 and 1937, Gittelsohn's course on modern Jewish problems (1935), and Gamoran's curriculum (1942) with the Joseph (1908), Berkowitz (1913), and Lehman (1910) programs.

A revealing signpost of this educational evolution from Pittsburgh to Columbus is contained in evaluatory comments on the state of the Reform Jewish school presented by Solomon Feinberg at the 1929 meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR).³³ Feinberg's critique reveals the then prominent curricular position, as well as the new trends and directions:

The Reform religious school has suffered to considerable extent by reason of the strong reaction in Reform Judaism against Jewish nationalism. In the main, our Reform religious schools have been so much opposed to all racial or nationalistic conceptions of Judaism that the reaction may have gone further than has been realized. . . . I am not pleading for Zionism or any other ism. I believe our Reform religious schools have acted very wisely and cor-

rectly in taking their stance as essentially and primarily religious institutions. The major emphasis in our Reform religious schools belongs where it has been placed, upon Judaism as a religious way of life. Yet in the attempt to divorce ourselves from the nationalistic conceptions or purely cultural interpretations of Judaism . . . our religious schools have gone much further than was necessary in neglecting Israel as a living people [pp. 448-450].

This evolution in Reform Jewish education is obviously related to processes which were occurring in the Reform movement as a whole, and it is best understood in that broader context. At the same time, the educational metamorphosis within the Reform school proceeded at its own pace, influenced by three factors.

The first factor was the pro-Zionist stance of some of the movement's key educational figures, particularly Emanuel Gamoran. Gamoran was educational tsar of the Reform movement from 1923 until 1962. He was part of that influential group of American Jewish educators who in the 1920-40s developed and applied the cultural pluralist theory to the American Jewish educational scene. Gamoran was ardently pro-Zionist ("Gamoran's main objective as educational director [of the UAHC] was to Judaize and Zionize the educational system of the Reform Jews,"³⁴ and he consistently emphasized the centrality of Palestine to Jewish existence for both survivalist and humanistic reasons. His views were particularly important since Gamoran assumed control over two crucial spheres of Reform Jewish education: the writing of curricula for the movement and the commissioning and editorship of textbooks. By controlling these two crucial resources, Gamoran was constantly able to push his pro-Zionist bias into the system. He had frequent battles on the score, particularly vis-à-vis his choice of and emphases in textbooks; however, he remained the controlling figure.³⁵

The second internal factor in the evolution of Reform Jewish education's stance vis-à-vis the teaching of Palestine and Zionism was a practical issue. Schools may reflect ideologies, but they ultimately must operate in immediate and real worlds. Students read newspapers, hear their parents' discussions, talk to other pupils. Even in a pre-television and pre-transistor age, it would have been highly artificial to purposefully exclude issues related to Palestine from the school, particularly for a movement committed to the interaction of Jewish and general life.

Thus, Reform schools *sui generis* had to be susceptible to contemporary elements of the Jewish and non-Jewish world, and there were few issues less "live and contemporary" at that time than Zionism and Palestine.

A third explanation for the pre-Zionist metamorphosis of the Reform school is pedagogic. The metaphysical advantages and disadvantages of religious versus people-centered Judaism can be debated; pedagogically, however, there is no question that the latter is a more appealing ideology. Peoplehood

implies customs, ceremonies, folklore, foods, music, dance, which are things which can be “done” in schools and which children enjoy (such as stories about relatives in Jerusalem; eating oranges from Jaffa; singing songs about places and events in biblical and modern Palestine). These are much more accessible and probably enjoyable educational activities than talking about God or morality or teaching prayer. Moreover, the 1920-40s was an era of educational progressivism, innovation, and experimentation, with such techniques as the activity and project methods being especially popular. The subject of Palestine particularly lends itself to project and activity methods. Thus, Palestine was a subject which easily lent itself to Reform progressive educational inclinations,³⁶ as well as which made being in the classroom more enjoyable and less painful for teacher and student.

2. *The Failure of the Culturalists*

The second major dynamic is the decline and defeat of the cultural-pluralist curricular stance. According to the prevalent historiography of American Jewish education, this educational school conquered American Jewish education, beginning in the 1920s. Solomon Benderly in New York, Alexander Dushkin in Chicago and later in New York, Louis Hurwich in Boston, Jacob Golub in Cincinnati, Judah Pilch in Rochester, Ben Ediden in Buffalo shaped bureaus and schools in the image of the cultural-pluralist theory.³⁷ One of the important elements of this theory was Palestine and Zionism; hence, their efforts resulted in an increased prominence on the teaching of Erets Yisrael and Zionism in Jewish education. This new, vigorous educational movement was to face many obstacles and problems, however, and by the 1940s its influence and impact (including its pro-Palestine stance) were to be in decline.³⁸

The cultural-pluralist stance was ultimately weakened by one of its own principles: pluralism. The theory was rooted in the commitment to the legitimacy of alternative forms of Jewish expression and schooling. Accordingly, no form of Jewish schooling should be regarded as illegitimate or faulty. Operationally, adherents of this approach who assumed control of central bureaus of Jewish education saw their function as mainly consultation and service to schools, rather than initiation and creation. The bureau of Jewish education, especially as evolved by the influential New York and Chicago models, was concerned with financing, supervision, consultation, public support, and production of materials. With few exceptions, the bureau was not directly responsible for running schools.³⁹ The point should not be exaggerated; it would be inaccurate to argue that bureaus and their leaders had no innovative or creative roles (witness, for example, the role of bureaus in camping, Jewish arts programs, extra-curricular activities, and textbooks). At the same time, the

theory and practice of the bureau was such that it effectively removed them and their highly creative leadership from the daily life of the classroom, to the often non-influential halls of central offices and agencies.

A second problem with the culturalist-pluralist stance was that, while it was educationally in step with the times, ideologically it was dissonant. This stance was, in part, a theory of culture, and its leaders were usually either themselves highly cultured Jewishly, or at least concerned with Jewish culture. The problem was that Jewish culture was not an easily accessible or very appealing form of Judaism to American Jews in the first half of the twentieth century. A cultural self-definition was time-consuming and demanding; it meant learning Hebrew or Yiddish; reading Jewish literature and thought, observing Jewish events and holidays. Moreover, American Jews were already occupied with another process of acculturation, Americanization. At precisely the moment that American Jews were busy with learning the language, lore, mores, and culture of America, the cultural-pluralists proposed an additional cultural burden and milieu. This was simply too much to ask of the American Jew; the cultural-pluralist educators proposed “ethnicity” when melting pot was the norm, and in so doing they advanced a theory which demanded too much of Jews who were already busy with another agenda.

The third reason for the failure of the cultural-pluralist curricular stance is the emergence and conquering of Jewish education by the religionists and the synagogue. The bureaus of Jewish education were city-wide institutions, and their leaders were agents of the Jewish community as a whole. As American Jewish life became suburbanized, the educational center of power became located in local institutions and leaders, such as rabbis and school principals. Any degree of power the bureaus had – and it was already suggested as being limited – was chipped away by the changing demographic patterns of American Jewish education.⁴⁰

3. The Ascendency of the Conservatives

A third important dynamic is the ascendancy of the Conservative curricular stance concerning Palestine and Zionism. There are three reasons for this development.

First, as we have already suggested, the atmosphere in the Jewish school generally became increasingly pro-Palestine. Thus, schools would be looking to educational institutions and curricula which already had existing programs and materials about Palestine. The Conservative school and its curricula had, from the outset, affirmed the importance of Palestine, and had included it in their daily life. Thus, the curricular stance of the Conservatives was in step with, and even anticipatory of, the times.

Second, the emerging model of American Jewish education was the supplementary three-day-a-week religious school and the Conservative curriculum became the prototype for such a model. (The Reform had concentrated on the one-day-a-week Sunday school, for instance, and Orthodoxy on the yeshivah and/or talmud torah). As Jewish education moved to the synagogue and the suburbs, it found relevant models and experience in the Conservative curriculum. The Conservative curriculum, then, was in step with both the changed ideological atmosphere toward Palestine, as well as the changed structural organization of American Jewish education.

Third, the Conservative curricular stance was educationally in step with the times. It reflected progressive influences, without being overly radical or non-conformist. It did not abandon basic Jewish contents which parents and grandparents would have expected as essential to any Jewish education (for example, “*davening*,” “the four questions,” and Hebrew), yet it was not excessive or overly rigorous in its educational demands.

Moreover, the entire educational program of the Conservative movement received new vigor and thrust in the middle 1940s with the reorganization of the Education Department of the United Synagogue of America under the direction of Abraham Millgram.⁴¹ Millgram and the Education Department embarked on a broad education program—including textbook publication, teacher-training, curriculum construction—which was aimed at expanding and deepening the effect of the Conservative school.

Thus, the Conservative curricular stance moved to centerstage because it was appropriate for the times on many scores. It was overtly pro-Palestine. It was a curriculum for a religious school and life-style, and it approached the teaching of Palestine and Zionism in that context. It was not radically “Zionist,” and it surely did not preach aliyah or “*shlilat ha-Golah*.” Finally, and perhaps most important, the emerging Conservative curricular stance vis-à-vis Palestine and Zionism was adequately ambiguous to appear “pro,” without spelling out any specific implication or practices.

4. *The Consistency of the Orthodox*

The fourth dynamic is a non-dynamic: the consistency of the Orthodox curricular perspective. The pro-Zionist stance of the Mizrahi-oriented schools remained firm, and teaching of Palestine in such frameworks continued to focus on: Erets Yisrael, God’s promise, *ge’ulat ha’arets*. Such a curricular stance does not necessitate major curricular innovations nor the production of new materials, since Erets Yisrael already exists in the classical materials and sources: Torah, Talmud, *Shulhan Arukh*, *mitsvot*. Thus, this stance is little affected by either modern pedagogic fads or by changing sociological winds in

the American Jewish community. It constitutes a clearly defined and internally logical system which need not be buffeted by external forces.

Practically, however, this stance was voiced by and broadcast to a minority in the American Jewish educational world. The stance remained clearly and logically pro-Zion and it had the internal resources and materials to teach the subject; what it did not have, was the bulk of the parents and children of the American Jewish community. Thus, this stance became more extraneous to the majority of American Jewish children, and it was to have little effect on the other stances.

5. The Non-Existence of the Zionists

The final dynamic is the non-emergence of a Zionist educational ideology and practice in American Jewish education. A serious Zionist educational movement never emerged in the United States. Structurally, the Zionist movement did not establish its own elementary and secondary schools, nor did any central office invest seriously in the preparation of materials or staff for such education. The various Zionist organizations of America did, at various times, establish education departments;⁴² however, none had long-lasting impact nor did any become central educational agencies in American Jewish education.

Subsequently, the Zionist curricular stance that did emerge did not differ very much from the culturalists (and even from the Conservatives). The Zionist stance called for more—but not a different—emphasis on Palestine and Zionism. The 1947 Grand curriculum presents many more details and resources on Palestine and Zionism than any other curriculum of the time; yet, its principles and roots reflect the Ahad Ha'am, Kaplan and Brandeis influence that so strongly shaped several of the other stances that have been examined. Thus, the American Zionist educational stance ultimately emerged as a pro-Israel stance, which makes it similar to the other emerging stances of the time.

The Legacy

These five dynamics describe the emerging educational patterns vis-à-vis Palestine and Zionism in pre-1948 American Jewish education. They together created a legacy which was to determine educational practice up until the late 1960s. What was that legacy?

First, a consensus position emerged which postulated concern for and love of Israel as an important goal of American Jewish education. There are few schools in the post-1948 period which do not, at least formally, subscribe to that consensus. Second, American Jewish education had come to unanimously regard Israel as connected with and part of religious Judaism, and hence to

teach it within the context and language of Jewish religious education. Third, the schools of the 1950s and 1960s inherited and accepted the rejection of two classical conceptions of Israel: as a cultural center (even though the slogan often did appear in American Jewish education), and as physical home. Zion became important to American Jewish education, but neither as home nor cultural center. Finally, pre-1948 American Jewish education bequeathed a legacy of ambiguity, confusion, and pedagogic passivity vis-à-vis Israel and Zionism to its post-State heirs.⁴³ The pattern of *not* confronting the various pedagogic issues of teaching Palestine but rather of speaking only in generalities was hammered out in the 1920s-40s and perfected in the 1950s-60s. If the 1920s-40s were a battlefield over the issue of Palestine and Zionism in Jewish schools, the 1950s-1960s were a wasteland. It is only in the late 1960s and early 1970s, amid the background music of the guns of 1967 and 1973, that American Jewish education once again began to wake up to and wrestle with the question of its Israel dimension.

As American Jewish education moved into the 1970s, the issue of whether to teach about Israel in the schools no longer becomes a question. A steady flow of instructional materials and in-service programs on the subject emerged. The important question vis-à-vis the teaching of Israel became not whether to teach about Israel but Israel, what for? That is, the question which now faces the American Jewish educational community relates to the meaning and message of Israel for the life of the American Jewish children.⁴⁴ The history of the teaching of Palestine and Zionism reflects the eventual inclusion of the Zionist idea into the life of the school; the task which Jewish education now faces is to make that idea a viable and meaningful value for the lives of the children.

NOTES

* I should like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Simcha Goldsmidt in the collection and analysis of documents used in this paper.

1. See, for example: Naomi Cohen, *American Judaism and the Zionist Idea* (New York, 1975); Henry Feingold, *Zion in America* (New York, 1974); Evyatar Freisal, *ha-Tnuah ha-Tsionit b'Artsot ha-Brit ba-Shanim 1897-1914* [The Zionist Movement in the United States from 1897-1914] (Tel Aviv, 1970); Alon Gal, "Brandeis, Progressivism and Zionism; A Study in the Interaction of Ideas and Social Background," unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Brandeis University, 1976; Yonathan Shapiro, *Leadership of the American Zionist Organization, 1897-1930* (Urbana, Ill., 1971); Melvin Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (New York, 1976).

2. For a discussion of the inspirational and programmatic literature on teaching about Israel in American Jewish education, see my *The Language of Jewish Education* (New York,

1978). Chap. 7, "Teaching Israel," pp. 96-121.

3. *Curriculum, Mizrahi Teachers Institute* (New York, 1918-1919).
4. Leo Jung and Joseph Kaminetsky, *A Model Program for the Talmud Torah* (New York, 1942).
5. Yisrael Frishberg, *Tokhnit Limudim Kellalit* [General Curriculum] (New York, 1946).
6. Barukh Ben-Yehuda, *Toldot ha-Tsionut* [The History of Zionism] (Tel Aviv, 1942).
7. Levi Bialik, "From a Teacher's Diary" (Hebrew) *Gilyonenu*, 1 (1946).
8. Pinchas Churgin, "On the Dispersion" (Hebrew) *Gilyonenu*, 2 (1947).
9. Zvi Adar claims that this stance was to emerge as the dominant one in contemporary Orthodox Jewish education: see his *Jewish Education in Israel and in the United States* (Jerusalem, 1977).
10. Morris Joseph, *Course Book on the Jewish Religion* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1908).
11. Eugene Lehman, *Curriculum for Jewish Religious Schools* (New York, 1910).
12. Henry Berkowitz, *The New Education in Religion* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1913). Berkowitz once called Zionism "the besetting sin and evil of this age." Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl*, p. 88.
13. Louis Grossman, *A Course of Work for Teachers in Jewish Schools* (Cincinnati, 1919).
14. *Special Report: Revised Curriculum, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Commission of Jewish Education* (March 1924).
15. Roland Gittelsohn, *Modern Jewish Problems* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1935).
16. Abraham Franzblau, *Curriculum in History for Jewish Religious Schools* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1935); and his *An Introduction to Jewish Religious Education* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1937).
17. Emanuel Gamoran, *A Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1942-43).
18. Alter Landesman, *A Curriculum for Jewish Religious Schools* (New York, 1922).
19. Samuel Cohen, *The Progressive Jewish School—An Integrated Activity* (New York, 1932).
20. Louis Katzoff. *Issues in Jewish Education* (New York, 1949).
21. See the following on the origins, theory, and dynamics of this "school" in American Jewish education: Alexander Dushkin, *Living Bridges: Memoirs of an Educator* (Jerusalem, 1975); Yaakov Iran, *Halakhah u-Ma'aseh ba-Hinukh ha-Yehudi* [Theory and Practice in Jewish Education] (Tel Aviv, 1977); Arthur Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehilla Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York, 1970); Nathan Winter, *Jewish Education in Pluralist Society* (New York, 1966).
22. Jacob Golub and Leo Honor, "Some Guiding Principles for the Curriculum of the Jewish Schools of Tomorrow," *Jewish Education*, 5 (1933), 22-26.
23. Ben Ediden, "Teaching Palestine through Pupil Activity," *Jewish Education*, 5 (1933), 103-108.
24. The minutes of this convention are recorded in *Jewish Education*, 4 (1932), 180-89; the paper is reprinted as: William Chomsky, "The Curriculum for the New Jewish Weekday School," *Jewish Education*, 5 (1933), 22-26. Chomsky subsequently modified his position in a paper presented in 1950, "The Problem of the Teaching of Erets Yisrael in the Curriculum" (Hebrew) *Shevilei ha-Hinukh*, 14 (1950), 219-26.
25. Alexander Dushkin, "Sanity in the Teaching of Palestine," *Jewish Education*, 2 (1930), 65-67.
26. "Proceedings of the 11th Annual Conference of NCJE," *Jewish Education*, 8 (1936), 147.
27. This stance is denoted "Zionist" either because of its ideological underpinnings, or be-

cause of formal organizational affiliations. For a general presentation of this position in the American Jewish educational context, see Nisan Touroff, *Ha'arakhot* [Assessments] (New York, 1947), pp. 212-22.

28. Samuel Dinin, *Zionist Education in the United States* (New York, 1944), p. 30.

29. The outline was subsequently reissued in book form: Jesse Sampter, *A Course in Zionism* (New York, 1915).

30. Leo Honor, "A Zionist Program of Jewish Education in America," *Zionist Quarterly* (1939), reprinted in Abraham Gannes, ed., *Selected Writings of Leo Honor* (New York, 1965).

31. Samuel Grand, *Palestine in the Jewish School* (New York, 1947).

32. See the following for a discussion of the metamorphosis of Reform Judaism vis-à-vis Palestine and Zionism: David Polish, *Renew Our Days* (Jerusalem, 1976).

33. Solomon Feinberg, "A Critical Evaluation of the Reform Religious School," *CCAR Yearbook*, 39 (1929), 439.

34. Robert Wechman, *Emanuel Gamoran: Pioneer in Jewish Religious Education*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1970, p. 148.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

36. Meir Ben-Horin, "From the Turn of the Century to the late Thirties," in I. Pilch, ed., *A History of Jewish Education in the United States* (New York, 1969), pp. 51-118; Lloyd Gartner, ed., *Jewish Education in the United States* (New York, 1969); Ronald Kronish, "The Influence of John Dewey on Jewish Education," *Conservative Judaism* 30 (1970) 44-57; Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York, 1961).

37. Ben-Horin, "From the Turn of the Century to the Late Thirties," p. 76.

38. Iran, *Halakhah u-Ma'aseh ba-Hinukh ha-Yehudi*, pp. 46-60; 68-79.

39. One of the important controversies among the cultural-pluralists was precisely about the role of the bureaus as innovator of new schools and programs (Berkson's position) as opposed to supporter and improver of existing institutions (Dushkin's position).

40. Gartner, "Introduction," *Jewish Education in the United States*.

41. Abraham Karp, *A History of the United Synagogue of America* (New York, 1964).

42. Dinin, *Zionist Education in the United States*, p. 55.

43. Leon Spotts, "Trends and Currents in Curriculum Development: 1930-70," *Jewish Education*, 40 (1971), 36-45.

44. For documentation and discussion of this new trend, see my "Israel in American Jewish Schools Revisited," *Jewish Education*, 47 (1979), 1-17.

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