

THE ZIONIST YOUTH MOVEMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD

BY

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FOREWORD

The UJIA Makor Centre for Informal Jewish Education is a world-leading facility in its field. It is committed to promoting informal Jewish education and this publication marks an important contribution to the discussion of the Zionist youth movements.

Paul Liptz is an internationally renowned Jewish educator who specialises in informal Jewish education - indeed for many of his students and professional colleagues alike he has been an inspirational mentor. He has produced this timely article on the Zionist youth movements, reviewing their history and addressing the educational, ideological and social challenges ahead. Though the focus is upon the British context, the article has resonance for movements everywhere.

The youth movements continue to be a central feature of the Jewish youth service in Britain today. In earlier generations, they were an option pursued by the minority but in more recent years the movements have increasingly become the largest provider of active teenage involvement in Jewish youth provision. Their residential activities continue to grow. They have led the Jewish world in supporting Israel Experience programmes in both the quality and quantity of their programmes - this has been particularly so in recent years. The quality of their leadership training programmes continues to reach the highest standards. Their peer-led ethos is admired by all those who engage with them - including youth work practitioners from outside the Jewish community.

UJIA Makor provide exceptional expert guidance and support to the Jewish Youth Service including outstanding proficiency in the youth movement field. UJIA Makor intends to engage the current leadership of the Zionist youth movements, together with other interested stakeholders, in a constructive debate around the challenges raised in this publication as we seek to ensure the long term future of the movements in Britain.

Roy Graham

UJIA Makor Director, (1995-2003)



UJIA Makor Centre for Informal Jewish Education is a partnership project with the Jewish Agency.

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INTRODUCTION

"The world is always changing", says conventional wisdom and the only way to maintain one's role in the world is to keep moving with that dynamic process. In addition, "change begets more change" (Bunt, 1975: 89). This paper is about the need to re-look at a Jewish framework and consider the necessary changes for the 21st century.

Jews have always been highly aware of their surrounding society. From ancient biblical times until the 20th century, Jewish survival has constantly demanded some form of adaptation. However, now, as in the past, there are those who feel that with or without adaptation, the Jews are "dying". It is true that many current Diaspora demographic projections are anything but encouraging, but the central thesis of this paper is that time and effort should be spent on ways of surviving and ensuring a more dynamic, creative people.

The past century has been one of sharp contrasts for Jews – a century which has experienced the trauma of the Shoah (Holocaust) as well as the marvel of the State of Israel, created against unbelievable odds (Gorny, 1994:193-196; Liptz & Spectre, 1994: 23-4).

Shoah and Statehood have become the foci of our memory and education. In all educational frameworks, we have to straddle the thin line between the study of trauma and the recognition of a remarkable story of political and human endeavour. We have to consider seriously how best to move towards an instructive and constructive pedagogic approach. Leaders, and lay people, must consider how to interplay past, present and future, how to be both historically aware as well as visionaries. *Jewish continuity* certainly aims at this, though perhaps 'continuity' is insufficient. We should be creative, inspired and committed in pursuit of Jewish renewal.

ZIONISM: A CONTEMPORARY LOOK AT PAST

The modern State of Israel is still in its infant stage in the sovereign sense. There seems to be a constant need to re-analyse directions, re-question national motives and discuss the issue of whether this fledgling state is best fulfilling a central goal - is it truly a representative of the entire Jewish people as was expected in the Proclamation of Israel's Independence:

"The land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people ... Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their statehood ... Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side for the fulfilment of the dream of generations – the redemption of Israel."

(May 14, 1948 - 5th of Iyar, 5708)

The problem of modern Jewish sovereignty is compounded by the lack of experience. It is sometimes stated that Jews, coming from well-developed community (Kehilla) settings of the Middle Ages, were prepared for statehood. The Kehilla functioned in a wide range of realms and "no department of community life was outside its purview" (Katz, 1961: 91). However, this ignores that, in reality, the Jewish community, even in its most developed form, had to deal with much lesser challenges than the sovereign state. After all, even one of the most developed Jewish communities, the Super-Kehillah of the Council of Four Lands "had no means of imposing its direct authority on a recalcitrant community - if it did not wish to invoke the assistance of the government" (Katz, 1961: 30) and it certainly didn't have to grapple with the complexities of armies, national economies and foreign relations.

It is true that there were certain, albeit limited, times of full Jewish sovereignty during the Second Temple Period (Stern 1973: 100; 1976: 208-222). In addition, there were the dramatic days of full Jewish control during the Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135CE) (Avi Yonah, 1984: 12). However, neither these historic events, nor the role of Jews in autonomous communities, were adequate in preparing Jews for the challenges of modern statehood. Thus, one may suggest that much work has to be done before the comple-

tion of the nation-building process, and the Jews of the Diaspora still have a role to play.

What is the place of the Israel-Diaspora relationship? (Hoffman, 1989: 27; Klein-Katz and Liptz, 2003: 440; Silberman 1985: 25). This pressing issue has still to be decided. A situation (adopted many decades, or even centuries ago), of Israel's turning to the Diaspora for financial assistance as a central aspect of the relationship, is inadequate. As Israel becomes increasingly self-sufficient (though still in need of support), new realms of contact must be developed, based on human understanding and empathy.

The Israel-Diaspora relationship had complications right from the earliest period, though Ben Gurion was eager to try and solve the tensions. In a public discussion with Jacob Blaustein, President of the American Jewish Committee in August 1950, the Israeli Prime Minister stated that "the Government and people of Israel fully respect the right and integrity of the Jewish communities in other countries to develop their own mode of life and their indigenous social, economic and cultural institutions, in accordance with their own needs and aspirations". At the same time, Ben Gurion had hoped that western Jewry would come on aliyah en masse. Blaustein, on the other hand, perceived the issue differently, feeling that "Israel's re-birth and progress, coming after the tragedy of European Jewry in the 1930's and in World War II, has done much to raise Jewish morale. Jews in America and everywhere can be more proud than ever of their Jewishness" (AJYB, 1952: 565-567).

While there is no easy answer to this issue, one can at least suggest some tentative solutions. The most pertinent challenge is to increase the knowledge, understanding and empathy of one for the other. Is the relationship going to be based on instinctive or intuitive responses, appearing mainly in times of crisis? There have been too many cases when these kinds of reactions have proven unsatisfactory. After all, on the really tough days of Israel's history, such as during the Gulf War (1990-91), the question often asked in Israel has been "Where are our Diaspora brethren?" Though beyond the scope of this paper to delve into the complex issue of how Israel and the Diaspora perceived each other, there can be no doubt that in

some senses, that 1990-1 period was a watershed in the Israel-Diaspora relationship (only to be later re-enforced during the darker moments of the current 'Matsav' that began September 2000). This should be contrasted with another critical event in Israel - the Six Day War. In May and June 1967, the Diaspora's support for Israel was overwhelming, including blood donations, significant money contributions and particularly, a rush of volunteers to help (including myself) - in fact, so many people wanted to get to Israel for the War that it was extremely difficult to get on a plane.

Sacher notes that in "June and July of 1967, a tidal wave of moral and financial support began cascading in from the Jewish hinterland of North and South America, from Western Europe, South Africa and elsewhere. Manifestly, this Diaspora population had undergone a trauma of conscience and identity during the summer crisis. Its response to Israel's needs was no longer essentially philanthropic, but this time something far more visceral. Israel's battlefield victory was no less their redemption than that of the citizens of Tel Aviv or Jerusalem" (1976: 714. See also Gorny, 1994: 193-211; Kaufman, 1994).

What happened between 1967 and 1991? And what impact is the current situation having on the Israel-Diaspora relationship? Was it the different nature of the wars - in 1967 Israel was in a highly vulnerable position while in 1990-1 it was, in some senses, an involved bystander? (Fisher, n.d.: 4). Had history played its part to the effect that almost 45 years of Statehood presented a very different picture from the 19 year old Israel of 1967? Or, one may ask, has something more significant happened to the relationship?

Is the "family" experiencing the reality of separation where all its members are now, apparently, getting on with day to day living? Has passion and genuine concern left us? If this latter concept is correct and the wider "Jewish family" is weakening, then the need to reinforce Zionist youth movements becomes doubly important. Only if this generation develops a true commitment to one another, will there truly be a "relationship" during the 21st century.

The burden is not only on the shoulders of the leaders and committed Jews of the Diaspora. Israel and Israelis also have to take up the challenge. Unless Israelis are prepared to learn about Jews in Britain, America, India and Russia, tensions and misunderstandings are sure to develop. Knowledge should lead to commitment and commitment to action.

I have been amazed that so few efforts have been made to arrange educational visits for young Israelis to the Diaspora where they could learn about the challenges and achievements of their Jewish non-Israeli brethren. For many young Israelis there is a higher likelihood of them spending time with a German family than with a Jewish family in any part of the world. The development of Mifgashim projects (Israeli and Diaspora Jews engaging with each other) has only just begun to become established as a feature of British Jewish life and should be welcomed and encouraged.

JEWISH YOUTH BEFORE 1948

We can learn from case studies of the past that opportunities for creative and productive action are greater among young people than with adults. The latter, weighed down by the demands of contemporary living, may not take on the same challenges of younger people, particularly those in collective, ideological movements.

The need for young Jews to organise themselves in cases of adversity may be seen in many situations. Frankel's *Prophecy and Politics*, a remarkable study of Jewish life in Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century, shows that young people were prepared to take up challenges in antagonistic environments (1981: 90-97).

When Jews were attacked, Jewish youth took up the challenge of self-defence. This concept has been articulated in Bialik's timeless *City of Slaughter* where he writes of mobs falling on Jews during the 1903 Kischenev Pogrom. "The crouched husbands, bridegrooms, brothers" peered from the cracks while terrible acts were committed against their wives and daughters and yet took no action. This act is juxtaposed against the "sons of the Maccabees" who took up arms against the mob (Mendes-Flohr, 1980: 330-331).

In times of powerlessness during the last century, young Zionists (usually members of youth movements) took up the task of changing history by building a Jewish State where Jews would be in full control of their own destinies.

The issue was not merely concerned with a physical or political act, but also required a profound philosophical decision. Many young, modern Jews of the time were experiencing the joy of feeling 'universalistic' - being part of wider trends within their contemporary society. And here Zionism came with the expectations that 'particularist' needs, the specific requirements of the Jewish people, should be satisfied first. Thus there developed a powerful interaction and tension between universalism and particularism.

While we should all be wary of glorifying the generation of young chalutzim (pioneers) in Eretz Israel in the 1910s and 1920s, they should indeed be an inspiration to all young people, up to this day. During the period of the Second Aliyah, 60% of the pioneers were aged between 15 to 25 (Gorny, 1975). **The underlying message is clear – well-organised, informed and motivated young people do make a difference.** The early chalutzim were often the object of scorn by adults who rejected the potential of these youngsters. The chalutzim, like the self-defence units in late 19th century Eastern Europe, moved from theory to practice. Ideas were discussed and argued over - with powerful results. Meir Shalev's *The Blue Mountain* (1991) and Yehoshua Sobol's play *The Night of the Twentieth* (1978) clearly indicate that the formation of new sociological frameworks was not easy - in fact, both writers argue that a severe human price was certainly paid. However, this seems to be built into any revolutionary concept that critically challenges ideological and sociological norms and realities. With all of Shalev's and Sobol's commentary, one cannot deny that the young, organised people of early Eretz Israel (Yishuv) played the crucial role in enabling an autonomous society to reach Statehood!

Another example of the central role played by well-organised and ideological youth in taking up the formidable task of survival is to be seen in the Holocaust. It is not by coincidence that there are many books and articles on the role of Zionist youth movements during the awesome years of 1939-1945, a theme well-articulated in the Kibbutz Lohamei Ha-Geta'ot Museum in Israel. Not only were they to play a central role in organising opposition and revolts against the Nazis in impossible conditions, but they also sensed that their actions would be an inspiration to the following generations.

When we look at the writings of Hannah Senesh who left Palestine (Eretz Israel) to assist the Jews in Europe (and to lose her life) we find a powerful role model. She wrote in her Diary on May 27, 1943 (aged 22):

"My entire being is preoccupied with one thing: departure. It's imminent, real. It's possible they'll [the Yishuv authorities] call me any day now. I imagine various situations and sometimes think about leaving the land ... leaving freedom ... I would like to inhale enough fresh air so as to be able

to breathe it even in the Diaspora's stifling atmosphere, and to spread it all around me for those who do not know what real freedom is."
(Senesh, 1973: 128)

It was Hannah Senesh who wrote "Ei-li Ei-li, She-lo yi-ga-meir le-ol-am" which became a 'national prayer':

"God - may there be no end
to sea, to sand,
water's splash,
lightning's flash,
the prayer of man."
(Senesh, 1973: 254 - Caesarea, 1942)

Abba Kovner, a young leader in the Vilna Ghetto, is remembered for the oft-quoted (and unfortunately often misinterpreted words) in January 1942 of:

"Let us not be led like sheep to the slaughter!
Jewish youth!
In a time of unparalleled national misfortune we appeal to you!
On none but you rests the national duty to be the pillar of the communal defence of the Jewish collective which stands on the brink of destruction."
(In Dawidowicz, 1976: 334)

During the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Mordechai Anielewicz, a deeply committed Zionist youth leader wrote these stirring words:

"The last wish of my life has been fulfilled. Jewish self-defence has become a fact. Jewish resistance and revenge have become realities. I am happy to have been one of the first Jewish fighters in the ghetto." [1943]
(Glatstein, 1973: 334-5)

JEWISH LIFE IN THE STATE PERIOD

With the above examples from the pre-State period, a question arises – **are there still important tasks to be carried out by Zionist youth movements?** The answer to this question must undoubtedly be dealt with in terms of a basic premise and that is – **the work of the Jewish people is not yet over!** It would be foolhardy to believe that statehood has provided all the answers, either for Jews in Israel or in other parts of the world. The creation of the State was a major event in Jewish history, but that political act in itself did not solve several central Jewish dilemmas.

The goal of this paper is not to ask the question of what Israelis still have to do in terms of achieving Zionist goals (an issue which certainly deserves attention!), but to look rather at Diaspora Jewry. It seems that there are two frameworks for analysis – the question of Jewish survival and continuity, and how Israel and the Diaspora will view each other.

From a Diaspora perspective several alternatives exist, ranging from a totally isolationist, almost anti-Zionist stand to one that suggests a high level of co-operation with Israelis. It is true that for some people this latter stand causes some embarrassment, either because of the subtle suggestion of dual loyalty or due to a sense of unease with Israel's behaviour in the political realm (Chazan, 1992: 242). Yet, it does seem that, "Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh B'Zeh" (All Israel are responsible for one another") Shebuot, 39a.

THE EDUCATOR'S CHALLENGE

In Talmudic times, the family was the focus and one reads that:

"He who loves his wife as himself; who honors her more than himself; who rears his children in the right path, who marries them off at the proper time of their life, concerning him it is written: 'And thou wilt know that thy home is at peace.'"

(Newman, 1945: 121, Yebamot, 62)

However, in the modern/post-modern world, many Jewish families are less involved in their children's activities. "They do not provide strong Jewish environments. They are themselves weak in experiential, social and cognitive resources to transmit" (Woocher, 1995: 23). Thus, formal and informal educational frameworks must take up the challenge.

Creative Jewish education should be high on the agenda of all concerned Jews. In terms of school-age children, be it in day schools,

cheder or religion schools, continual thought should be given to ensuring that a generation, committed to a "here-and-now" approach to life, will be interested, and able, to grapple with the significant lessons of the past. However, *formal* education cannot fulfill all the needs. As will be shown later, *informal* education is also required.

New educational settings must be introduced, *for all age groups*, to take on this pressing challenge. *Jewish Continuity* ('Jewish Creativity') projects must penetrate all sectors of society. All age groups should benefit from these initiatives. This clearly seems to be the message of the growth of the British Limmud seminars, to give but one example.

If one accepts the premise that Jewish continuity and the strengthening of the Israel-Diaspora relationship are two central challenges facing the contemporary Jew, the question then is "How does one implement these goals?". The answer must surely be found in the realm of education and learning. The possible frameworks are numerous, ranging from the formal school environment to a wide range of informal learning institutions. The Jewish day school in most western societies has had mixed impact on

children outside of the Haredi community. According to the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR), since 1950, while "the British Jewish population has declined by over 25 per cent, the number of children in full-time Jewish day school education has increased by around 500 per cent", and in 1999, "more than 50 per cent of primary-age Jewish children attended Jewish day schools." (JPR, 2001: 3), (these figures include the Haredi community). According to the Community Research Unit of the Board of Deputies of British Jews 1999 figures, "22,640 pupils attended 135 UK Jewish day schools (including both independent and state schools at nursery, primary and secondary level" (JPR, 2001: 4). We await with interest to see if the Jewish day school movement is able to make a significant impact amongst British Jewry over the next few years. If one then looks at the chedarim, religion schools and similar types of education, one notes that where they do exist, in most cases they appear to be only partially relevant and only up to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Where will Jewish youth find an attractive, alternative learning community after that age? Is there still some format that can comfortably compete with the appealing aspects of post-modern, western society, with its slick technology and glittering materialism? The clock cannot be put back. Therefore, one has to try to draw from this changing world those aspects that can be useful to contemporary human needs.

THE EDUCATOR AND THE PRESENT ERA

Traditionally, education was a well-developed, even central aspect of Jewish life with the family, community and school/yeshiva all being intricately involved. The Bible and Talmud are peppered with examples imploring Jews to study as an act of vital importance. We read:

"R. Alexandri said: He who studies Torah for its own sake makes peace in the household above and in the household below. Rav said: It is as though he built the Temple above and the Temple below. R Yohanan said: He shields the whole world, all of it, [from the consequences of sin]. Levi said: He also brings redemption nearer."

(Bialik, 1992: 414/113, B.Sanh 99b)

To be a Jew was to study "Torah l'shema" (i.e. for its own sake) without any practical considerations. This is illustrated in Milton Steinberg's remarkable historical novel *As A Driven Leaf* where Elisha Ben Abuya goes into a school and says:

"My dear children", he said with a soft urgency, "a long time ago a little boy about your age sat and learned what you are learning. They taught him stories and beliefs that they said were true. And he grew up and discovered that it was all legend and fable. I say to you, do not believe what they tell you here. Do not take it too seriously. Go out and be shoemakers, tanners, carpenters. Make things with your hands, real things that you can touch and taste. Then perhaps you will be happy and make others happy too." He was saddened to see a fascinated horror in the children's eyes. The teacher and his assistant came toward him. How he got out of the room he could not remember afterward. He had a confused recollection of a scuffle, of a din of voices, calling at him "Infidel", "Atheist", "Apostate". When he came to himself he was on the street. Only then he was aware that his right cheek smarted. He raised an unsteady hand to it. It came away wet and sticky with blood. Holding a corner of his garment against the scratch, he left the town."

(1939: 252-253)

The world has, however, moved away from many traditional concepts and one is faced by new challenges for "although Judaism has for generations derived its identity and justification from its books - the book or scroll, more than the picture or status, became the preferred emblem of the Diaspora Jew - the influences of the outside world, the exigencies of physical survival, and the imperatives of involvement in modern civil society have over the years turned Jews away from the traditional house of study." (Heilman, 1983: 1).

Has individualism taken over? What are the results of countless hours of young people sitting alone in front of the computer? Are we satisfied with the implications of extended television watching? These questions are certainly not new but demand our attention also in a Jewish context. No claim is made here that technology should be disregarded, but rather the question is - can a full, healthy life-style be adopted, which combines the multi-faceted aspects of individualism and collective activities, indoor and outdoor pursuits, structured and spontaneous realms and so on?

It is my basic premise that the contemporary educators' role is to initiate and strengthen learning environments which most adequately serve the modern complex human being. In addition, for those of us who accept that "being Jewish" is a primary value, the question posited is – can we provide something which is exciting and suitable, both on the cognitive and affective (experiential) levels, which is viable and will succeed? - a real challenge! Part of the answer is – the Zionist youth movement.

THE ZIONIST YOUTH MOVEMENT

The youth movement may, in a sense, be perceived as a community. Woocher comments that:

"we must try to create sites and settings in the collective life-space we call the Jewish community that invite attachment and can subsequently provide ideological legitimisation for that attachment. The strategic paradigm is to engage the individual in a community that has identifiable Jewish characteristics." (1995: 24)

Informal educational frameworks, such as youth movements and clubs have a vital role to play both in the worlds of learning and in the realm of personal development, although one should be frank about their limitations (Aron, 1988: 268). According to Cohen's 1992 research, there are over 30 Jewish ones in the UK (Cohen, 1992: 162), the history and development of which are found in Bunt's *Jewish Youth Work in Britain. Past, Present and Future* (1975). The more comprehensive 1998 Talkback Survey of the Jewish Youth Service in Britain states under 'Organisations':

"Our findings show:

3 central agencies providing a range of complementary services to the whole sector [two of which have since merged]

17 national or regional organisations (excluding the Union of Jewish Students and the Lubavitch Youth Organisation). These organisations [mostly youth movements] have 255 local groups or branches, and these local groups run 440 separate age group or activity sessions on a regular basis.

6 specialist organisations who run 15 different sessions on a regular basis. 46 independent local clubs and centres. The 34 for whom we have accurate data run 136 separate age group or activity sessions on a regular basis."

(Miller, S.V., *Talkback Survey*, 1998: 5)

(The independent club sector – outside of the synagogues – has in fact

continued to contract.)

During adolescence, young people go through various stages of identifying with varying, and often confusing, values. In an analysis by Alexander and Russ (1992), we learn that "like the adolescents who comprise them, these groups sometimes rebel against adult authority and at other times welcome it. They can play a pivotal role, however, in the development of adult identity among participants" (90). The writers speak very positively of the potential identity forming that comes about because of this involvement (91).

The role of the Zionist youth movement in the 20th century is one which should be an inspiration to anyone concerned with the survival and creative growth of Jews.

It is a story which has within it powerful moments and important challenges. It is also, however, an educational framework that should not be taken for granted. It requires the involvement and support of the wider community as well as the commitment of its participants.

Zionist youth education should not be pushed to the side, to play second fiddle to formal Jewish education. It should be recognised as a legitimate realm in its own right, reinforced by training, organisation, funding and inspiration. It should be remembered that literally thousands of young Jews, throughout the world, have remained committed to their heritage, people and Israel because of their involvement in these movements.

It is my goal in this article to add commentary to this particular realm, based on my own experiences and involvement in formal and informal education over a period of more than 35 years.

There are numerous misconceptions about voluntary, informal learning frameworks. One often hears that because youth movements are not compulsory and "regular" they are therefore not "serious". The idea that

important education only exists in formal frameworks, seems to me to be a false, even dangerous, attitude. Learning can be found in many environments - it does, however, have to be prepared and presented with thought and concern. It is inadequate to expect that random learning can have any serious impact. The informal nature of the Zionist youth movement provides many exciting challenges for the educator - how best to take advantage of Zionism and Judaism, presenting it in a way that differs from the formal school, and yet substantive enough to be meaningful.

One sometimes hears the word "informal" stated in the context of 'spontaneous'. Good informal learning can certainly take advantage of spontaneity, but that should never be a dominating motif. Informal education, like formal education, demands a well-organised, planned schedule. Each age-group should be confronted with suitable, challenging programmes. They deserve to be inspired and each individual should be aware that s/he is part of a wider learning concept. It is unsatisfactory for children to have poorly prepared madrichim, whose 'job qualification' is only enthusiasm. Thus, one should work towards a "school for madrichim", one similar to the old Argentinian "Editi" model.

Professionalising informal education is vital - and the sooner communities are aware of this the better for all concerned. Indeed, British Jewry's UJIA has led the way in this regard through its investment in informal Jewish education in both UJIA Makor and Israel Experience.

Once an overall educational philosophy has been developed, and suitable madrichim located, one can then get on with the job of the nitty-gritty of youth movements - locating the clientele for "if there is no flock, what shall a shepherd do?" (Newman 1956: 252, Yalkut to Pentateuch, 187). Activities should be well-developed to compete successfully with the glitter of the 'outside world' – and this is no easy matter!

If one looks at the centuries of Jewish history, one aspect appears clear in the educational approach. Education was never random – it followed a clear pattern and text. In many cases, people would ensure that learning

was a constant in their lives. It may well have been that learning could be adapted to all situations – self-learning on some occasions, the chevruta (paired-learning) at others and classroom teaching in yet other situations. Whatever actual framework was adapted, however, it always had defined and clearly articulated goals.

AN INFORMAL EDUCATOR'S 'CURRICULUM'

It has already been suggested that associating the terms 'informal' and 'spontaneous' is distinctly problematic. While informal education does certainly permit aspects of spontaneity, it would be inadvisable to permit this to go too far. I remember participating in a session at Limmud several years ago and being told that one organisation conducted their youth seminar by having late-night sessions where energetic discussion would lead to the programme for the next day. When I questioned the wisdom of this approach, I was told that creative ideas are the result of dynamic situations and the educator cannot anticipate them prior to a seminar.

Whilst one must clearly always be flexible and willing to respond to new situations, all learning environments should be based on a well-planned overall programme - the informal educators' 'curriculum'. As Reisman has noted:

"... it would be an error to assume that an experiential program requires less advance preparation because the role of the group leader is much less directive than is the case in a traditional educational approach."
(1979:28)

All Zionist youth movements should have a long-term plan for their whole organisation. It should include both ideological and operative aspects. From the earliest ages (8 or 9) right through to the most advanced stages, there should be clear goals - and each year should fit into the wider model.

"Lego-building" is not only an appealing play model, it also has benefits for informal education.

Each year of the participants' involvement should be based, where possible, on the learning and activities of the previous year. It is clear that this theoretical approach is hindered by the youth movement's reality that there is always a significant dropout rate and one cannot be sure that most of the children or youth were involved throughout the previous year.

Consequently, the madrich/a has to refer back constantly to the previous year's theme, whilst ensuring that there will not be excessive repetition for those who were full participants in the earlier events. An additional consideration is the powerful impact of residential activities, which are often given their own curricular agenda over a full movement experience. Indeed, residential activities are becoming increasingly dominant in the youth movements in Britain.

I still remember how I, at the tender age of 8, learned that by continuing on in the youth movement, I would reach certain exciting, well-defined goals each year. It, therefore, seemed worthwhile to carry on in the Movement (despite other appealing alternatives) for the various educational incentives that were attainable at each stage.

It is clear that those movements that have a clearly defined long-term programme, whereby a child knows that each stage has its own set of 'educational goodies', ensure a higher level and more consistent participation of its members.

Educational psychologists frequently emphasise that, at certain ages in particular, learning should satisfy the needs of the ego. This seems to be particularly true in informal education. At the same time, however, the youth movement has as a *raison d'être*: the need to place the individual clearly in the wider, group context. Therefore, activities should be sensitive to both group and individual needs. In the end, one hopes that years spent in a Zionist youth movement will have not only developed a strong sense of self, with self-confidence and a willingness for self-expression, but also an ability to be part of, and contribute to, sub-groups and larger groups at the same time. Furthermore, movement graduates invariably attest to the benefits they have been able to apply in later life as a result of the life skills that they acquired through their movement experience. The youth movement, then, has the wider goal of integrating its participants in the *shichvah* (age-group), movement, wider community and also to encourage everyone to develop a higher sense of Jewish peoplehood.

The overall 10 year plan (assuming a youth movement involves participants from the ages of 8 to 18) could start with immediate, local issues, looking at aspects of one's immediate society and crucial aspects of Judaism. As time goes by, the educational vista should be expanded to include not only the Jews of Great Britain, but also those living in other parts of the world, with particular reference to Israel. Critical and analytical thinking should be encouraged and leaders should be wary of poorly defined generalisations. It seems that towards the end of a person's youth movement experience, the most complex and possibly even frustrating topics should be on the agenda - Talmudic discussions, Israel-Diaspora relations and the Middle East situation (including Islam), and existential issues should be among them.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF... THE JEWISH COMPONENT

A youth movement should be not only appealing (after all, marketing is part of the reality), but educationally sound. The Zionist youth movement has a model which should, where possible, be used. It is not an educational framework in a vacuum, but rather intricately tied to Jewish and Zionist aspects. It should, and must, differ from a regular non-Jewish youth club down the road. Jewish youth movements make use of the chaggim (festivals) - how exciting a group Pesach Seder can be, or eating in a large Succah, or celebrating Chanuka together.

Chaggim are also useful because they include the three essential components of youth movements - cognitive/knowledge-based aspects, experiential activities, as well as group interaction. Zionism can be introduced with ease. Pesach is not merely a festival, but rather one that leads us to Eretz Israel. Tisha B'Av is clearly designed to draw us to Israel - after all, the destruction of the Temple was, and could only be, in Israel. Tu'Bishvat leads us to agricultural Israel and the story of the role of trees in Israel's history (see Klein-Katz and Liptz, 2003: 444-445 on *Israel's Jewish Calendar and Rhythm*).

THE LANGUAGE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

I would also make a plea for Hebrew learning, which in British informal institutions unfortunately does not appear to be a priority (Cohen 1992:45; Klein-Katz and Liptz, 2004: 290). While it is unlikely that 20 minutes at a weekly youth movement activity will lead to fluency, it does indicate that the language of the Jewish people was, and is, Hebrew. It is the language of our past, present and future. Modern teaching methods, including multi-media techniques, also enable one to learn about contemporary Israeli and Jewish events through Hebrew. And after all, a poem by Rachel or Yehudah Amichai in Hebrew captures the essence of Israel. At certain times, Hebrew learning has reached higher levels of interest, as was the case after the Six Day War when:

"many Jews who lived outside of Israel were proud of her victory and wanted to identify with her people. One way to do so was to emulate Hebrew speech."
(Dori, 1992: 263)

EFFECTIVE ZIONIST EDUCATION

The question of how Zionism and Israel should be taught has been the focus of much research and discussion, both in Israel and the Diaspora. In Chazan's view, this is because "the creation of the State of Israel is an event of profound importance for the Jewish people as a whole and for each of us as individuals" (1992: 241).

A further question is: what elements should be emphasised and which ignored? It is clear that not only are there numerous realms of study, but the goals and pedagogic techniques should be carefully considered.

It seems to me that the modern State of Israel has to be perceived as a story of continuity - from Abraham to modern times. It is a gripping drama with hopes and dreams, some of which were fulfilled and others remaining unfulfilled. In the Zionist youth movement, the elements most applicable to each particular age-group have to be carefully chosen. Goals, subject-matter, pedagogy and relating the issues to wider themes all require careful planning (Chazan, 1992: 244).

Most British students involved in Jewish education have visited Israel (Cohen, 1992: 49), but their visits should also be well conceived (Liptz, 1993).

Rabbi Avraham Kook, writing in "the Holy City of Jaffa in 1906-7" wrote:

"Come to the Land of Israel, dear brothers, come to the Land of Israel. Save the souls of your generations, yea, the soul of our entire nation. Save her from desolation and degeneration, save her degeneration, save her from defilement and evil - from all the suffering and oppression that threatens to come upon her in all the lands of the world without exception or distinction."

(Feldman, 1986: 238)

In dealing with events of the 20th century, it is vital to take advantage both of recent research relating to Zionism (e.g. Shimoni, 1995), and also to ensure that topics of the post-State period are relevant. Zionist youth

movements should be in the forefront of creative programming ensuring the interplay of critical analysis with ideological concepts. Ideology, after all, with its resulting realism, "calls upon the young person to give up some of his or her needs to serve some nobler cause. For this idealism to be placed in the service of Jewish identity, commitments to the Jewish people or religion are in order" (Alexander & Russ, 1992: 91).

The curriculum should be set up in clearly defined units, with each unit ending with a particular event, be it a weekend away, a seminar or a camp. Each year should then be perceived as the sum total of several, well-defined and well-coordinated sub-units.

DIFFERING LEARNING STYLES

Educators have increasingly informed us that human beings learn in different ways. During my 30 years of university lecturing, I have been struck by our lack of sensitivity to the reality of differing learning patterns in this formal framework - informal environments should not be trapped by tunnel-vision thinking. Reisman has sensitised us to different learning styles. He favours the "personalised small group" where there is "additional enhancement of learning as a result of the broadened perspective and support provided by one's peers" (1979: 19).

Educators in informal frameworks are much freer than their colleagues in formal education regarding the chosen curriculum. To utilise this, it is sensible to choose topics that include visual images and music. Zionist youth movements should, for example, take advantage of such movies as *To Cast a Giant Shadow*, *Late Summer Blues*, or for more serious analysis, sections of the remarkable *Pillar of Fire* series.

Youth movements usually succeed in open discussions (Kalms, 1992: 76). This, however, has the danger of sometimes being almost an "I feel ..." or "I think ..." situation, based on a minimal amount of content. New material should always be added, either in the form of a sheet of paper with well-articulated information or a short introduction by the madrich/a. After all, even youth movements which clearly have an appealing social aspect to them, must also be learning environments. I well recall, some 50 years ago, at the age of 8, learning about draining the swamps of the Galilee, the early chalutzim, and the overall goals of building a Jewish state. (Incidentally, it was a great disappointment to learn many years later that my few weekly pennies used to assist in draining the swamps, had actually caused an ecological crisis to the northern area of Israel!)

CHANGING THE LEARNING SITE

The youth movement has the challenge of incorporating 'classroom' (in reality it would be a clubroom or some other structure) with outdoor learning. Whereas schools are built on the concept that 'real' learning exists within the classroom, the youth movement is free to exploit the terrain and wider environment as the 'social site' (Blackman, 1995: 49) using the "Wandervogel" approach (Mosse, 1964: 170-189). I still recall (with elements of nostalgia!) going on various walking tiyulim (hikes) in Zimbabwe and being told that we were actually walking from Tel Aviv to the Kinneret. Many years later, when I came on aliyah, the idea of actually doing such a thing had no appeal whatsoever (Klein-Katz and Liptz, 2003:443)!

The changing of learning environments from one site to another is not only designed to make learning more interesting and fun, but also to permit learners to excel in different frameworks. After all, why shouldn't people be respected for their walking abilities as well as their willingness to help those who have problems in these situations. Surely, we have advanced from the times when people are to be evaluated purely on their academic attainments. What was considered essential in the early scouting movement and by the "Outward Bound" philosophy, surely also has validity for the Zionist youth movement.

LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

There is perhaps no topic in the whole range of informal Zionist education that requires more attention than the realm of leadership training (*Securing Our Future*, 1991: 30-31). Bunt, in relating to Habonim, notes that "one cannot but be impressed by its strong tradition of leadership from within" (1975: 106).

The staff (counsellors/facilitators/madrachim) need to be trained, knowledgeable and committed to the goals of the programme. They "need to serve as effective role models of the values the programme seeks to promote" (Alexander and Russ, 1992: 94).

Youth movements have always promoted powerful tenets of commitment and responsibility. Poorly financed informal frameworks demand of their leaders a very high level of involvement to ensure an effective Movement. A major time/effort investment is the norm and one should assume that on frequent occasions a pressured day-to-day reality will be the norm. Only if leaders are prepared to make these commitments will goals be attained. In addition, the leader who combines hard work with creative and informed education, is the role model ("dugma ishit") required for success.

It is noticeable that vast amounts of money, time and energy are spent in preparing people for formal education - teachers and heads not only study, but are given on-going in-service training. I have often heard the argument that this is not the case with informal education because of the rapid change of staff. Thus, one hears the question: if a madrich/a is only going to be actively functioning for a year or two, why invest in that person? This approach is faulty. After all, **people who spend a year in Israel on one of the year programmes may in fact only work in a particular youth movement for a relatively short time, but the overall impact of that person can be quite remarkable. Evaluations of a person's contribution must not be seen in the narrow confines of a particular youth movement but rather in terms of the wider picture.**

The Jewish world dearly needs people like this. In my travels to various Jewish communities over the last 35 years, I have been amazed by the number of highly motivated people who studied at one of the informal training institutes in Israel (of which the Youth & Hechalutz Department's (now known as the Department for Jewish Zionist Education) Institute for Youth Leaders from Abroad ('The Machon') may be the best known). The United Kingdom compares well with other countries in terms of extended stays in Israel (Cohen, 1992: 49). Some of these graduates entered the Jewish professional sphere, while others became well-informed and committed lay leaders.

It is not always possible for people to spend a full year in Israel on one of the Jerusalem or kibbutz-based programmes. Other models should be developed. Many countries have fine people and facilities at home which could be the basis for high level courses, combined with well-planned visits to Israel. In Britain, for example, the existence of UJIA Makor, with its team of talented educators, could clearly be the basis for a British-based "Institute for Zionist and Jewish Leaders", supplementing the Israel-based frameworks.

In the cases where capable madrichim become paid movement workers, one can then develop a more professional organisation which can involve itself in long-term planning, utilising the central support services of UJIA Makor. Madrichim who cannot afford some of the costs (telephone bills, transport costs, etc.) should be assisted. Adult organisations' facilities can be shared.

Training leaders is a slow process. One does not become a leader merely by participating in a course, but rather by integrating experience with theory. Some of the best leaders are those who have slowly moved into more demanding positions, particularly when they have constantly been able to look at positive role models. Therefore, young people of 14 or 15 should be introduced into leadership roles, always under the guidance and instruction of an older madrich/a. The formative years from 14-15 onwards, and the challenges of initial leadership, can be of the utmost benefit to those who started the process at this age. In fact, even when the

period is difficult, there are probably few who afterwards regret the experience - at least with later hindsight. Clearly, this is an issue of some complexity as the whole concept can come into conflict with the counter needs of schools, friends and parents. One would hope that parents, and particularly those who gained from their own youth movement experiences, would encourage their own children in this realm.

During the ten years that I worked at the Institute for Youth Leaders from Abroad, I met many parents who had themselves been participants at the same Institute many years earlier – all of whom recalled their experiences with joy and nostalgia.

ZIONIST YOUTH MOVEMENTS AND THE WIDER SOCIETY

While this paper looks mainly at the Zionist youth movements as such, it is also necessary to place these movements in the context of the wider Jewish and non-Jewish society. It is clear that effective educational frameworks cannot survive in isolation, but must rather find ways of interacting with a wide range of 'interested' parties. I will attempt to discuss this important realm by looking at the following settings:

- 1) Parents
- 2) The Jewish 'Establishment'
- 3) Other Zionist Youth Movements
- 4) Jewish Youth Organisations and Clubs
- 5) Non-Jewish Youth Frameworks
- 6) Social Action and Volunteering

1) Parents

Informal educational organisations are frequently beset by irregular financial support, unsuitable activity rooms and many other technical difficulties. In my experience, I have been struck by the fact that many parents, if suitably informed, can become a crucial support group. However, there is frequently a large gap between the reality of the Zionist organisation and the parents' expectations. It is probably correct to say that most adults live in a world of relative order – they, by and large, know how events of the weeks and months to come will occur. Holidays are planned long in advance, large purchases are usually initiated as part of considerable thought and the regular ebb and flow of life is welcomed. This situation is very different from the youth movement reality, where decisions are often fairly spontaneous and planning is perhaps the result of some quick telephone calls made during a busy school or university day by a madrich/a.

This imbalance of life-styles and concepts of decision-making does not always lead to a comfortable relationship between parents and the youth movement. But it does seem to be the case that when an active Parents' Committee is formed, which contacts other parents and occasionally acts as an intermediary between madrichim and parents, a more efficient

framework can be established. It seems that 'education' must not only be for young participants but also for concerned parents. A well-formulated 'position paper' dealing with the goals and intended activities, sent to parents at the beginning of the year, will only help. In addition, as with parents-teachers meetings at schools, this could also be a useful concept for youth movements where madrichim meet parents and discuss issues with them. Parents often welcome being better informed and if they themselves were never members of a youth movement, they have a great deal to learn about an unfamiliar field.

On a visit to South Africa, anger was expressed by parents at the 'inadequacies' of the senior madrichim. When members of the Parents' Committee intervened, several problems were immediately solved. Parents then volunteered their time and money to ensure a successful seminar.

One can even become more creative. If senior members have completed a week-long intensive seminar, how about a week-end seminar/retreat for parents? If one's children have discussed some important Jewish or Israeli issue and enjoyed it, perhaps their parents would enjoy the same experience. And to go even further. What about a short visit to Israel (perhaps around the Christmas-New Year holidays) for parents whose children were, or are, on a year-long Israel programme?

2) The Jewish 'Establishment'

While it is in no way intended to start an inter-generational conflict, it does seem healthy if the youth movement constantly questions the direction and activities (or lack of) of the adult 'establishment'. There are many realms where Jewish and Israeli needs have changed, and the establishment is unaware of them. In some meetings that I have attended over the years, I had the feeling that sections of the adult Jewish community were many years out of date. On occasions, historical battles were still being fought.

The youth movements should 'move'. While it would be best to try and influence the adult environment by gentle persuasion, one should not negate the occasional need for forceful statement. The youth movement is obliged also to educate the adult 'establishment' (Bunt, 1975: 145-148). If

any model is of value, then one can certainly look at the early chalutzim (pioneers) in the first decades of the 20th century in Eretz Israel to see the effectiveness of persistence. Young people have been among the best educators of their predecessors!

Particularly when limited resources are a reality (and this is often the norm), then youth movements must clearly articulate their claims and needs - after all, the beneficiaries of a successful movement are not only the madrichim and chanichim (participants), but the Jewish community as a whole (*Securing Our Future*, 1991: 50).

3) Other Zionist Youth Movements

The Zionist movement as a whole has experienced serious tensions and divisions, from its early days up to the present. In the Yishuv (Eretz Israel in the immediate pre-state period) the conflicts between the Hagana/Palmach and Etzel/Lehi groups almost reached the level of civil war in the 1940s. These tensions spilled over into the Diaspora and even in small communities around the world, the Eretz Israel realities were played out. It is fortunate that, in most cases, those days are over. Limited resources and human power suggest that working together is no less than a statement of survival. There is still the existing situation with ideological and theological differences, but it seems that cooperation is a vital need.

Ideological and religious differences exist between Zionist youth movements and these differences are legitimate. After all, it is often on the basis of competing ideas that more creative and active frameworks are established. Modern concepts of competition are often a means of improving and advancing one's movement. At the same time, let us also consider ways of greater cooperation. A trip to Europe or Israel by a few movements working together may reduce costs. Shlichim from Israel can certainly serve more than one movement, particularly the smaller ones. Community centre facilities should be to the advantage of all. And as one has seen over the years with UJIA Makor (formerly Makor-AJY/JPMP), central facilities are to everyone's benefit. I was fortunate to attend a good example of central co-ordination in its work with the Zionist Youth Council. In the late 1990s, they were able to bring together over 150 senior move-

ment members from ten different movements for an intensive Zionism Seminar. Their central service delivery has continued to expand and offers high quality education, training and guidance without dis-empowering the movements and the other people they support.

Israel's internal political conflicts and strife should not be played out in the Diaspora, for the issues are different. Israel could learn from some of the better examples of Jewish community cooperation that exist in some Diaspora communities.

4) Jewish Youth Organisations and Clubs

Zionist youth *movements* often pride themselves on being different from *organisations and clubs* because of their basic ideological orientation. In addition, the overall set-up of a *movement* is usually different from an *organisation*. Does this mean that there can be no meeting between these two frameworks? There are realms where cooperation is in fact advisable. Surely Jewish movements, clubs and organisations can get together to plan Holocaust Memorial Day or Israel's Independence Day. They might certainly join together for training sessions on areas of common concern. They can also use the same facilities – a seminar centre or camp site. In addition, if a trip is planned overseas, let everyone cooperate. The Jewish Youth Service Conference that took place in UJIA Makor's London offices in May 2003 was attended by over 150 people and was an outstanding example of such co-operation.

5) Non-Jewish Youth Frameworks

In many cases, non-Jewish clubs and organisations may be ignorant about Judaism and Israel. All Jews are beholden to help inform the wider society, as ignorance and prejudice have all too often been the enemies of the Jewish people.

Once, on a visit to the United States, I was invited to a meeting of several religious ministers in a large city. I was horrified at the level of prejudice and ignorance of this 'select' circle in relation to Judaism and Israel. It was clear to me that many had in fact never really had a serious conversation with a Jew, besides a few meetings with a local Rabbi.

If youth movements can initiate carefully prepared discussion groups, particularly in areas where the inhabitants have little contact with Jews, this would be a sensible action. In addition, as most madrichim have also spent some time in Israel, the possibility of explaining some of the Israeli realities would be welcome (arguably an imperative under the current situation in Israel and the Middle East). It seems that all too often Jews have refused to take up the challenge of initiating such conversations with local non-Jews. Youth movement madrichim, with experience of informal and creative educational methods, are often highly suitable for this task. Of course, it is often already the case that the movement madrichim play the central roles in the campus debates on matters of Jewish and Israel concern.

6) Social Action and Volunteering

Youth Movement Madrichim demonstrate enormous commitment by dedicating significant time and energy to their leadership activities. The vast majority of these hours are provided on a volunteer basis and the community would do well to recognise this not least in view of the costs involved in providing personnel to run alternative activities. However, young people in general are often willing to volunteer and commit themselves to a range of social action projects in many areas of life. This provides a further avenue for young people to express themselves whilst making a positive contribution to their community and the wider society. The Nativ Project has provided a much needed focus to support social action and volunteering on both an educational and practical level, with projects for Israel, the Jewish community and beyond.

CHANGING A PERSON'S LIFE

Let me now make a plea for the value of the youth movement in yet another realm with a powerful example. Research is increasingly emphasising that in the 20th century, and particularly as we move further into the next century, there are certain phenomena which are becoming increasingly clear. One issue which is causing much concern is the rise of youth suicide and youth depression (Frederick, 1985: 5; Liptz & Cramer, 1990; Pfeffer, 1986). Today, perhaps more than ever before, the breakdown of traditional societal frameworks, and particularly the family, has resulted in the need for alternative support frameworks to deal with the problem of *loneliness*. It is not within the scope of this paper to analyse this position in its socio-logical and psychological realms but rather to suggest that it is a harsh reality. The youth movement may be a useful organisation in identifying these cases. Well-trained and committed madrichim can help to locate this type of problem which will hopefully be addressed through appropriate referral and consultation (again, UJIA Makor has developed strong and sensitive expertise in this area). The building of a warm social climate is essential (Bunt, 1975: 117). Group activities should include the insular and marginal child, and give him/her a real role. Subtle responsibility can give one a better sense of self-esteem.

In the past decades, I have often been impressed by stories of how a youth movement changed a person's life. I can even say that for myself! All too often a madrich/a will be unaware of just how important a role that s/he has played, but the real picture is that many of these young and responsible leaders deserve a medal for what they have done for others.

THE ROAD AHEAD: THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A challenge must be to look closely at our quality of life. Entering the 21st century, one approach taken reflects the view that: "post-modern life is often perceived as an endless rush of events. People are looking for the proverbial quality time – time that is measured, purposeful and shared" (Woocher, 1995: 25). Can the Zionist youth movement fulfil this role?

This paper has also looked at a wider, intellectual question. What have we achieved as a people and where are we going? I started this paper relating two critical events of Jewish history – the Shoah and the creation of the State of Israel. In both cases, most of the more dramatic activities were not carried out by the masses, but by small groups of committed women and men, of all ages. It is my belief that in the last century and before, only a minority of the members of the Jewish communities had a really well developed sense of Klal Yisrael (the wider Community of Israel). One might sometimes become upset and frustrated by the burdens placed on the shoulders of a few determined people.

All too often, crass individualism and selfishness can dominate and those who are committed to the wider good feel that they are wasting their time. This is not true!

The proud record of the Zionist youth movement stands before us. We, at this crucial time of Jewish history, have an important part to play.

The continuous chain of Jewish peoplehood, with each link the hard work of the generations before us, is now our challenge. It is my belief that the Zionist youth movement should take up the challenge not only of 'Jewish continuity', but of something more. Creative and determined youth leaders can ensure an even better generation to take us on in the 21st century be it by working for the renewal of their own communities or by making aliyah to Israel.

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