

Abstract

Title of Dissertation: THE COMMUNITY JEWISH DAY SCHOOL:
A NEW EXPERIENCE IN JEWISH EDUCATION

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The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the origins and development of the Community Jewish Day School in America, a new form of education for the American Jewish community. It was different from earlier, single-ideological day schools that had emerged in the early part of the twentieth century. This dissertation describes the emergence of this new form of education by looking at three different cities at three different times.

What has emerged from this research is that by 1946 Philadelphia presented its Jewish community with a four-pronged configuration necessary to build a community Jewish day school. First, there existed a strong desire to intensively educate their children outside the home in an institution that could integrate both General and Judaic studies. Second, there was also present an ability to pay for private education and a sufficient population ready to

leave the public school for a period of time. Third, Philadelphia in 1946 also provided a comfortable host environment in which Christian neighbors were doing similar things for their children. Fourth, the families who came forward were representative of varied Jewish religious backgrounds requiring this welcoming environment and a pluralistic setting. The traditional, single ideological school was not suitable -- the diversity of the first families demanded a respect for Jewish heterogeneity.

Again in 1972 and in 1982, the demographics, cultural and religious needs, economic resources and hospitable environment merged. Numbers, a strong commitment, ability to pay and a comfortable host environment were all present. The dissertation traces the development of this unique trans-ideological institution by relating it to the major changes that have occurred within the American Jewish community, the world Jewish scene and in American society. The dissertation presents the Community Jewish Day School by placing it within the events and trends in the larger historical and social environment of the American Jewish community. The study further suggests that this form of education, in fact, is a reflection of the much larger pluralistic society of mid-twentieth century America.

The Community Jewish Day School:
A New Experience in Jewish Education

by

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Nomenclature

From time to time in the body of this paper the words Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist appear. Sometimes they are capitalized, other times, not. Where they are capitalized, the writer feels they need to be for emphasis and clarity.

Acknowledgements

This study is dedicated to the men and women who took the initiative in innovating this new form of Jewish education, particularly Mr. Charles E. Smith, who taught the Jewish community of Washington to fundraise for its own institutions, especially schools. He shares his love and commitment to Jewish education with me and with a thousand Jewish children daily. It is also written in appreciation to Joseph Mendelson, who had the foresight in 1965 to pioneer a Conservative day school in Washington, which evolved into its present community status, and to William Davis, now deceased, who single-handedly built the kindergarten classroom at the Gesher School.

It is written with appreciation to Dr. Barbara Finkelstein who provided the initial direction for this work and to Dr. George Ritzer who spent the summer of 1992 mentoring me and Dr. George Male who helped bring the study to conclusion.

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INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1946 the first Community Jewish Day School opened its doors in Philadelphia. It was communal in ideology espousing a multi-ideological approach to Jewish education. Its faculty and student body were drawn, by design, from every group in Jewish life.¹ The challenge to the curricular framework in such a school is to provide for all the major ideologies in Jewish life. Jewish pluralism, thus expressed, means that no one Judaic philosophy is more valid than another, that each philosophy of Judaism has distinct beauty and validity, and that one group's Jewish practices are as authentic as another's.² This dissertation explores the origins and development of this educational form as it was defined in Philadelphia and in two other schools in other cities over a thirty-six year period. This study is a story of schools in three different cities. It looks carefully at whether the time during which a particular school was founded had a bearing upon the community nature of the institution.

There are no specific studies that look at the emergence of this educational form in 1946. Its founders claimed that this was a new form of Jewish education different from earlier ideological, especially orthodox, day schools that had emerged in the early part of the century (1910-1925). Shortly thereafter, conservative schools were

founded for families of conservative Jewish persuasion. While all of these schools aspired to the common goal of perpetuating Jewish identity and the Jewish religio-cultural heritage within American society, each had its own ideological approach.³ There have been studies of these single-ideology Jewish institutions of learning and of other minority school systems. There exist an array of studies that look at the emergence of Catholic schools in the United States and elsewhere, Amish schools, non-religious independent schools and the public schools. This dissertation describes the emergence of Community Jewish Day Schools by looking at the origin of three such schools, suggests how others who have studied minority and alternative institutions of learning might have thought about them, and explores the conditions which led to their establishment.

The three schools are Akiba Academy, founded in 1946 in Philadelphia, the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School founded in 1966-72 in Rockville, Maryland and the Gesher School founded in 1982 in Alexandria, Virginia. All three schools have been described in their founding documents and by the utterances of their leaders as being trans-ideological⁴ and pluralistic. Each of the three was chosen because of its unique status in Jewish education.

Akiba was the first of its kind in this country and has always been an upper school, -- seventh through twelfth

grades, eventually adding a sixth grade. The Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School is representative of a number of community Jewish day schools that began as Conservative day schools and evolved into their present, trans-ideological status. It is also the largest such school in the country with 1,027 students and 150 faculty members. The Gesher School, the youngest of the three (1982), opened as an elementary school and was a community day school from its inception. While there are thirty-four more community Jewish day schools in the United States today, the three chosen are representative of three different points in time and three different communities, although all are on the east coast. Further studies of this type might examine schools in the midwest and on the west coast.

This research examines social conditions and changes occurring in the twentieth century while gathering information from founders, original faculty, original students and their parents. Such specific information sheds light on the personal circumstances, attitudes and communities which prompted the creation of these institutions. From the founders and early parents the study seeks to determine patterns in occupation, economic status, level of religious education, religious affiliation and commitment, and relationship with non-Jews. Some of this is derived from a questionnaire; the rest of the information emerges from follow-up interviews. Every effort has been

made to identify the specific issues to which the respondents were reacting at the time of the founding of their institutions. There is also an effort to examine the three schools in light of the transformations occurring in the larger society that may have acted as preconditions and precipitants of change.⁵ This aspect of the study is equally as important as the information derived from the founders and students. The beginning point for the researcher was the suspicion that the community Jewish day school movement constitutes a vital chapter in the recent history of American civilization, and that it, in fact, mirrors the much larger pluralistic society of mid-twentieth century America. This study may also yield information about American society and Jewish historical development during a period of major historical changes that were reflected in changes in education.

It is further an assumption of this study that Jewish education, as all forms of education, is restructured and assumes new meanings depending upon the prevailing historic, economic, social and cultural conditions.

The study, therefore, considers the proposition that community Jewish day schools did not emerge until the 1940's, and not in any considerable numbers until the 70's and 80's, because it was not until then that the idea of pluralism and a tolerance for ethnic roots had come of age making such schools a comfortable option for segments of the

Jewish community who heretofore would not have considered them as such.

Jews in 1946 were heir to a series of educational traditions that existed in the Sunday school, the synagogue supplementary schools attended in the afternoons after public school, the orthodox day schools and Yeshivas, and the single ideological conservative day schools. One thing is now clear; the founders of Akiba Academy in 1946 in Philadelphia were not comfortable in any of the existing institutions that were then available to them. Were these people members of a minority seeking an alternative to the existing value system, much like other minorities had in the past?

Statement of the Problem

The study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. When did the concept of the community Jewish day school emerge?
2. Why did such institutions emerge?
3. Were there precedents for such schools?
4. Who founded them?
5. For whom were they founded?
6. What was happening in public education at the time of the founding of these Jewish community day schools?

It attempts to determine why community Jewish day schools

did not emerge until the 1940's and not in any considerable number until the 1970's and 1980's.

Design

In 1959 Alexander Dushkin was commissioned to initiate a study on the state of Jewish education nationally. The following is found in the preface to his report.

It is generally accepted as elementary truth that education is as broad as life;... A complete and adequate study of American Jewish education would, therefore, need to include all the social, economic, cultural and psychological factors that affect the entire life and growth of American Jews; all the historic antecedents, present working and future trends of these many complex factors. Since the school is but one of the elements in the education of a person, no real evaluation can be made of what any school does, without knowledge of the personality patterns involved and the influence upon them of all other educative elements - family background, home life, social and educational contacts, and the general spiritual cultural climate in the community.⁶

This study attempts, therefore, to look at the three schools by also examining some of the founding personalities, the families who chose to send their children, the homes from which those children were coming, the level of religious educational attainment of the parents and the general climate of the three communities.

Having accepted the community day school as an established institution, and as reflected in its founding documents as both trans-ideological and pluralistic, the study asks how and why it came to be, what functions it

performs, whom it serves and whom it fails to serve -- the kind of information one should be able to determine from a historical record. Each of the schools are looked at in a chapter of its own (Chapters 2,3, and 4) providing information about the state of Jewish and public education at the time of the founding of the school in that particular city. The cities and their schools are presented as individual case studies looking at the community's role, if there was any, in the creation of the institution.

In Alexander Dushkin's quote he cites personality patterns as a factor to be understood. Just as David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot ⁷ focus on the people who created, managed, and reshaped the public school and on the transformations in the larger society that acted as preconditions and precipitants of change, this study seeks out the people who created, managed and reshaped existing day schools and looks for the transformations in American society that might have influenced those leaders. It was also John Higham who said that leadership focuses the consciousness of an ethnic group, and makes its identity visible, and additionally, is responsible for the creation of new structures.⁸

Often explanations for change lie in the characteristics of the groups that oppose or advance it. In this case it is the group that has advanced the establishment of this trans-ideological, community

institution that provides the information. The leadership role in this study falls to the founders of the three schools and sometimes the parents who took a chance in sending their children to a school without a record. Occupational backgrounds of those founders and the schools' original parents, their economic positions, their generational status in this country, their religious affiliations, their needs, and the kinds of neighborhoods they lived in were looked at.

Methodology

Questionnaires

Four questionnaires, one for founders, one for parents, a third for original students, and a fourth for founding faculty, were used to gather information about the origins of the schools. In the event that some of the founders and parents were deceased, their children were contacted to respond in loco parentis. It should be recognized that asking children for basic information about their parents such as occupation is not a great problem, however, there are limitations when one asks a child to imagine what his/her parents were thinking forty or fifty years ago when they were founding the school or registering their children in a new school.

It was decided that questionnaires would be used to gather initial information because the people to be contacted were spread out over three cities and not always easy to reach for an interview. The questionnaires were developed with the assistance of current parents and faculty at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School who responded to, and critiqued, early samples. At their suggestion most open-ended questions that were part of the original questionnaire were eliminated and simplified. A ranking question was added which asked the respondent to simply place various alternatives in order of importance. It was concluded that this question would not only provide excellent information but also create less of a problem for the respondent than an open-ended question.

The respondents were asked to rank the issues on a continuum of one to ten; one being of highest value and ten the least important. In many instances issues were given the same ranking by respondents, i.e. they were accorded the same degree of importance. On several questionnaires, certain issues were not given a numerical ranking at all with the explanation that those issues had no impact whatsoever on the thinking of the respondent.

The data derived from the questionnaires (found in the Appendix) were studied as a whole to see whether generational, economic and religious patterns emerge for all three schools. Then they also were examined with regard to

individual schools to determine whether time and place played any specific role in shaping each institution.

The questions themselves derive from the information gleaned from the literature review. It was expected that the questionnaires would yield information on whether there existed in 1946 a greater perceived need for Jewish identification and continuity than previously; whether, in fact, there was a loss of faith in public schools; whether interest in day schools was based on dissatisfaction with respondents' own religious education; whether affiliation with the school was a need for expression of religion; and whether family circumstances (occupation) demanded a longer school day for children.

Interviews

Where possible, meetings with founders, parents and students were attempted in the expectation that such meetings would enhance the qualitative aspects of the survey and further clarify their motivations.

It is important to note that founders alone cannot present the entire story; the time and place in which they function is also very important. They were creating and establishing new institutions, but they were not doing so without "circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past."⁹ Descriptions of the geographic areas where the schools were located, including

Jewish population and demographic statistics at the time of the founding of the institutions, were included. Looking at the broader picture of each city, their Federations of Jewish Philanthropies (main fundraising organs in each city for local institutional building and assistance to Israel), boards of educations and pre-existing schools, provide the background for each school.

Limitations

Unfortunately, there are relatively few founders, particularly representing the Akiba Hebrew Academy which was founded in 1946, still alive today. With the exception of three Akiba leaders, only one of whom actually responded for himself while the other two were responded for by their children, the remainder are deceased with no available families to contact. The author of this research found it necessary to rely heavily on the children of founders and secondary sources (in the case of Akiba particularly on Louis Newman, Solomon Grayzel, noted historians, and Saula Rubenz Waldman, an original student who wrote her own historical analysis¹⁰ of the founding of Akiba).

Going to the sources for this research meant not only locating founders, original parents and students, and faculties of the three schools, but also asking them to recall their perceptions and reasons for becoming part of the establishment of their respective community Jewish day

schools. In the case of Akiba, not only the majority of founders, but also most faculty and parents, are either deceased or no longer able to respond. As is often the case with students, locating them became a difficult problem. Alumni files are not always up to date and some former students have chosen not to remain on their school's mailing lists.

Of the twenty-one original families who sent their children to Akiba in September of 1946, fourteen were located and contacted, but only six parents, and/or their children in loco parentis, responded to the questionnaire. Of the twenty-one students, two are deceased, seventeen were contacted and twelve responded. Of the five faculty contacted, three responded.

The author has relied on those who chose to respond and this is a limitation that emerges. It must, therefore, be considered that those who chose not to respond may be different from those who did respond. They may be of other economic status; they may or may not be involved in the mainstream of Jewish life today and may be reluctant to respond.

The numbers of respondents from both the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School and Gesher School are also small, not so much because of death or old-age, but more because of the small number of people initially involved in the founding of the schools. Whereas every founding member of

Gesher's board responded, there were only six founders, and in spite of the difficulties encountered and the paucity of respondents, the author of the research chose to present the data with the knowledge that the common themes that emerge may be somehow biased.

Another potential limitation to the study that must be considered is the fact that the author of this research is currently the principal of the Lower School at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School and also served as a consultant for the development of curriculum during the first year of the Gesher School.

Historical Analysis

The transformation from a single-ideological to a multi-ideological institution did not happen all at once. Insight into the purpose of the community Jewish day school institution requires an appreciation of the historical development of the Jewish day school and Talmud Torah education in America. In order to recover the origins of the three community Jewish day schools, the study, therefore, briefly surveys the 200-year history of struggle and strain for Jews in America in Chapter One. That chapter (Chapter One) also includes an accepted definition for a community school and the status of these schools today. Chapter One also provides a literature review looking specifically at how others have researched origins of

educational forms and what Jewish educators have said about the history of Jewish education in this country. Chapters Two, Three and Four provide historical settings for the Akiba Academy, the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School and Gesher School. Chapter Five draws conclusions based on the information retrieved from the questionnaires, from interviews and from the literature review.

Footnotes - Introduction

1. Saula Rubenz Waldman, History of Akiba Hebrew Acedemy, (Philadelphia: Akiba Hebrew Acedemy), 1980. This paper was written in honor of the school's thirty-fourth birthday.
2. Daniel W. Bennett, "A Community Day School Network," The Pedagogic Reporter, vol 38, no. 4, (January, 1988), p.13.
3. Bernard Steinberg, "Jewish Education in the United States: A Study in Religio-Ethnic Response," Jewish Journal of Sociology, vol. 21, (June 1979) p. 7.
4. A trans-ideological institution is one which allows for the showcasing of the various options of thought and practice among the Jewish people making them readily available to students. An institution which encourages tolerance of differences, acceptance of differences, appreciation of differences and admiration of differences.
5. Bennett, "A Community Day School Network," p.11

"... the day school principal, the local rabbi, and the wealthy lay leader have affected Jewish education, but so have John Lennon, Richard Nixon, Bruce Springsteen, Ollie North, Don Mattingly and the Grateful Dead! Jewish education takes place within a larger social context, and the general life of America's Jews greatly affects what happens in Jewish education. Thus, Jewish life in the past two decades was shaped as much by such phenomena as Watergate, Contragate, 'Zionism is Racism,' Skokie, Jesse Jackson, Pollard, and Vietnam as it was by new Jewish textbooks and innovative curriculum projects. American Jewish education is influenced as much by the larger canvas of American culture and life, as it is by Jewish colors and strokes."
6. Alexander Dushkin, "Report of the Commission for the Study of Jewish Education in the United States," Jewish Education in the United States vol. 1.(New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1959), p. 6.
7. David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980, (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1982), p. 12.

8. John Highham, "Forms of the Ethnic Leadership," in Ethnic Leadership in America, ed. John Highham (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), pp. 2-8.
9. Tyack and Hansot, Managers of Virtue, p.12.
10. Waldman, History of Akiba, 1980

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Historical Overview

Although this study focuses on the emergence of the Community Jewish Day School in the second half of the twentieth century, such an examination cannot responsibly begin without a brief narrative of Jewish education in America. The concept of Jewish Day School is not indigenous to the twentieth century but has actually had a longer history in the United States. Its emergence, disappearance and re-emergence follows an interesting cycle which interacts with the public school movement from time to time and with successive moves of immigrants to this country.

As early as 1755 a Jewish Day School existed in the New World when Congregation Sheareth Israel in New York City established a "public school" to teach both Hebrew and secular subjects to the children of early Spanish and Portuguese settlers. This school continued with some few interruptions until the occupation of New York by the British, when most of the Jewish community fled to Philadelphia.¹

While the school itself no longer exists today, the Congregation of Shearith Israel does continue as the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of New York City. From 1808 until

1821, the school was once again operating as a day school, teaching Hebrew and English subjects. Students attended classes twelve months a year, six days a week from 9-5 with a two-hour recess. The curriculum included Hebrew, the prayer book and Bible, but the largest part was devoted to secular subjects -- English, Spanish, math, spelling, literature and history. Maintenance of the school came from tuition and a subsidy from the congregation. This enabled poor children of the community to attend for free.² Thereafter, until the Civil War, it became a supplementary school, since for their secular education, the pupils went to private, and later public, school, attending the religious school program after regular class hours.

It is evident from the brief historical synopsis of Sheareth Israel that the Jewish day school emerged in the presence of two vital factors: a critical mass of Jews in the locale, accompanied by a critical amount of solidarity, or commitment to preserve heritage. "Faith and market" were both strong enough to intersect and demand the institution meet their needs. It is also evident that as soon as commitment and cultural needs changed, the community sought alternate vehicles for educating its youngsters. The private (non-religious) and public schools became popular, with religious education reserved for afternoon school. It will be important in looking at the twentieth century to plot the tension between demographics, cultural and

religious need, and economic resources and note if where they meet in time, a Jewish Day School emerges.

Yeshiva Israel School and Synagogue was dedicated at Newport, Rhode Island on December 2, 1763. Its educational program assumed primary importance and included both the secular and religious education of the Jewish children. The teachers were required to be competent to teach not only Hebrew but also English, Dutch, and Spanish. However, in October 1822 the last Jew left Newport for New York, and with the demise of the community there, the school closed.³

The Synagogue schools of the colonial period were similar to the schools sponsored by the Protestant and Catholic churches at the time. Enrollments at such Jewish all-day schools reached a peak, before dropping off in the mid-nineteenth century when in New York eight hundred and fifty-seven pupils were taught in seven schools by thirty-five teachers.⁴ The popularity of these institutions is attributed to a similar popularity of Christian private schools, and they were intended for the children of the rich.⁵ Apparently Jews became comfortable educating their children in an openly religious school when others did the same.

Initially, public education was limited, and because it was of questionable quality⁶ it was available mainly for the poor. Not until the quality of public education improved did public schools loom as a threat to private,

religious education. As legislation after 1850 began to favor state, rather than church, control of schools and as confidence in public education increased, religious all-day schools, Jewish and some non-Jewish, began to decline. In time, sectarian groups were prevented from obtaining public funds to establish and maintain their own religious, educational institutions.⁷

A second wave of Jewish migration came from Germany in three distinct groups at three separate times. The first group came after the period of reaction and absolutism which followed the fall of Napoleon in 1815. These Jews came not just as individuals, but in organized groups from Germany. They were mostly from small towns, poor and culturally limited. Lacking capital and skills, many of these people lived in America as peddlers spreading out across the south and midwest, gradually settling down in a multitude of American towns. Educating their children in a Jewish school could not have been uppermost on their minds; even if they had wanted to do so they could not have afforded it.⁸ Prospering economically had to have been a priority.

A second, more educated and affluent group of German Jews arrived after 1848. These Jews had participated in, and supported, the German democratic revolution of 1848. When that revolution failed, these Germans had to flee as political exiles. Many of the German Jews arriving in this second group brought with them a new ideology of Judaism,

Reform Judaism.⁹ This group also was concerned with adapting to a new environment and certainly not with encouraging its membership to preserve a heritage that they considered outmoded.

In one congregation after another, changes of a far-reaching sort were introduced: the length of the service was sharply curtailed; the traditional prayers for the return to Zion and restoration of the Temple and of the Davidic monarchy were dropped; references to the resurrection of the dead were eliminated; organ music was introduced; English replaced Hebrew as the primary language of prayer; the traditional segregation of the sexes was abolished, so that men and women sat together in family pews; and regulations were passed prohibiting male worshippers from wearing prayer shawls and hats.¹⁰

Although they could have afforded private schooling, they were not committed to Jewish day school education. This resulted in other, less intense forms of education for their children. They, experimented with different patterns of Jewish schooling.¹¹ Among these were the Jewish Sabbath, or Sunday School, which provided religious instruction only once a week with their children sitting in public school classrooms for General Studies with their American neighbors five days a week.

A third group of German Jews arrived several years later with a very different commitment to preserving their heritage. These immigrants, not having been exposed to Reform Judaism while still in Germany, were shocked by the laxity in religious observance they encountered in America.

They turned for a solution to the day school concept. This group remained in the big cities: Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati and New York where the few day schools that remained were attached to synagogues. A special school committee at each synagogue supervised the school, collected tuition, hired teachers, and determined curriculum. Leading members of the congregation usually served on the committee, and they visited the school constantly to test students and observe teachers. The program of Jewish studies was the traditional one, but generally the program was weighted in favor of secular studies. These schools remained until the public school became too important a factor to compete with, particularly after the public school eliminated Christian texts from the curriculum.¹²

By 1872 the entire system of Jewish all-day schools had collapsed. Aside from the problems of poor discipline, lack of good teachers and the financial difficulties of these all-day schools, the parochial type of education suffered from ideological dissent from within the Jewish community. Although the Orthodox German Jews had favored the all-day school and regretted its disappearance, others, particularly the Reform Jews, were outspoken in their opposition to it. Fear was often expressed that Jews were erecting a wall between themselves and the Gentile community by maintaining these schools. The anti-sectarian movement had gripped the Jews of America.¹³

By 1880 not many of the descendants of the early 18th century American Jews still adhered to the tenets of Judaism. Inter-marriage and the conversion to Christianity made for a thinning of the ranks of these early Jews.¹⁴ They felt little need for an all-day school, where English and Hebrew subjects would be taught. Some even began registering their children in Christian "Institutes" or "Academies" as their neighbors were doing. In most of these private schools the purpose of instruction was the inculcation of Christianity. Others also sent their children to the popular public schools.¹⁵

Meanwhile Jews from other countries continued to enter the United States. The largest influx of Jewish immigrants to this country came with the Eastern European or Russian migration. Politically discriminated against in Poland and Russia, pressured by economic misery, and subjected to the blood libels and terrors of the pogroms, nearly one million Jewish immigrants reached the United States between 1881-1905.¹⁶

These immigrants had come from countries where Jewish learning was universal. In the United States, however, as a symbol of their freedom, they immediately enrolled their children in the public schools, and under the stress of economic and social conditions, they were often forced to neglect the Jewish education of their children. They could not afford a full-scale day school system. In addition,

Americanization and the ideology of the "melting pot" operated against the establishment of a separate system.¹⁷

New York City was the largest recipient of these masses of immigrants. Its schools were different from the schools in Russia that the immigrants had known. New York schools were free and nonsectarian and this inspired confidence in the public schools of New York City: Jewish children learned quickly that the important school was the public one and the heder or supplemental one was the secondary one.¹⁸

These immigrants never doubted their cultural continuity; they simply assumed it and never thought about its demise. Consequently, Jewish educators sought to develop an educational system that would meet popular needs. Jewish supplemental schools "would preserve Jewish life....without interfering with America's cherished plan of common schools."¹⁹ As a result, most children who attended Jewish schools in the early decades of the twentieth century went to supplemental schools. Only a small percentage attended a Jewish parochial school for the entire day, generally termed Yeshiva, and then it was usually only the male children of the most religious families.

A group of those supplemental schools, known as Talmud Torahs, was established early in the century as schools for the entire Jewish community. This tradition of serving the children of a community emanated from the shtetls of eastern Europe where communal tradition was very strong.

Educationally and religiously, these schools stressed not exclusive and conflicting loyalties, but an inclusive multiplicity of loyalties.²⁰ Talmud Torahs offered daily instruction opening their doors at 9:00 a.m. for children too young to attend public school. Children in public schools until 3:00 p.m. attended Talmud Torahs from 3:30-8:00 p.m. Poor children attended free of charge, while the neediest also received clothing and shoes.²¹

Most Jews at this time were not comfortable with the concept of yeshiva education in America.²² They did not believe that such an education was representative enough of the American way of life. They nevertheless continued to view the community as being responsible for Jewish education and were most comfortable with a supplemental school network. Samson Benderly, a young Jewish educator, emerged as a leading spokesperson for this movement. Through his leadership and advocacy, the Talmud Torah grew in importance and moved to the top of many communities' financial agenda.²³ Throughout his career he worked to funnel all communal funds to the advancement of the Talmud Torah which he considered to be the least identifiable ideological school, therefore, serving the most varied elements in the community and deserving of its funding.²⁴

While the immigrants were prepared to have their children Americanized, they were uneasy with what they believed was a loss of identity. They looked to the Talmud

Torah as an acceptable way of combating this situation. As time went by, however, social mobility emerged more and more as their all-consuming goal, and they came close to accepting themselves as a discarded generation as the price to be paid.²⁵

Within a brief few years, a small minority of Jews began to find that the Talmud Torah was not satisfactory. They were concerned that the Talmud Torah would not stem the tide of an assimilation they were beginning to experience²⁶ and they turned once again to the concept of an all-day school.

It was from the Orthodox community that this movement re-emerged and, therefore, this community monopolized the earliest Jewish Day Schools of the twentieth century. The first Yeshiva, Etz Chaim Talmudical Academy, was founded in 1887 under the auspices of several East European immigrants with eighty students in attendance from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The day was spent in Hebrew and classical Jewish studies while evening hours were allocated for secular English classes.

Ten years later, in 1897, the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York City offering advanced classes in Talmud and related Rabbinic literature was established. In 1915 the two schools merged creating the first Jewish All-Day High School in America. In 1919 the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York

registered it as an accredited high school.²⁷

This group and their Yeshivot served a small minority of Jews. The majority, as described earlier, remained determined to adapt completely to American society. Even among some orthodox Jews, there was a belief that they provided enough of an education in the confines of their homes to maintain the Jewish identity. For most Jews this did not change until after World War I when more orthodox Jews came to view the supplementary system as inadequate and conceded that they needed more than the home. By 1939 thirty-two Orthodox day schools were teaching 7,000 pupils and the American Association for Jewish Education was organized. Nineteen thirty-seven and 1938 were very significant years in that day schools not only began to proliferate in New York City but also opened their doors outside of New York City on Long Island, and in New Jersey; they were all, however, Orthodox schools.

In 1940 there were thirty-five day schools with 7,700 pupils. Just ten years later in 1950 there were 139 schools enrolling 55,000 students, and by 1964 65,000 students were in attendance at 306 schools.

The end of World War II brought with it the disintegration of the old Jewish neighborhoods in many cities and simultaneously saw the rise of "Jewish Suburbia" and a great movement of population from major eastern cities to smaller, less populous centers all over the United

States. This dealt a major blow to the Talmud Torah movement which lost its constituency of supporters and students to the suburbs. For several years nothing resembling the communal aspect of the Talmud Torah was in existence. During the mass moves to suburbia, Judaism became primarily associational, with affiliation based on synagogue membership. At this time, the synagogue, not the community, assumed the total responsibility for its members' education, with the synagogue-centered school replacing the earlier educational pluralism of the communal Talmud Torah. For a time Jewish supplemental schools became predominantly local, single ideology, synagogue institutions.²⁸

In 1979 a survey of Jewish day school population in this country revealed 90,675 children in attendance. By then both the day schools and the synagogue schools had taken away all enrollments from the Talmud Torahs. Of the 306 schools counted in 1979 not all were Orthodox; some were also Conservative emanating from the Solomon Schechter movement. Each of these schools continued within its own ideological approach.

Definitions of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism

The goal of the Orthodox school emphasized the theocentric aspect of life's dramas. Its objectives included the concepts that the worldwide community of Israel

is one and the goal of an education must lead to good deeds.²⁹ The Conservative viewpoint saw the primary aim of the school as creating an "irrevocable identification" with the Jewish people rather than with the basic rituals of Judaism. Conservative Judaism tries to adapt ancient ritual to modern times.³⁰ The Reform goal for the school was to create a Jew whose Judaism is inseparable from his own self identity by creating an internal personal commitment to Judaism.³¹ As opposed to Orthodoxy, Reform Judaism while continuing to stress the ethical concepts of Judaism, does not follow the traditional practices of Orthodox Jewry. The Reconstructionists viewed the school's function and aim as the way to get the children to participate in the totality of Jewish life.³²

In viewing the numerical explosion of day school enrollments, one is confronted with a geographic spread. While in 1940 day schools existed in six communities in four states and two Canadian provinces, 1964's map is dotted with day schools in one-hundred seventeen communities in twenty-nine states and five Canadian provinces. The gradual disintegration of densely populated urban Jewish sectors, the shift of Jewish population from older, established urban areas to new ones, and the rise of suburbia with growing concentrations of Jewish population are relevant changes. Suddenly finding themselves in a new and strange environment, the former urbanites experienced a strong need

for identification and belonging.³³

It is among day school enrollments beginning in the 1940's and 50's that we suddenly see the philosophy of the earlier communal Talmud Torah re-emerge in the Community Jewish Day School. This constituency felt a need to identify and belong, but they were not all Orthodox. Nor were they necessarily Conservative. Since 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel, a sense of cohesiveness had been growing among Jews of all religious denominations. This cooperative spirit was raised to even greater heights in 1967 during the Six Day War when a concern emerged for the security and survival of the Jewish people in America among Reform Jewish leaders. At this same time the Reform movement began questioning its tradition of educational separation in congregational (supplementary) schools along denominational lines and exploring the idea of a "pooling of community resources, a sharing of experiences, advice and equipment...regardless of ideological affiliation."³⁴

As of 1978 there were approximately 6,000,000 Jews in America with varying degrees of commitment to Jewish life. Jews, in no other country at no other time, had ever before experienced such unprecedented human, social, and cultural openness, nor had they ever been confronted with such powerful challenges to their value system. Tradition and communal constraints had lost much of their authority. In

the American context of freedom, choice, democracy and individualism, people defined "Jewishness" in their own way and joined or created Jewish lifestyles, institutions, and affiliations which expressed their individual values.

For some of them commitment invariably included some measure of ritual practice and religious observance. Others considered themselves totally committed to Jewish life although they were personally agnostic and considered ritual an outmoded form of human expression. They expressed their commitments instead by visits and financial help to Israel, participation in the life of their local Jewish communities, and belonging to Jewish organizations, having Jewish friends and marrying within the Jewish community...

Among the Jews who have some kind of commitment or relationship with the religious dimension of Judaism or its institutional expression, there are clear divisions expressing a variety of ways of thinking about and practicing Judaism.³⁵

The Community Jewish Day School is a new approach to Jewish education that Dr. David Shluker, Director of the Jewish Education Service of North America's Department of Community Consultation and Planning, refers to as trans-ideological.³⁶ In such a school, Orthodox liturgy becomes familiar to the Reform Jewish child and Reconstructionist practices are introduced to the Conservative child. Such a trans-ideological philosophy is most appropriate for a school whose student body comes from homes of varying religious ideologies. All aspects of life, structure, teaching and activities at the school reflect the pluralistic makeup of the broader community. Faculty are, therefore, recruited from different seminaries and

denominations so that the staff will reflect the pluralistic role models that make up the broader Jewish community.

The pluralism within that broad Jewish community implies a willingness to look for shared values and goals and indicates an appreciation of the positive motives of each group. Pluralism conceptualized in this way dictates a commitment to seeking creative solutions to common problems. In this view, persons are obliged to develop and utilize strategies and approaches that narrow differences or reduce conflict, within the parameters of each group's principled positions. Within such a context, Michael Zuckerman delivers a powerful message for life in the twentieth century:

At home and abroad, issues decisive, not merely for politics but also for the very fate of man hinge on how we get on with others from whom we differ. In many ways, this is the one momentous issue by which modern man will be judged.³⁷

The question of how to transmit a meaningful, positive attachment to a particular vision of Judaism (a denominational loyalty), while inculcating a commitment to the larger unity and totality of the Jewish people becomes a very important matter; how to best teach about other Jews and movements with understanding, respect, and love, without confusing our children.³⁸

This study attempts to determine whether the Community Jewish Day School is a beginning effort to answer this need which arose out of the unique pluralistic, American society

in which Jews found themselves living in 1946 and thereafter.

Literature Review

This section looks at precedents of traditions which can shed light on the origins of Community Jewish Day Schools and which already exist in the writing of educational historians, ethnic researchers, sociologists, and scholars of Jewish history. The word, "community," is what distinguishes this institution from other Jewish day schools and its use as a descriptor compels one to look at its meaning and significance in relation to the school.

The Concept of Community

According to Thomas Bender, community, which has assumed many structural forms in the past, is best defined as a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds. While he cites the New England town as an example of community, he does not accept it as a definition of community. The logical conclusion to be drawn from Bender's premise is that a family, a neighborhood, a group of friends or a class can be a community without providing a definition of the concept. One must, therefore, keep an open mind toward the various structural forms that might contain community, but know that a definition of community must, then, be independent of particular structures.³⁹

Martin Buber wrote: "A real community need not consist of people who are perpetually together; but it must consist of people who, precisely because they are comrades, have mutual access to one another and are ready for one another."⁴⁰ None of the thirty-seven schools belonging to the national group of Community Jewish Day Schools of America serve a single territorial area or local constituency. In fact, children travel daily from distances that cause them to ride on buses and in cars for an hour or more in many instances. The kind of "community" alluded to here is obviously not the New England type of community or the community that early twentieth century immigrants knew in the ghetto of New York's lower East Side. Thomas Bender urges us to seek out "new images of community based upon an historical notion of continued transformation."⁴¹

Compatible with Bender's explanations of transformations of the community rather than its demise or disappearance is his view of the capacity of the family to socialize the child. He maintains that this capacity did not change, but the society that the children would be entering had indeed undergone massive changes. The school was, therefore, needed to supplement the family. Its role was not to take over the family's educational functions, but rather to perform new ones that the family could not. The family taught children about community, while school introduced them to society.⁴²

Whereas in the nineteen-twenties and thirties personally and privately Judaism may have been withering, Jewishness in the neighborhood was flourishing and the family was satisfied. As long as Jews lived in crowded settlements with little contact with either native Americans or other immigrant groups, they were able to ignore the new American environment.⁴³ The family still had confidence in itself to transmit that old-world Jewish culture, or Yiddishkeit (Jewishness), as it was called. Families surrounded themselves with other Jewish families, their streets reflected the insides of their homes and while they were climbing the ladder of Americanization and breaking into higher financial strata, they were sending their children to public schools with everyone else and were thrilled that they were permitted to do so.

Because of the intensity of their desire to see their children rise above their own social and economic status, some parents were even willing to withstand humiliation if they thought it would contribute to their children's upward mobility.⁴⁴

But with the passage of time Charles Silberman's historical study returns the reader to Bender's analysis of the child for the new society they were encountering.

When your street counting both sides has twenty houses, twenty families, and only one other than your own is Jewish, you wonder and worry. How will that child know that he is Jewish and what it is to be a Jew? So we look about the house and take inventory. My wife doesn't bench

lecht (recite blessing over the Sabbath candles), and I don't own a tallis (prayer shawl). The mezzuzah is gone from the door. In the city there was always one left from tenant to tenant. So outside of our telling him so, and the occasional Jewish meichel (food), how will he know? (as quoted by Silberman from an essay by H. Gersh in 1954)

It was a question most Jewish parents asked.... A feeling of Judaism could not easily be transmitted to the children, for it was the unconscious product of the old extended family system, as well as of the old ethnic neighborhoods. When I was growing up, for example, we lived within walking distance of seven of my mother's eight brothers and sisters and all four of my father's siblings. It was taken for granted that Saturday afternoons would be spent visiting grandparents, great-aunts and great-uncles, and assorted other relatives. By the time my children were born, however, family members were scattered throughout the New York metropolitan area. In short, the extended family system and the old neighborhoods disappeared together as family members began to go their separate ways in a social and psychological, as well as a geographic sense.⁴⁵

Educational Historians and Sociologists

The theme of Family

There exists a group of historians who explore early educational history by also focusing on the theme of family transformation as an explanation for the emerging public educational effort. Those studying the American colonial period, Bernard Bailyn and Michael Zuckerman as examples, link the emergence of school to a transformation in the functions of families as educational institutions and

helpers of social order. In contrast to Bender's theory, early colonials reacted to what they perceived as a growing incapacity of families to manage children effectively as they began to establish schools to complement, if not to strengthen, the educational hand of New England families. In an attempt to maintain order and stability they vested schools with educational missions that once belonged entirely to the family -- teaching children to read and write, preparing them for labor, forming their manners and morals, securing their loyalty, compelling obedience. The emergence of schools for this group represented new structures of authority for children. These historians would likely link the emergence of the Community Jewish Day School with an incapacity of the family to remain the transmitter of the heritage. Silberman also provides an argument for this group of researchers pointing out that suburban parents during post-World War II had little or no religious education themselves (when they lived in the old neighborhood), and as a result they were too ignorant of Judaism to answer their children's questions now.⁴⁶

Those same Jewish children were in constant contact with non-Jewish children at play and in school and their parents believed that they needed to understand what makes them different and to develop positive feelings about their Jewishness.⁴⁷

Silberman provides strong arguments to support both

Bender and Bailyn. It seems, at this point, of little consequence whether the family was incapable or whether social conditions were experiencing transformations that rendered the family inadequate as the sole transmitter of Jewish identity. Circumstances demanded change. Jacob Neusner couched the issue in the following terms:

The commandments, which set our conduct of life apart from that of others, were intended, we are taught, to purify the heart of man, not to preserve the Jewish people or to insure the persistence of a special way of life. But for our place and time what was central has become peripheral (purification process), and what was once the obvious and almost irrelevant by-product (preservation) has become the heart of the matter.⁴⁸

For Jews the issue of education being exclusive or communal (inclusive) is not new. In the first century Rabban Gamaliel II declared that his school was open only to the kind of student whose "inside was like his outside," i.e. who combined proficiency in scholarship with good character and moral integrity. On the other hand, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, a fellow scholar disagreed with this selective exclusionist formula and urged that all who desire to enter upon the study of Torah should be readily admitted. As he put it, "Torah is the property of the entire people. Who is to say who can benefit from the study of Torah and who cannot."⁴⁹

The school of Rabban Gamaliel closed; the community

school of ben Azaryah survived. Although this does not prove one wrong and the other correct, one should note that some nineteen-hundred years ago, the concept of a school serving the entire community was the popular one.

Catholic Parochial Schools in the United States

This study would hardly be complete without looking at James W. Sanders' study of the Catholic educational enterprise in this country, a system preceding the Community Jewish Day School. It bears careful scrutiny since it, too, involves a minority system. Sanders looks at the emergence of the Catholic school system in an urban context. He views Catholic education in its many relationships to the total urban scene. This resulted in a look at the general social, political and economic climate in Chicago. He noted the city's growth and its prosperity which overflowed to the Catholics in the 1920's as a factor in the establishment of the Catholic school system.⁵⁰

Sanders also cites the conflict with, and suspicion of, public schooling as a catalyst to the development of Catholic education. Protestant control of the public schools constituted a major factor. Without the public school as enemy, Sanders feels the Catholic system would never have been founded on such a grand scale. He makes this argument potent by pointing out that where public schools were run and staffed by Catholics, parochial schools

did not flourish to the same degree.⁵¹

Sanders touches upon what this study refers to as the "immigrant factor" as an issue not to be glossed over lightly. To those for whom Americanization meant the desired obliteration of cultural differences brought from Europe, the ethnic Catholic school could only be seen as divisive. But for those Catholics who saw Americanization as a fusion of diverse cultural strands into a new social whole, the Catholic school would be a logical vehicle to ease the immigrant's transition from the old world to the new.⁵² Moreover the Catholic church's early ethnic policy, of providing its parishes with priests of their own nationality and parish schools with their own sisters who taught in their own national tongue, helped cement the early immigrant's loyalty to church and school.

A unique aspect to Sanders' study is that of its limitation to Chicago. In the rest of America not every diocese developed an educational program comparable to that which emerged in Chicago. And, in 1929, in spite of Pope Pius XI's strong encyclical mandating religious schooling on the world's Catholics, even Chicago's Catholic schools recorded their first enrollment loss. To Sanders, this evidence indicated the pressure of economic and social forces -- extreme financial hardship during the Depression forced many Catholic parents to remove their children from parochial schools.⁵³ Certainly all institutions should be

examined in light of the economic and social forces surrounding their clientele. It will be important for this study also to focus on the ability of the Jewish people to establish and sustain an educational institution where tuition provides the largest part of the revenue. Sanders provides this direction for research as well as that of examining the public schools' role in the life of the Jewish immigrant. At no time was the public school considered by the Jews the common enemy against which to rally, as it was by the Catholics.⁵⁴ There did come a time, however, when there emerged a disenchantment with the quality of education provided by the public school, which is cited by some of the Jewish historians to be examined later on in this study.

In the light of his own interpretations of the Catholic School movement, one could derive that Sanders might view the emergence of the Community Jewish Day School in the 1940's as a direct result of an ability to support the institution. He might also conclude that it would be a result of a migrant group seeking a comfortable transition from the ghetto of the Lower East side of New York City (or cities of heavily populated Jewish communities) to suburbia, much like the Catholic immigrant seeking an easy transition from the old world to the new. As Sanders cites the mistrust of the Catholics with regard to the public school, he probably would not overlook the loss of faith on the part of Jewish parents in the American public school.

For Sanders, it is always important to discuss Catholic schooling in the total context of American society, to place the development of Catholic schools within the mainstream of American educational history. This focus of his becomes an important direction for researching the trans-ideological Jewish day school.

Other historians have embedded educational institutions in traditions similar to those of Sanders. Private schools had emerged in the absence of alternatives as early as the colonial period. According to R. Freeman Butts, in response to the pressures of the newer immigrant groups, colonial governments allowed the development of a variety of private sectarian religious schools, each supported and promoted by the voluntary effort of the various religious denominations.⁵⁵ Not until after the Revolution, and really not until the period of 1820 - 1850, did a reversal of attitudes occur. It was not until then that the government sought to transform education as part of the larger political transformation -- to make it public where it had been private; to make it uniformly republican where it had been ideologically pluralistic -- when state responsibility for education was proposed as the best way to develop a common school for all.

The idea of a common school was strengthened and gained momentum as a result of Horace Mann's visits to Prussia, where the movement for national education had originated

earlier in the nineteenth century. Mann returned with glowing reports about the Prussian system. Such a national system never developed here since education in America was not viewed as the responsibility of the national government. The multiplicity of denominations also made it difficult to adopt the Prussian model.

In the 1830's, however, public education became an important issue not only for the progressive Jacksonian Democrats, but also for the wealthy conservatives who saw public education as one means to struggle against social disintegration.

The so-called masses (many of them immigrants), were often perceived as a danger for both social order and progress and not compatible with American republicanism. An important factor which brought about the movement toward public and universal education was the urgent need of the wealthy ruling classes to train the poor in the disciplines of punctuality and obedience, so necessary for workers in industry.⁵⁶

Eventually the states and local school districts did assume responsibility for educating the young. From then on Carper and Hunt suggest that at various times in its history, pluralistic America, while offering vast economic possibilities and freedoms, has also been viewed as a threat to the traditions of some ethnic minority groups and religious sects with regard to educating their young. Just as Sanders viewed the Catholic school system as a response to a contradictory religious environment and a distrust of

the public schools, so, too, do Carper and Hunt view the Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist and Amish schools as responses to hostile educational environments.⁵⁷

Patrica Lines' research agrees with this thinking. She points out that when the public school's values were Protestant, a vigorous Roman Catholic school system emerged. Speaking of the current situation she asserts that public schools devoid of strong values curriculum have had the effect of promoting the flourishing of a strong Protestant private school movement.⁵⁸ Following the line of reasoning of Sanders, Butts, and Lines, one is tempted to see the Community Jewish Day School in a school of alternatives as a response to a hostile educational environment or as a more comfortable option.

Again, as Sanders interprets the Catholic school as a comfortable haven for the Catholic immigrant once he could afford to send his child there, so, too, does Oscar Handlin discover a significant pattern of an incredible upward mobility for Jews as the nineteenth century closes. Each new immigrant group, as it came, pushed upward the level of those who immediately preceded, and was in turn pushed upward by its successors. This process of upward movement produced a fluidity in our social system virtually unknown at any other place or time.⁵⁹ This pattern of upward mobility for Jews may provide some parallels with the prosperity which overflowed to the Catholics in Chicago. In

both cases, an ability to pay tuition was present enabling the establishment of a private enterprise. This was in sharp contrast to many earlier Jewish immigrants who were struggling to emerge from the "proletariat" and for whom only a secular education seemed exciting.

This pattern also emerges in the writings of W. Lloyd Warner who points out that the sons and daughters of the Jewish immigrants also took advantage of the mobility of American society.

Unlike other immigrants, Jewish parents were passionately concerned with giving their children an education. Equipped with language and knowledge, this group passed quickly out of the proletariat into white collar, professional, and academic occupations.⁶⁰

Susan Horn's dissertation claims that in 1910-20 America's Jews could afford to finance only a supplemental, rather than a full-scale, parochial system. That, and their desire to take advantage of free access to the American public educational system, made Jewish supplementary schooling very attractive.⁶¹

Jewish Historians

According to the interpretations of Jewish historians, the Community Jewish Day Schools come into view within general trends occurring in American history. David Singer traces the day school's emergence and growth from

Conservative and Reform Jewish families to a loss of faith in the quality of the public school. This loss of faith occurred simultaneously on the part of Catholic, Baptist, and many middle and upper class white families, particularly those residing in inner cities.⁶²

David Singer is confirmed in his findings by James Carper and Thomas Hunt, who point out that as problems associated with public education approached "crisis" proportions, there has been a concomitant awakening of interest in private schooling. Writing in 1984, the two see Americans as more receptive than at any other time in recent history to nonpublic options.

Public opinion surveys in 1981 and 1982 suggested that a substantial percentage (some polls placed the figure as high as 45%) of public school parents would transfer their children to a private school if the financial means were available. Furthermore, the general public seems to be more supportive than ever before of tuition tax credits, vouchers, and similar proposals for enhancing educational choice...and the Reagan administration's philosophical preference for private choice has drawn considerable attention to nonpublic education.⁶³

For some Jews the failure of the public school went beyond the quality of academic studies to touch on the basic goals and ideals of a value-free education which some claimed public schools were espousing. As early as 1953 Marvin Fox began arguing against a values-free education and for the addition of a morals/ethics component in the curriculum.⁶⁴

Other sociologists and rabbis have written extensively on the importance of the creation of the State of Israel as a unifying factor for all Jews. An example is Jacob Neusner, who claims that the year 1948 and thereafter ushered in an emotional high accompanying a sense of enormous pride to Jews everywhere, with the recognition of Israel as a state.

....the reality of the State of Israel turns out to fascinate the younger generation (those born since 1945) still more than the fantasy mesmerized their parents. If the 1950s and '60s were times in which the State of Israel rose to the top of the agenda of American Jewry, in the 1970s it seems to constitute the whole of that agenda. No other Jewish issue has the power to engage the younger generation of Jews as does the issue of the State of Israel.⁶⁵

It was from thinking such as Neusner's that a theory of cultural pluralism could arise. For Rauch the most prominent representative of such theory was Horace Kallen, writing in 1915, a deeply committed Zionist stirred by the hope of a national revival. After making an historical analysis of the struggle of many minorities against assimilation throughout history and the failure of many political systems to obliterate differences among people, Kallen proceeded to describe a society in which pluralism would be a reality.

In the first phase (the immigrants) exhibit economic eagerness, the greed of the unfed. Since external economic differences are a handicap in the economic struggle, they assimilate, seeking thus to facilitate the attainment of economic independence. Once the proletarian level of such independence is

reached, the process of assimilation slows down and tends to come to a stop. The immigrant group is still a national group, modified, sometimes improved, by environmental influences, but otherwise a solitary spiritual unit, which is seeking to find its way out on its own social level.... Americanization has liberated nationality.⁶⁶

Within this interpretation, cultural pluralism could in itself be considered a product of the American melting pot and would prove most attractive to those who were already largely assimilated. Horace Kallen, himself, in 1906 participated in the founding of the Harvard Menorah Society. This was the beginning of an intercollegiate movement intended to overcome a "shameful ignorance of things Jewish among Jewish students and thus to combat their impulse to forget or hide their origins. Kallen propounded what would become a cornerstone of his thesis: people cannot successfully change their ethnic identity. Mixing occurs only in external relations, not in a man's inner life."⁶⁷

Leonard Dinnerstein, Gertrude J. Selanick and Stanley Steinberg write about an environment in the early part of the twentieth century that was hostile to foreigners, particularly after World War I.⁶⁸ An anti-immigration atmosphere became very intense. Even American Jews joined the ranks of those who opposed further immigration of Eastern European Jews into this country.

Send no more immigrants. America is not a poorhouse. We will not be made an asylum for the paupers of Europe. Emigration must cease. We'll not receive another refugee.⁶⁹

Since a large proportion of the new Jewish immigrants in the early 20th century were Russian, their problems were compounded by the popular fear of the Bolshevik revolution. The Jews were openly prevented from holding certain jobs, and a rigid quota system was instituted to limit the percentage of Jews in some universities. Under such conditions would the Jewish community feel comfortable educating its children in a Jewish day school?⁷⁰ Coming from such an environment, Samson Benderly, a strong leader in Jewish education prior to World War II, was dedicated solely to the public school system and committed to the afternoon supplemental school for Jewish schooling.⁷¹ He was so vehement in his advocacy of the supplemental Talmud Torah that he actually prevented day school support from growing in America, and inhibited the use of communal funds needed to make it grow.⁷²

Ethnic Historians

In his article "Jewish Education in the United States: A Study in Religion-Ethnic Response," Bernard Steinberg views the day school as the creation both of the Jewish community and its host society; it is thus the product of dual influences, not only in its historical development but also in its distinctive contemporary characteristics.

In the wider setting, American history is to a

great extent that of the absorption of immigrants and of their subsequent contribution towards an emergent national culture. The American social ethos evolved largely as part of this historical process. At first the ideal of Anglo-Conformity prevailed, when the newcomers were expected to adapt to the dominant English forms established by the original forebears of the new nation. In due course it became manifest that this ideal was not to be attained. The newcomers persisted in a maintenance of their cultures.

By the early years of this century, the well-known melting pot theory had gained wide currency. An emergent composite American culture was envisaged, for which the shedding of original cultural differences was a prerequisite. In its turn the melting pot ideal was not realized, but there did occur a subsequent acceptance of immigrant subcultures as an integral element of American society...⁷³

Over the past two decades, Steinberg sees the issues of ethnicity and of religion and education assuming great prominence within the American educational system. The religious issue has attained importance through a series of United States Supreme Court decisions and acts of Congress relating to such matters as aid from government funds for denominational schools.

In considering the general framework out of which Jewish education grew, Steinberg asserts that the desire of many American-born Jews to preserve a form of religio-ethnic identity arose partly because they found themselves in a milieu where other groups were striving to do the same thing. Steinberg sees the closing years of the 1960's as being marked by an upsurge of intensified assertive ethnic

consciousness within America's population, highlighted by the rejection by many Blacks of the principle of cultural integration. This development was accompanied by legislation aimed at providing special educational opportunities by means of affirmative action policies for Blacks and other underprivileged groups, partly through the integration of schools. Jewry has been influenced by this more emphatic expression of cultural pluralism and has responded up to a point by its own affirmation of its distinct collective identity.

Several other writers have attempted to explain why ethnicity has remained important. Herberg and Greeley have done this by linking ethnicity with religion. While Herberg was claiming that ethnic differences in America were being replaced by religious differences along a tripartite Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish dimension because religion was a more respectable way of maintaining ethnic primary groups, Greeley was suggesting that religion and ethnicity are so inextricably intertwined, that the persistence of ethnic groups is really due to continuing religious identification.⁷⁴

Glazer and Moynihan also analyze the persistence of ethnicity and argue the "the adoption of a totally new ethnic identity, by dropping whatever one is to become simply American is inhibited by strong elements in the social struggle of the United States."⁷⁵

As early as 1914 Horace Kallen wrote that democracy involves not the elimination of differences, but the perfection and conservation of differences.⁷⁶

While one-hundred percent Americanization may have been the perceived norm, it quickly became clear that not all immigrants were thoroughly Americanized.⁷⁷ Mary Durkin examines the claim of Harold R. Isaacs that not only in America but everywhere "essential tribalism is so deeply rooted in the conditions of our existence that it will keep cropping out of whatever is laid over it."⁷⁸ Durkin's experience of being American and the heritage her ancestors passed on to her reflect for her the possibility that human beings can have loyalties to more than one group, that for the many to become one does not necessarily demand that the many become the same. Community Jewish day schools acknowledge the validity of all major streams of Jewish thought and incorporate this principle into their curricula. They believe in dialogue and exchange of ideas and exhibit a willingness to learn from each other. They strive to develop a program that fosters appreciation of the diversity in Jewish life.⁷⁹

A decline in support for melting pot theories is further strengthened by Mindel and Habenstein in their study of Ethnic Families in America. They see, instead, the American nation as a conglomerate of "unmeltable ethnics." The cultural upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s celebrated,

rather than suppressed, cultural diversity. Fueled in part by the civil rights movement and, perhaps to a greater degree, by the growing openness of American society, the 60s and 70s were to witness an explosive increase in ethnic identity.

Both Andrew Greeley's research and that of Mindel and Habenstein conclude that there were ethnic concentrations in the United States in the 1970's. They both accept the assumption that the cultural matrix that has made American diversity possible is denominational pluralism. The United States was a religiously pluralistic society even before it became a politically pluralistic one. The Congregationalists, the Quakers, the Episcopalians, the Methodists all shared one English cultural tradition, but they shared it in diversified affiliations. The seeds then for pluralism and diversity were planted long ago and the recent and dramatic increase of interest in America's cultural heterogeneity should come as no surprise.

Furthermore, for Greeley, ethnicity does not have to be a divisive force. According to him, the cultural baggage brought by the first generation immigrant does not have to disappear; it mutates.

Unity is achieved in human societies not by homogenization but by the integration of diversity.We live together as different persons not by eliminating our differences, not by denying them, not by fighting over them but by learning to tolerate them, respect them, and perhaps even to enjoy them.⁸⁰

The ideas of these ethnicists provide a comfortable setting for any alternative form of education encouraging the maintenance of ethnic heritage, but particularly for the institution of the Community Jewish Day School.

Writing in 1981, Sydney Goldstein cites statistics that yield birth rate levels among Jews which are inadequate to ensure growth, especially when viewed in conjunction with other losses. His data which support the current pattern of very low fertility, high levels of intermarriage and lower residential density through population redistribution all serve to weaken the demographic base of the Jewish population. As a solution he urges the community to be prepared to develop new institutional forms designed to mitigate the negative effects of population decline and dispersal.⁸¹

The review of the literature assembles an array of perspectives which support the underlying themes of the community Jewish Day School in America. Getting along with others from whom we differ, teaching Jews about other Jews who think and believe somewhat differently, and learning to respect their differences emerge from the general movement of cultural pluralism in the second half of the century.

The community Jewish Day School represented for those who founded it a response to the crisis of preservation of religio-ethnic identity: it was traditional yet modern; endorsed by the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and

Reconstructionist segments of the Jewish community. This trans-ideological institution, in turn, acknowledged a respect for all of these major streams of Jewish thought, and in particular, celebrated the diversity in Jewish life.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER ONE

1. David de Sola Pool, "The Earliest Jewish Religious School in America," The Jewish Teacher, May, 1917, vol. I, no. 3, pp. 161-163.
2. Hyman B. Grinstein, The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1945) pp. 220-230.
3. Morris A. Gutstein, The Story of the Jews of Newport (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1936), p. 98.
4. Alvin Schiff, The Jewish Day School in America, (New York, Jewish Education Committee Press, 1966), p. 22.
5. Bernette K. Jaffe, The Evolution of Jewish Religious Education in America in the Twentieth Century, (P.H.D. Thesis, Case Western Reserve University, 1980), p. 12.
6. Ibid., p.13
7. Edgar W. Knight, Education in the United States (New York: Ginn & Co., 1951), p. 657.
8. Kenneth Libo and Irving Howe, We Lived There Too, (New York: St. Martin's/Marek), 1984, p. 21
9. David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism 1st edition, rev. (New York: Ktav, 1967) as cited in Bernette K. Jaffe, p. 16.
 "Reform Judaism originated in Germany around 1810, primarily as a result of the civic emancipation that was granted to Jews in those parts of Germany that were occupied by Napoleon.....It was also a consequence of the liberal and rational spirit of the Enlightenment. Exposed to the religious life and institutions of their Christian neighbors and to the general culture of the enlightenment era, previously almost completely unknown to them in the ghetto, a number of German Jews became discontented with various aspects of Jewish life and practice. They wished to make the synagogue service more attractive by abbreviating the prayers,

translating them into the vernacular, introducing mixed choirs and instrumental music. Some also believed that covering the head during worship and otherwise, the dietary regulations, the wearing of phylacteries and other traditional customs and laws were outmoded."

10. Charles E. Silberman, A Certain People American Jews and Their Lives Today (New York: Summit Books, 1985), p. 46.
11. Jaffee, The Evolution of Jewish Religious Education, p.21.
12. Nathan H. Winter, Jewish Education in a Pluralist Society, (New York; New York, University Press, 1966), p. 6.
13. Hyman B. Grinstein, "In the Course of the Nineteenth Century," A History of Jewish Education in the United States, ed. Judah Pilch, (New York: AAJE, 1969), p. 34.
14. Ibid., p. 31.-32.
15. Ibid., p 32
16. "Jewish Statistics," American Jewish Yearbook, 1905-1906, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1907), p. 151.
17. Eduardo L. Rauch, "Jewish Education in the United States" Religious Schooling in America, eds. Carper and Hunt, (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press), P. 137.
 "It is possible to speculate that the Jews would have wanted to establish more parochial schools, but simply didn't have the spiritual, financial or intellectual resources to do so. We also must not forget that German-American Jews had long accepted the public school as the central educational institution in their lives, and that they might have pressured the new immigrants into accepting the public school the same way they had."
18. Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers, (New York:

Simon and Schuster, 1976), pp. 200-204.

19. Alexander M. Dushkin, Jewish Educator in New York City, (New York: Board of Jewish Education, 1918), p. 138.
20. Zalmen Slesinger, "Dare the School Stand Still in a World of Change," Judaism and the Jewish School eds. Judah Pilch and Meir Ben Horin (New York: American Association of Jewish Education, 1966), pp. 182-185.
21. Grinstein, The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, p.49.
22. Dushkin, Jewish Educator in New York City, pp. 138-139
23. Walter Ackerman, "The Americanization of Jewish Education," Judaism 96 (1975), p. 423 as cited in Susan L. Horn, "Communal Responsibility for Jewish Education: Concept and Application," Ph.D dissertation at New York University, 1987.
24. Susan L. Horn, "Communal Responsibility for Jewish Education: Concept and Application." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1987 p. 34.
25. Irving Howe and Kenneth Libo, How We Lived, A Documentary History of Immigrant Jews in America 1880-1930 (New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1970), p. 25.

"Every day that passed I became more and more overwhelmed at the degeneration of my fellow countrymen in this new home of theirs. Even their names had become emasculated and devoid of either character or meaning....It did not seem to matter at all what one had been called at home. The first step toward Americanization was to fall into one or the other of the two great tribes of Rosies and Annies.

Cut adrift suddenly from their ancient moorings, they were floundering in a sort of moral void. Good manners and good conduct, reverence and religion, had all gone by the board, and the

reason was that these things were not American.

Tottering grandfathers had snipped off their white beards and laid aside their skullcaps and their snuffboxes and paraded around the streets of a Saturday afternoon with cigarettes in their mouths, when they should have been lamenting the loss of the Holy City in the study room adjoining the synagogue."

26. Moses Rischin, The Promised City - New York's Jews, 1870-1914 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), pp. 146-147 as cited in Eduardo L. Rauch, "Jewish Education in the U.S."
27. Rauch, "Jewish Education in the United States," pp. 370-371.
28. David Resnick, Jewish Education, Who-What-How (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1983), p. 2.
29. Norman Lamm, An Orthodox Perspective on Jewish Education and Jewish Identity (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1977), p. 16 as cited by Susan L. Horn, p. 6.
30. Simon Greenberg, "The Tangibles of Jewish Education," in Judaism and the Jewish School, ed. Judah Pilch and Meir Ben Horin (New York: Block Publishing, 1966), p. 251 as cited by Susan L. Horn, p. 7.
31. Eugene Borowitz, "Creating Commitment in Our Religious Schools," in Judaism and the Jewish School, p. 268 as cited by Susan L. Horn, p. 7.
32. Mordecai Kaplan, "The Meaning of Jewish Education in America," p. 332 as cited in Susan L. Horn, p. 7.
33. Isaac B. Berkson and Ben Rosen, "Congregational and Communal Schools," Jewish Education, no. 1, vol 12, (New York: 1940), pp. 8-14.
34. Minutes, New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Biennial Convention, 1963, p. 10 as cited in Bernette K. Jaffe, p. 178.
35. Eduardo L. Rauch, The Growth of the Jewish Day School:

A Critical Review of the Literature, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard graduate School of Education, 1977) pp. 8-10.

36. Personal interview with Dr. David Shluker
37. Michael Zuckerman, Friends and Neighbors Group Life in America's First Plural Society, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982) p. 25.
38. Cited from "The Concept of Klal Yisrael," The Pedagogic Reporter, (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, January, 1988).
39. Thomas Bender, Community and Social Change in America, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1978), p. 7.
40. Martin Buber, Paths in Utopia, p. 145 as quoted in Thomas Bender, p. 8.
41. Bender, Community and Social Changes in America, p. 146.

"The kind of community that is available to us is not the enveloping community seventeenth-century New Englanders knew. That is gone forever, but we need not regret it. To define community in such static terms is to foreclose any possibility of community through time....The bifurcation of society fundamentally altered the dimension of community in America."
42. Ibid., pp. 138-9.
43. Oscar Janowsky, ed. The American Jew - a Reappraisal (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1967), p.128
44. Charles E. Silberman, A Certain People, p.62

"Nearly half a century later a successful lawyer recalls with startling clarity his admissions interview for Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. He and his father were scheduled to meet the interviewer, an Andover alumnus, at the latter's club. When they arrived, the alumnus met them outside the door and explained apologetically that he had forgotten that the club

did not admit Jews to its premises. The boy wanted to leave, but his father, convinced that attending Andover would open doors that otherwise would be closed, insisted on remaining; the interview was conducted with the three of them standing at the curb."

45. Ibid., pp. 178-180
46. Ibid., p. 180
47. Ibid., pp. 178-180
48. Jacob Neusner, Stranger at Home (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 32.
49. Gemorrhah, Berachot, chapter 4, p.28a

The argument learned from this chapter of Gemorrhah would become important to the philosophy of a community school.

50. James W. Sanders, The Education of Urban Minority Catholics in Chicago, 1833-1965 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), preface XIII.
51. James W. Sanders, "Roman Catholics and the School Question in New York City, Some Suggestions for Research" eds. Diane Ravitch and Ronald K. Goodenow, Educating an Urban People, The New York City Experience (New York: Teachers' College Press, 1981), pp. 116-140.

In this article Sanders looks at Chicago and Boston in addition to New York City where it became apparent that the development of parochial schooling was a function of public school intransigence in dealing with Catholic interests.

It is intimated here that because in New York City Catholics gained such enormous power and were able to directly influence and control public school affairs until at least the end of the 19th century that the parochial school did not flourish as in other cities "because all the public school teachers are Catholic and the appointment of a non-Catholic to a teaching position is an idea too preposterous to be

entertained." (as quoted from The New York Times.)

In Boston, too, the presence of many Catholic principals and teachers in local public schools diminished the urgency of the parochial school movement.

52. Sanders, The Education of Urban Minority Catholics in Chicago, 1833-1965, p. 55.
53. Ibid., p. 15.
54. Leonard Bloom, "A Successful Jewish Boycott of the New York City Public Schools - Christmas 1906," American Jewish History vol. LXX, No. 2, (December, 1980), pp. 180-188.

"At the turn of the 20th century the Jewish commitment to public school was open and explicit. Samson Benderly, the educator in charge of the Bureau of Jewish Education for the Kehillah of New York, opposed the development of all-day schools on the ground that they might compete with public schools...The public schools adjusted to the immigrant masses they began to serve in the last decades of the 19th century by becoming more involved in their lives..."

Thomas Kessner, "Jobs, Ghettos, and the Urban Economy, 1880-1935," American Jewish History, (Boston, Massachusetts: Dec., 1981), Vol. LXX1, #2.

"Italian parents often feared the school as an Americanizing agency bent on training children away from their parents. Jews respected the status education conferred and perceived its liberating possibilities albeit in a limited self. By preparing their children for white-collar jobs, education would free them from dependence on others; it would 'teach' them into society, showing them how to dress, speak, behave, and fulfill American middle class conventions."

Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805-1973, (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 179-180.

"...In the new country, and especially in New York City, the educational system was not only free, it was completely open to Jewish children. The opportunity to get an education overshadowed any other factors like the crowded, deteriorated condition of many slum schools. Far from protesting school conditions, Jewish parents rose up in anger only when their children were not admitted because of overcrowding."

55. Robert Freeman Butts, The American Tradition in Religion and Education (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950), pp. 115-116.

"The private sectarian schools came to be a prominent feature of the eighteenth century scene especially in those colonies where a large number of dissenting sects created a heterogeneous population. Schools sponsored by Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, Quakers, Baptists, Lutherans, German Reformed, Moravians, Mennonites, Catholics, Methodists, Puritans, Anglicans, and other groups made their appearance and prospered according to the efforts of the various sects....

When the dissenter groups could freely conduct their public worship, they began to promote their own religious schools. The Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century was, thus, a great promoter of sectarian education, as well as a promoter of sectarian religion in general. The increasing freedom of schooling also made it possible for private secular schools to appear and to flourish during the early and middle part of the eighteenth century until the academies supplanted them. When certain sects grew strong enough, they often applied for and obtained public funds from the city or state involved. The denominated academies of the late eighteenth century often received such aid."

56. Rauch, "The Growth of the Jewish Day School," p. 32.
57. James C. Carper and Thomas C. Hunt, Religious Schooling in America, 1984, preface.
58. Patricia Lines, "Private vs. Public Education," Phi Delta Kappan, (Jan. 1986), p.13.
59. Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People (New York: Little Brown, 1951), p. 3.
60. W. Lloyd Warner, Structure of American Life (Edinburgh, 1952), p. 127.
61. Horn, "Communal Responsibility for Jewish Education," p.39.
62. David Singer, "The Growth of the Day School Movement," Commentary (New York, August 1973), p.21.
63. Carper and Hunt, preface ix.
64. Marvin Fox, "Day Schools and the American Educational Pattern," The Jewish Parent, (September, 1953), p.12.
65. Neusner, Stranger at Home, p. 69.
66. Horace M. Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot," The Nation, Feb. 1915, pp. 217-220, as it appears in John J. Appel, ed. The New Immigration (New York: Jerome S. Ozer Publishing Corp., 1971), p. 111 and as cited in Carper and Hunt by Rauch, p.146.
67. Horace Kallen, The Structure of Lasting Peace, (Boston, 1918), p. 31 as cited by Higham, p. 203.

"An Irishman is always an Irishman, a Jew always a Jew. Irishman or Jew is born; citizen, lawyer, or church-member is made."
68. Leonard Dinnerstein, The Leo Frank Case, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968); Gertrude J. Selanick and Stephen Steinberg, The Tenacity of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America, (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

69. Bernard D. Weinryb, "Jewish Immigration and Accommodation to America: Research, Trends, Problems," Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society, XLVI, 3, (March, 1957), p. 393 as cited by Eduardo Rauch in "Jewish Education in the United States," p. 199.
70. Robert T. Handy, "The American Religious Depression 1925-1935," Church History 29 (1960), pp. 3-16; David A. Hollinger, "Ethnic Diversity, Cosmopolitanism and the Emergence of the American Liberal Intelligentsia," American Quarterly (1975), pp. 133-151.

"At this time American Jewish culture itself had become vastly more secular. Historians of American Christianity sometimes speak of religious depression: of the postwar era; among Jews, no less affected by this 'depression' than their Christian neighbors, there was a shift from religious awakening to deepening interest in universalism, or what has been called the 'cosmopolitan spirit.'"
71. Samson Benderly, "Jewish Education in America," The Jewish Exponent January 17, 1908. Reprinted in Jewish Education 20 (June 1949) , p. 81-86.
72. Walter Ackerman, "The Americanization of Jewish Education," Judaism 96 (1975), p. 423 as cited in Susan L. Horn, "Communal Responsibility for Jewish Education: Concept and Application," 1987.
73. Bernard Steinberg, "Jewish Education in the United States: A study in Religio-Ethnic Response" Jewish Journal of Sociology (London, 1979), vol 21, pp 4-5
74. Charles H. Mindel and Robert W. Habenstein, Ethnic Families in America Patterns and Variations (New York: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., Inc. 1976), p. 5.
75. Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew (New York: Doubleday, and Co. 1960), p. 12
 Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1970), p.33.
76. Horace Kallen, "Culture and Democracy" 61 Cf. Edward A. Ross, The Old World in the New (New York, 1914), as

cited by John Higham, p. 207.

77. H.R. Isaacs, Idols of the Tribe (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 26 as cited by Mary Durkins in Greeley and Baum.
78. Mary Durkin, "The American Experiences: An Irish Catholic Perspective," as found in Ethnicity edited by Greeley and Baum, p. 40.
79. Rauch, "The Growth of the Jewish Day School," p. 21.
80. Andrew M. Greeley and Gregory Baum, eds., Ethnicity, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), p.59.
81. Sidney Goldstein, "Jews in the United States: Perspectives from Demography," American Jewish Yearbook, 1981, vol 81, pp. 3-59.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FOUNDING OF THE AKIBA HEBREW ACADEMY - 1946

Schools are created by people who feel passionate about a mission that they do not believe is being met elsewhere. Those passions arise because of many reasons and emerge from varied circumstances.

It is not surprising that Philadelphia was the first city in which a community Jewish day school opened its doors in 1946. As early as the colonial period of American history the people of Pennsylvania, along with those of New Jersey and New York, acted under conditions of cultural pluralism¹ (conditions that did not come to characterize the rest of the country until the nineteenth century). The founders of Akiba Hebrew Academy operated under circumstances like cultural pluralism that were amenable to the advent of such an institution.

Reality for the Jewish community of Philadelphia in the nineteen-forties was the mass murder of six million Jews in Europe and the destruction of all former seats of Jewish learning there. No longer would Americans be able to depend upon the Yeshivas of Poland and Germany as inspiration for Jewish leadership and continuity. New centers of learning would have to be established. This concern was expressed in

an early Akiba Academy brochure, published to attract students, which states Akiba's intention to be a private secondary school, serving the greater Philadelphia area, New Jersey and Delaware, established for the purpose of educating young people "to occupy positions of leadership in the Jewish community of tomorrow."²

The same concern was recorded by Saula Rubenz Waldman, one of the students in attendance on the school's initial morning of September 11, 1946, in a brief history she wrote in honor of the school's thirty-fourth year (1980). In the aftermath of World War II and the destruction of European Jewry,

...it was recognized by many thoughtful members of the Jewish community that serious questions of the survival and transmission of Jewish knowledge and traditions had to be faced. One-third of the world's Jewish population had been lost and, with it, the great European centers of scholarship and Jewish culture.³

Dr. Leo Honor, a founder of Akiba and a respected educator and major figure in the Jewish community, deplored the status of Jewish education throughout the entire United States:

...the present status of Jewish education must give us real and deep concern. We get our children for only a few hours a week, late in the day after they are fatigued from their schoolwork and during hours which they should be devoting to recreation, if they are to develop properly balanced personalities. And it is for only a few years that they come to us to be educated. During puberty and adolescence, when their understanding is beginning to mature, when their mental faculties are sharpest, we lose them because of the pressure of

their other interests and activities. If we are to accomplish anything with the education of our Jewish boys and girls, then we must somehow continue to reach them during the highly impressionable and formative high school years and for much more time than they are now with us.⁴

Underlying these words of concern was the reality that Americans were no longer able to rely on other nations to produce the future leaders of Jewish communities. If Jewish continuity were to flourish, knowledgeable Jews would have to be raised locally in viable institutions.

Helping the Philadelphia Jewish community to enhance its status as a center for Jewish learning was the impact that knowledge of the Holocaust atrocities had had on the American people as a whole, an impact strong enough to turn the tide of anti-semitism. Prejudice against Jews in the United States was not altogether over, but it was diminishing significantly. This rethinking of anti-semitism received its greatest, and probably most direct, impetus from the occurrence of the Holocaust but, indirectly, according to John Higham, from the termination in the 1920s of mass immigration to this country from Eastern Europe, which removed some of the stresses that produced the exclusionist mentality for Jews. These stresses needed to be reduced before an integration of Jewish and American culture could occur and before Jews, all sorts of Jews, irreligious as well as religious, Conservative, Reform and non-affiliated, could feel truly comfortable about

establishing Jewish schooling for both secular and religious subjects under one roof. The ending of immigrant waves to the United States made rapid Americanization of the Jewish community possible:

As the great wave of immigration subsided and the immense heterogeneity of early twentieth century American diminished, the rigid perception of all deviating groups as impure and corrupt tended to dissolve -- In little more than a generation the image of the Jew as the quintessential alien was virtually obliterated. Instead, some critics now saw the Jew as a quintessential Middle Class American secularist.⁵

If John Higham is correct, then by 1946 the image of the Jew in the minds of the general population was far more positive than it had been. This translated into a greater ability for Jews to feel good both as Jews and as Americans. Jews who might have felt disloyal if they espoused any form of education other than public education, might begin to move actively toward pursuing a more intensive Jewish education and still feel perfectly "American."

Furthermore, John Simpson asserts that in the United States an ideology exists which strongly associates Judeo-Christian symbols with the idea of America and "thus, it is possible for an individual to interpret his practice of religion as participation in the American Way of Life."⁶ Within this context, Jews who had wanted to be full members of American society suddenly realized how much they also wanted to keep their Judaism intact. Charles E. Silberman points out that right after World War II "most important of

all, they [Jews] discovered how much they wanted their children to be Jewish, and they realized this was not something they could take for granted, still less leave to chance."⁷

In her historical analysis of Akiba's beginnings, Saula Rubenz Waldman also cites the hospitable environment of American pluralism leading to great opportunities and expanded visions on the one hand and, on the other, to "the temptation of weakened ties and assimilation. To ensure that Judaism would not disappear through inadequate education and indifference, new educational structures would have to be built. Akiba was one response to that need."⁸

The founders of Akiba were also heirs to a city in transformation. Whereas community as a place and community as an experience had initially been one and the same, that was no longer true for Philadelphia's Jews. Jews were spreading out and no longer living in one concentrated neighborhood, but they were nevertheless tied by virtue of the organizations to which they belonged and the synagogues they attended. John Dewey's insightful definition of community describes well the newly emerging community that established Akiba.

Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common, and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. What they must have in order to form a community or society are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge - or common understanding....Persons do not become a society by living in physical proximity, any more

than a man ceases to be socially influenced by being so many feet or miles removed from others. A book or letter may institute a more intimate association between human beings separated by thousands of miles from each other than exists between dwellers under the same roof. Individuals do not even compose a social group because they all work for a common end...If, however, they were all cognizant of the common end and all interested in it so that they regulated their specific activities in view of it, they would form a community.⁹

The Philadelphia Jewish community was beginning to sense that they were living in two different social and psychological worlds. Tonnies referred to these two worlds as *gemeinschaft* (community) and *gesellschaft* (society).¹⁰ Bender saw the two worlds as tension-producing, but not standing in opposition to each other; one yielded up to the other. Philadelphia's Jewish community in 1946 appeared to be what Bender describes as a bifurcated society, becoming a more complicated, transformed form of *gemeinschaft*.¹¹ In this context, the Akiba Academy can be viewed as a possible product of that society, a more complicated institution than its single ideological predecessor, but definitely richer.

The reality of 1946 was that the Jews of Philadelphia were no longer living in an intensely Jewish embrace; their neighborhoods no longer provided continuity, the streets no longer reflected the ethnicity of their homes. No longer on Yom Kippur did the whole community cease to bustle and transportation come to a literal standstill; nor was the Sabbath necessarily a time set aside to visit with grandparents and aunts and uncles (in the afternoon) who

lived up the street or on the next avenue. Perhaps, as Charles E. Silberman suggests, for those who had already moved to Gentile neighborhoods, more had been involved than just a shift from being part of the majority to being a tiny minority, for the Gentiles in the new neighborhoods were different from those whom they had known before. In their old neighborhoods there may have been no Gentiles, or any Gentiles they lived with had been fellow "ethnics," working class Irish, Italian, and Polish Catholics who were outsiders as much as they were. These Gentiles were perceived as occupying a lower position on the social ladder, and, therefore, the Jews were not worried about, or concerned with, gaining their approval. But Silberman suggests that the new Gentiles to whom they suddenly lived next door were "insiders," white Protestants rather than fellow ethnics. Here in this new neighborhood the Gentiles were insiders in an age in which Jews still felt themselves to be outsiders. Suddenly Jews felt a need that they hadn't experienced before -- the company of other Jews for themselves and for their children.¹²

Within the enclaves in which Jews had lived in the 1920's, Jewishness was in the air they breathed. The restaurants were Jewish restaurants, the bakeries were Jewish bakeries, the butchers all had signs in Yiddish and Hebrew indicating they were kosher, and the stores sold Jewish delicacies. Charles E. Silberman writes that while

most of his classmates were Jewish in his public school class on Manhattan's Upper West Side, even those who were not stayed home on the major Jewish holidays. In such communities, Jewish families did not worry about Jewish continuity. If they were not exactly providing the continuity in the home, the neighborhood was. These families did not feel the need to provide more than a rudimentary Jewish education for their children.¹³

Observances in such an environment grew out of an ethnic and cultural impulse rather than from a religious one, although this was not a distinction the immigrants would have made or even understood. Buying kosher meat, lighting Sabbath candles, eating matzoh during Passover, reading a Yiddish newspaper or attending a Yiddish play, belonging to the Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle) or some other fraternal order, were all manifestations of Yiddishkeit, ways of maintaining one's identity as Jews. In short, irreligious and even anti-religious immigrants lived in an intensely Jewish embrace.

While describing her childhood in New York City, Vivian Gornick's sentiments paralleled those of Silberman.

Although my parents were working-class socialists (and thus ideologically opposed to religion) the dominating characteristics of the streets on which I grew up was Jewishness in all its rich variety. Down the street were Orthodox Jews, up the street were Zionists, in the middle of the street were shtetl Jews, get-rich-quick Jews, European humanist Jews. Jewishness was the great leveler. On Pesach (Passover) and Yom Kippur, we did not have to be

observing Jews to know that we were Jews. The whole world shut down, everyone dressed immaculately, and a sense of awe thickened the very air we breathed; the organic quality of the atmosphere told us who we were, gave us boundary and idiomatic reference, shaped the face of the culture in which each of us assigned a vital, albeit primitive, sense of identity.¹⁴

Kate Simon, in her autobiographical novel, Bronx Primitive describes a very rich Jewish lifestyle which was also not religious, but certainly ethnic. She recalls for us the street where her mother shopped for the Friday night meal (the chicken) and the fish which swam live in her bathtub until Friday when it became gefilte fish.¹⁵

In describing life on the lower east side of Manhattan (New York City), one is similarly confronted with manifestations of Jewish belief and practice. In 1905 Jewish children were concentrated in thirty-eight elementary schools there. Out of the sixty-five thousand people in these public schools, sixty thousand were Jews. While Jews remained together in this way, public education was not perceived as a threat to their traditional way of life. Jewish children would continue to socialize with other Jewish children and would remain close to home, thus permitting them to continue their Jewish practices within the family. They would also be able to go directly from the public school to the Jewish supplementary school in the afternoons, which was always in the neighborhood.¹⁶

This was no longer the status of the several

neighborhoods in which Philadelphia's Jews were living in 1946. Whereas once Jews had been concentrated in older, cloistered neighborhoods, they were now scattered to the suburbs. We learn from the three founders who responded to the questionnaire (one responded, two were responded for by their children) that one already lived in a predominantly Gentile neighborhood while the other two still lived in predominantly Jewish ones. Only one of the three lived close to relatives. Of even greater importance here, perhaps, are the responses of Akiba's first students. Of the eleven (of twenty-one) students in 1946 who responded, three lived in Gentile neighborhoods, two lived in mixed neighborhoods and had experienced some form of anti-semitism at school, five still lived in Jewish neighborhoods and one described his neighborhood as being Gentile, but open to Jews. For this population, socialization with other Jewish children could not have been guaranteed in the local public schools, and even at home their families did not always observe Jewish practices.

Public schooling had been a gift when these Jews first arrived in America, since large numbers of them were enabled for the first time to gain access to secular learning.¹⁷ However, in 1946 some Jews began to consider the possibility that secular education might not be enough; that their homes were suddenly no longer strong enough to remain the sole transmitters of Judaism to their offspring, that they were

no longer living in crowded settlements where their children had only minimal contact with other Americans or other minority and immigrant groups and that they were no longer able to ignore the new American environment. The three founders referred to a need to keep heritage alive and vibrant and to make Jewish identity meaningful for the children.

This desire for religion, for ethnic identity, for heritage survival was consonant with the post-war religious revival that the entire country was experiencing. Philadelphia was no exception. The Jews were encouraged by their Christian neighbors, who were buying more Bibles and books about the Bible and who were going to see films with biblical themes more than ever before.¹⁸ Jews watched as other minority and religious groups began to assert themselves. Catholics had been building their own schools for over half a century all over the country, Protestant schools had existed since schooling in America had begun, and Philadelphia had many excellent Quaker schools.

Philadelphia Jews became comfortable with the idea of educating their children in an openly religious school because others were doing the same. Salo Baron's interpretation of what was occurring in the Jewish community seems to apply here. "There are incontestable signs," he wrote, "not only of a general awakening, but of a certain eagerness of the Jewish public to pioneer in the unexplored

realms of a modern culture which would be both Jewish and American, and to find some new and unprecedented spiritual and intellectual approaches to the Jewish position in the modern world."¹⁹

1946 was a time for many Jews in Philadelphia (and elsewhere) to be immersed in the Zionist movement. The purpose of the movement, intensified by the Holocaust, to create a Jewish state in Palestine, was a rallying point for Jewish group consciousness. Zionism appealed to all types of Jews regardless of their social, political, and religious differences. It became a powerful antidote against assimilation by appealing to a common denominator called ethnic heritage.²⁰ That, in turn, contributed to the need for the continued existence of Jews as an identifiable group.

One receives an identity in a variety of ways. A child is given a name, is born into a religion, and internalizes the values and traditions of his home, his extended family and his friends. Schooling, too, can be a powerful transmitter of identity. When Jews started coming to America in sizable numbers in the 1840s and 1850s, the dominant conditions of American education had already been defined as public, free, and universal, with no public funds for religious instruction, and no public funds for religious schools. As a result, any group that wanted full-time schools of its own had to provide its own resources and

compete with the public schools; an expensive proposition and one that was unrealistic for most new immigrant groups. Jews could not afford to finance a successful day school system in the mid-1800s. Those communities which established day schools (New York City, Albany, Cincinnati, Chicago, Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia) saw them fail. One reason, according to Irving Howe and Kenneth Libo, was the lack of funds among most immigrants to provide their children with a formal education of any kind, certainly not a private education. They cite the case of the Bloom family of San Francisco, urban Jewish pioneers who needed every penny their son, Sol, could earn and contribute to the family. For Sol and for so many others, even public education was a luxury his family could not spare him for.²¹

By 1946 many of the men and women who came together as founders of Akiba were earning a good living and could themselves afford to contribute, or knew of others from whom they could expect financial support for a Jewish day school.

By the early 1940s, the Jews of Philadelphia had experienced a series of demographic, ethnic, economic and religious changes, which made them aware of a need to provide for the next generation what was disappearing from their immediate surroundings. Without the old extended family system, without the old ethnic neighborhood, without the ability to rely on the European centers of learning from

which to import their Rabbinic scholars, where would the sense of Jewish self come from? Without their own ability to teach text and halacha (law as recorded in the Torah), how would their children know?

Recognition of this need provided the impetus in the spring of 1943 to explore ways of broadening the scope of Gratz College in the Philadelphia Jewish community. Gratz College was the first Jewish teacher training institute in the United States established in November, 1897. It consisted of six departments including the Elementary School of Observation and Practice and offers courses leading to teachers' diplomas and the academic degrees of Bachelor of Hebrew Literature, Bachelor of Religious Education and Master of Hebrew Literature. It was decided by the Philadelphia Council on Jewish Education (consisting of representatives of all agencies involved in Jewish educational facilities in Philadelphia), the Federation of Jewish Charities and the Allied Jewish Appeal to survey Jewish education in Philadelphia, to study the feasibility of coordinating the various agencies under a central organization, namely, Gratz College, and to determine what, if any, financing should be made available.²²

Dr. Leo L. Honor of Philadelphia and Mr. Morris Leibman of the Board of Jewish Education of Chicago were invited to conduct the survey, while the Allied Jewish Appeal undertook to finance the cost of it.

The two men learned that Philadelphia already had ninety-one elementary and secondary school units in which instruction was given in Hebrew, Bible, Holidays and Customs. In November, 1943 these schools had a population of about fourteen thousand. The ninety-one schools were of various types. They differed in terms of the (a) auspices under which they functioned; (b) the intensiveness of instruction given; and (c) the particular philosophies and concepts of Jewish education.

In terms of central auspices, the schools were categorized in nine groups:

- (a) The Associated Talmud Torahs
- (b) The Congregational Schools (of Conservative and Orthodox type)
- (c) The Reform Congregational Schools
- (d) The Hebrew Sunday School Society
- (e) The Yeshivot
- (f) The Workmen's Circle Schools
- (g) The Folkschulen
- (h) The institutional schools
- (i) The unaffiliated schools

In terms of intensiveness of instruction given, the schools were classified as five-day-a-week schools, three-day-a-week schools and one-day-a-week schools.

In terms of the philosophy of Jewish education, the schools were classified as:

- (a) the traditional orthodox school
- (b) the modern orthodox school
- (c) the conservative religious school
- (d) the reform religious school
- (e) the Yiddishist-secular school
- (f) the labor Zionist secular school

The traditional Orthodox school, Yeshiva, emphasized primarily a curriculum of prayers, Bible, Talmud, and customs and ceremonies, and stressed orthodox observances. The highest goal sought by Yeshiva as a result of its educational process was the creation of a "Lamden" type person (the learned Jew in the traditional sense); its minimum aim was to produce pious, observant Jews devoted to traditional Judaism. The language of instruction in these schools was Yiddish.

The modern Orthodox school of the intensive type (Associated Talmud Torahs), in addition to the curriculum of prayer and Bible, emphasized the Hebrew language as a means of studying the Bible and prayer book and as an end in itself, viz., to enable the child to read, with appreciation, modern Jewish writings. Jewish history and contemporary Jewish life were given prominent places in the course of study.

The congregational weekday religious schools resembled the modern Orthodox school except that they placed more stress on correlation of the curriculum with formal

synagogue activities. They held sessions only three times weekly, although in many cases they devoted no less time per week to Jewish studies than did the modern Orthodox school. In addition to their Hebrew schools, they conducted one-day-a-week schools for the teaching of history and Jewish customs and for carrying on extra-curricular activities.

The one-day-a-week Orthodox type school was represented by the Hebrew Sunday School Society. In these schools the children were taught history, Biblical passages in English, religious precepts and customs, prayers and hymns. Assemblies and group activities supplemented the program.

The reform Congregational School was in the main a one-day-a-week Sunday school except that some classes met for an additional day during the week. The sessions were from two to two and one-half hours in length. Its curriculum consisted of Jewish history, religion, Jewish holidays and Hebrew. Extra-curricular activities and assembly programs were conducted in addition to classroom work.

The secular Yiddishist schools emphasized the Yiddish language and literature, Jewish history, present-day Jewish life, and social ideals. The schools were under the supervision of the educational committee of the Workmen's Circle National organization, which published textbooks, prescribed curricula, and gave some financial support to the schools.

The Labor-Zionist schools provided a place in their

curriculum for both the Yiddish and Hebrew languages, history, Bible in Hebrew and in Yiddish, and studies about Palestine. These schools also were affiliated with a national organization (National Worker's Alliance - Poale Zion), which prescribed curricula and recommended texts and materials.

The independent, unaffiliated and private schools did not furnish any data about themselves. The private school was usually conducted for profit by a single teacher. The curriculum, as a rule, was limited to the reading of prayers, study of some Bible and to the preparation for the Bar Mitzvah ceremony. The private schools were usually too small to permit proper grading, and the income from teaching was too limited to permit the provision of proper physical facilities, educational materials, etc.

The survey produced no information on the only institutional school in Philadelphia, the Foster Home. This school had been working under the supervision of the Associated Talmud Torahs for many years. The Associated Talmud Torahs had also accepted responsibility for the Jewish education of the children living in foster homes.

The survey found that there were approximately forty-six thousand Jewish children of school age in Philadelphia. An attendance of fourteen thousand in the Jewish schools out of a possible total of forty-six thousand meant that the Jewish schools in Philadelphia were instructing about 30

percent of Jewish children of school age at any one time. This did not mean that only 30 percent of Jewish children received a Jewish education. A much larger proportion, perhaps as high as 80 percent, found its way into the Jewish school at some time or other for a longer or shorter period of instruction. Their length of stay in the Jewish school was so short, however, that it was difficult for the school to leave any impression on their minds and hearts, according to Dr. Honor and Mr. Leibman.

The results of the survey suggested that efforts needed to be directed not so much toward encouraging parents to provide a Jewish education for their children (they were already doing so), but to emphasize the fact that Jewish education, in order to be effective, must be continued for a longer period than was then the practice in most cases. Attention also needed to be centered on making the school and the processes of education more attractive and meaningful to the pupils so that they would want to stay there for a longer period.²³

Looking at the results of the survey and knowing Philadelphia as well as they did, a small group of educators and parents began suggesting that a Jewish academy be developed which would care for both the secular and Jewish education of junior and senior high school pupils. At first nothing happened beyond the talking stage, but after three years the suggestion generated by the survey became a

reality. According to Saula Rubenz Waldman in her History of Akiba Hebrew Academy published in 1980 the idea for the school originated with Dr. Joseph Levitsky, Professor of Hebrew at Temple University, Dr. Simon Greenberg, Dr. Leo L. Honor, who became first chairman of Akiba's Education Committee, Rabbi Elias Charry, who succeeded Honor in that position, and Dr. Joseph S. Butterweck, head of the Department of Secondary Education at Temple University. These men enlisted and inspired a number of enthusiastic laymen whose devotion to the school had become legendary. Notable among these was Akiba's first president, Martin Feld, who went so far at one point as to mortgage his own home to ensure the school's financial security.²⁴

In early 1946 Dr. Leo Honor completed, "A Plan for a Progressive Jewish All-Day High School in Philadelphia." He wrote that,

Anyone concerned with the problem of Jewish education must recognize that the present situation is not at all satisfactory. Enrollment in the supplementary schools is frequently inadequate and retention poor. But even more serious is the fact that while the pupils undoubtedly acquire a positive attitude towards Jewish living by attending our schools, from the standpoint of content, they derive too little to justify all the time and effort which has been put into their education. The level of achievement in the study of Hebrew is frequently little higher than that of two years of modern language study in high school. Our graduates master little more than the narrative portions of the Bible, and hardly touch upon Talmud. Even modern Hebrew literature remains largely unfamiliar to most of the graduates of our Hebrew High Schools, and we find little continuation of interest in Hebrew reading beyond

graduation. Nor is the situation much better as regards the content subjects, such as Jewish history, customs and ceremonies, community life or current problems. The same situation prevails in all Jewish communities throughout the states.²⁵

Dr. Honor goes on in the same paper to suggest reasons why a Jewish community elementary school could not succeed at that time. He cites the lack of sufficient numbers of pupils from any one neighborhood and the problems posed by travel to a centrally-located school for younger children. Furthermore, he was concerned with the many additional grades that would be required for a first through twelfth grade, as well as the lack of properly qualified elementary school teachers trained in both Jewish and secular subjects.

The issue of transportation was a problem in 1946. Busing was not yet available nor was carpooling a common practice. The original twenty-one students came from all parts of Philadelphia, many using the public buses and trains. Public transportation would not be an appropriate option for six to twelve-year olds and so, logically, a seventh grade entry level emerged.

In addition, a secondary issue existed which made a grade seven through twelve school more acceptable at the time. There were still many who viewed a school where only Jewish children would be educated for a full day in both Judaic and General Studies as parochial and ghettoizing. A seven through twelve school, as contemplated here, would not

be "parochial" in the usual sense of that word, because it would in no way attempt to replace the public school generally. Nor would it, like the traditional Yeshiva, emphasize Jewish content at the expense of general education. In looking back at the historical beginnings of the school, Lewis Newman emphasized that the school was never intended for the school population at large, nor on the other hand was it an attempt to supplant the public school. It would merely be designed to serve the needs of a few who want the best, most progressive type of private school, similar to the schools being sponsored by many Christian denominations to meet their own special needs -- such as the Friends' Central School or the Episcopal Academy in the Philadelphia community. Nor would it have had a "ghettoizing" effect, since its students would associate with non-Jewish children in public schools during their elementary years and in college later on.²⁶

This idea appealed to a population that was not eager to isolate their children entirely from their Gentile neighbors in public school. Many of the Jews were still living in Jewish neighborhoods and felt somewhat secure with their identities. Within this proposed educational scheme, their children would still be part of the Americanization process in elementary school and later on in the university if they wished, but would be receiving a heavy dose of Jewish identity and heritage during those most crucial

teenage years.

On September 11, 1946 the Akiba Hebrew Academy opened its doors. The students and their parents, the faculty and members of the Board of Trustees, were greeted by Rabbi Elias Charry, a prominent Rabbi of Philadelphia and a founder of the school. He spoke about the *raison d'etre* for the school. "It is deplorable," he remarked, "that of all the large Jewish communities in the United States, Philadelphia is the only one which has not long had at least one Jewish all-day school like this one. Perhaps this is the reason for the low level of Jewish cultural life in this community. As a father, as a rabbi, and as a citizen of Philadelphia, I have keenly felt the need for just such a school, and am gratified that the need will now be met by the Akiba Hebrew Academy."²⁷

Rabbi Charry must have been referring to the general concept of Jewish day school when he bemoaned the fact that Philadelphia was so far behind other cities in establishing such a school for, in fact, the founders of Akiba were in the forefront of Jewish education in 1946. They were pioneers in reflecting a move from an ideology favoring homogeneity to a greater tolerance of diversity within the Jewish community. Akiba was the first trans-ideological Jewish Day School in America.

According to Rabbi Charry the twenty-two men and one woman who together founded Akiba did not begin with a

firmly-established philosophy, but one thing they were certain of was that they were striving for a synthesis -- not to be affiliated with any one particular religious segment of Jewish life. They wished to reflect the best in Jewish community life, in Jewish tradition, and at the same time, to embody the finest in secular education.²⁸

What was clear to the founders was that the impetus for the establishment of the school came from the recognition and respect for the diverse elements of the Jewish community. It was desired that all Jewish children -- Orthodox, Conservative and Reform, as well as those from non-affiliated families should together learn their common Jewish heritage, while simultaneously learning to respect each other's point of view and the devotion and sincerity with which it is held.²⁹ The school was intended to strengthen the identification of every student with Jewish living, personal and social, without compelling acceptance by all of any particular interpretation of what is 'the' Jewish way of life. Such an outlook not only permits but requires certain educational experiences which are not possible in a Jewish school which seeks to inculcate only one ideological point of view

....The specific ideological or theological framework of the child's family, however much it will be respected, is not the only one that will be met at school.³⁰

As the children were preparing to leave the assembly on

that first day and begin classes, they were told by Oscar Divinsky, their principal, the reason for the name Akiba Hebrew Academy. Akiba more than any of Judaism's heroes, had brought together the qualities of scholarship and active participation in the life around him at a time of great crisis in Jewish history. Dr. Divinsky must have been reflecting on the recent debacle for Jews when he referred to 1946 as a time of crisis.

We too are living in momentous days. We need Jews who are steeped in the traditional learning of our people and who, by reason of that very fact, are able to deal clear-headedly with the realities of present-day life. It is such Jewish men and women that Akiba Hebrew Academy will need to produce.³¹

The three founders (two whose children responded in loco parentis) providing information for this study were all involved themselves in Jewish education professionally. The majority of the other founders were businessmen.³² From the three who did respond it is learned that they were all in agreement that education and training for a future generation were mandatory if Judaism as a religion and as a heritage was to survive.

In 1946, Philadelphia was a city with Jews scattered in many neighborhoods, practicing Judaism on a variety of levels and with some not practicing at all. This diversity must have helped to form the consciousness of the founders who pioneered a move in education from an ideology favoring homogeneity to one of heterogeneity. Prior to 1946 in

Philadelphia there did exist a rich array of Jewish institutions (as identified in the survey), but not one of them existed to serve a plural population.

The three founders who responded were all Conservative, however, the twenty other founders represented all aspects of Judaism, Orthodox, Reform and unaffiliated. This information was learned from a conversation with Simon Greenberg, the one founder who is currently living in New York City.³³ The three founders were committed to the establishment of a secondary Jewish Day School because of their steadfast belief in day school education where both Jewish and American curricula would be integrated under one roof. Rabbi Greenberg responded, "I would have supported any Conservative or traditional day school, too, had I been invited to." All three agreed that respect for each other and the other founders drew them to the endeavor.

The early years were apparently times of searching and growth with an Education Committee, Board of Trustees and Principal working to establish a set of principles to guide the school. It was not until 1950 that Akiba published a brochure which appears to have been meant for recruitment and retention of students. In that brochure there were three primary objectives listed:

1. To provide for a selected number of adolescent boys and girls an education which incorporates the very best in modern school practices.

2. To integrate with such a progressive educational program those traditions which represent the best in American Jewish life.
3. To provide an intensive and integrated Hebrew and secular education within the normal school day.

Also to be found in the brochure was a clear, philosophical statement. "Akiba Hebrew Academy holds firmly to these principles:

That there is a rich and significant Jewish culture which must be perpetuated.

That the significance of this culture is most effectively grasped through the study of our basic classics in Hebrew.

That this culture must be integrated with the total education received by the American Jewish child.

That leadership can be developed and that the period of adolescence is important to this development."³⁴

A further search at the Jewish Archives Center of the Balch Institute in Philadelphia³⁵ revealed an undated statement on the subject of religion in Akiba which was found among the papers of Edwin Wolf, one of the United Jewish Appeal Federation's leaders in the forties and fifties. While undated, this statement is in the files of 1945-1950 and must have been written for Akiba sometime in

its early period.

- I. We are a community school. We were not founded by a particular segment of the community nor are we responsible to a particular segment of the community...We have appealed to all segments of the community to send their children and all have responded.
- II. We adopted a program of positive Judaism. We are not a secular institution, nor are we indifferent to any vital aspect of Jewish life. We took as our task to make intelligent and vital Jews of our children by:
 - a. Transmitting an understanding of the heritage of our people.
 - b. Instilling a desire to participate in its present life.
 - c. Inspiring a love of the Jewish people and its culture.
- III. As for the actual practices and observances of Jewish life, we left these to the home and synagogue. We were anxious that the synagogue keep a strong hold on our children by understanding and training them in their particular ways. We were also anxious not to create cleavage between home and school in matter of observance. We never insisted on conformity to a particular code of religious behavior in deference to either extreme in our group. We did, however, acquaint all our children with the rites and observances of traditional Judaism. In group behavior and school activity, we took into account the sensitivities of our children and their home environment...In our teaching, however, we drove a middle course, taking into due consideration a respect for tradition and a recognition of differences.³⁶

By the time that the 1951-52 yearbook was to be published, the Education Committee (still consisting of original founders) affirmed their original ideas in a statement for The Citadel Yearbook,

Akiba approached every interpretation of the Jewish past with respect. Children are encouraged to

become acquainted with whatever interpretations and practices their families prefer. No one interpretation is imposed on any individual. We seek to transmit to our students the knowledge of traditional Jewish values. In a democracy each of us should become able, as one matures, to act less out of habit and unconsidered impulse, and more on the basis of independent, reflective judgment and conscious deliberation. We believe that the experiences of our people as a whole, and of outstanding Jews individually, offer criteria to aid anyone in choosing among alternate ways of behaving.³⁷

Of the three responding founders, all were males with incomes in 1946 of no less than \$15,000. This is not surprising in light of all the literature which states that such schools were not founded until there existed a clear ability to maintain and fund a private institution. \$15,000 in 1946 was a very comfortable income. Other founders may have been far wealthier. A strong, stimulating force behind the birth of the school, once a need for its use was established, was Martin Feld, a manufacturer of knitted goods. His was an industry which was dominated by family-controlled companies, which formed a community that Feld constantly called upon for contributions to his cause. Rabbi Elias Charry served with Feld as a founder and subsequently, on the Board of Directors; while not wealthy himself, he was instrumental in organizing parlor meetings among his congregants and others to raise funds. At an early board meeting, the members themselves decided to tax themselves in order to keep Akiba solvent.

The three founders providing information for this study

were all involved in Jewish education throughout their careers. They were all Conservative and immigrants to this country from Russia. They considered themselves generally less observant than their parents and grandparents, but were Sabbath observant and better educated than their parents had been. All were graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City.

Of the three respondents, only one lived within walking distance of close relatives (extended family). Two lived in Jewish communities, while one lived in a predominantly Gentile neighborhood. All agreed that their local public schools were good.

None of their own children attended the school. In one case the children were grown; in another, the children's knowledge of Hebrew had far surpassed the entry level of Akiba's seventh grade class. These men were committed, according to their own comments or those of their children, because of their belief in the concept of Klal Yisrael (one Jew bearing responsibility for his fellow Jew) and to the need for day school education.

The three founders agreed in their ranking of issues that the need for Jewish continuity was most important to them. To a man they stated that their involvement with Akiba was motivated by their expectation that, as an institution, it would provide Jewish continuity. Four out of the six parents answering also ranked continuity as their

primary reason for sending their children to Akiba, with two of the parents ranking it second and third in importance. Seven of the eleven students ranked continuity as the most important factor influencing their parents, while the other four ranked it second, third, and fourth, with one student responding that he truly did not know how to rank the issues "in loco parentis."

While faculties do not always play a role in the establishment of an institution, their perceptions about the school have great effect on the institution. The two men and one woman responding thought that the founders established the school and parents chose it in 1946 because they were concerned with the preservation of Jewish continuity, and because they wanted their children to learn Hebrew and study Bible. All three believed that both the Hebrew language and Bible were extensions and catalysts for continuity. An original student who began in 1946, Mindelle Goldstein, who later taught at Akiba and was also a parent there, stated that greater need for ethnic identity, the importance of learning Hebrew as a language, and Bible study were all integral to providing Jewish continuity.³⁸

This ranking of Hebrew language/Bible as second in importance by parents and faculty was also true for the three founders. Such ranking seems reasonable, since it would be Hebrew language and Bible study that provide links to the past and enhances the continuity for the future.

Repeated emphasis on the importance of teaching Hebrew language suggests that the imminent creation of a Jewish state in 1948, with Hebrew as its language, played no small role in the founders' desire to make sure the next generation would acquire fluency.

For these founders, the integrated secular and Jewish education under one roof was third in importance, while social pressure and status symbol were ranked least in importance.

The founders had strong convictions and were passionate about establishing a school not because it was considered the socially accepted thing to be doing nor because they were seeking a fancy "prep" institution; they were passionately concerned with preserving Jewish identity.

The fact that only one of the three founders lived close to relatives, and one already lived in a neighborhood that was predominantly Gentile, also suggests that preserving Jewish continuity was an important concern. No longer were they living in crowded neighborhoods filled only with other Jews; they had contact with other immigrant groups, with Gentiles, and they were not ignoring the new American environment.

While the three founders providing information had educated religious backgrounds themselves (two were rabbis, one a dean of Gratz College and director of the Council of Jewish Education) and could certainly have transmitted that

knowledge to their own children, they probably were not representative of the majority of the founders. These three, however, succeeded in convincing others of the importance of having their children learn from knowledgeable teachers, understand what made them different from their non-Jewish classmates in public schools, and develop positive feelings about those differences.³⁹

Whereas conflict with, and suspicion of, public schooling is cited as the catalyst to the development of Catholic education, that seems not the case with Jewish education in Philadelphia in 1946. Public schools were highly regarded by this group and nowhere is there an indication on any returned questionnaires of any discomfort with them. The children of these three founders were the products of public education.

And whereas other historians see the public school as an "Americanization agent," for these three immigrants (in 1946), the establishment of a Jewish institution providing an integrated secular/Jewish curriculum was certainly not un-American. Providing an integrated, secular Jewish education was ranked third in importance by the founders and highest by the parents. It is clear that there existed a concern with finding time within the school day to teach both general studies and Jewish studies curricula. In response to this concern, Jewish materials were to be integrated into the teaching of all general subjects

(secular). The split in the pupil's mind, between his general and Jewish education, would thus be eliminated. And, if skillfully done, the program at Akiba would represent the equivalent of several hours more a week devoted to Jewish learning without any extra burden. Most important to the founders was the great saving of time and effort spent in comparison to attending two schools; a public one and a Hebrew school/Talmud Torah. It was the intention of the founders that this additional time would be able to be used for athletics.

Akiba's program added one and a half hours of instruction per day to the four and a half hours of actual instruction which most students were receiving in public high schools and junior high schools of Philadelphia in 1946. Thus, there were eight class periods of forty-five minutes each, sessions running from 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. including lunch. Three periods a day were devoted to Jewish studies directly, making almost ten hours per week of actual classroom instruction in these subjects. In addition, the subjects marked with asterisks on the appended original schedule permitted large amounts of Jewish materials to be introduced in connection with them, so that Social Studies, for instance, also included Jewish History and civics; music included liturgical and modern Palestinian and Jewish folk tunes; art included Jewish art motifs and Jewish artists.⁴⁰

The time saved by attending just one school for both

Jewish and secular education could then be utilized to full advantage for recreation or the pursuit of other interests. Each of the parents responding to the questionnaire revealed the importance of providing for athletics within the school day. Three of the six specifically mentioned that a public school day and supplementary school in late afternoon left little time for athletics or other interests, such as playing an instrument. The Akiba schedule provided for a one-and-a-half hour block of time at least once a week for physical education within the school day.

The founders and faculty cited diversity and the incorporation thereof into a community day school as being significant. "It was an opportunity to teach in a Jewish atmosphere, but not a narrow one," wrote Mrs. Jacob Schachter. "It was a school where students could learn Jewish sources (Bible, Talmud, Jewish history) and Hebrew together with other Jewish children of varying backgrounds and learn to respect Judaism and each other," she continued.⁴¹

Eduardo Rauch, in his research, has pointed out that Jewish day schools in the nineteen-forties and thereafter may be a reflection of a move from an ideology favoring homogeneity to a greater tolerance of diversity.⁴² Akiba was, indeed, a pioneer in this effort, educating students from all denominations of Judaism and endeavoring to see that those students receive a variety of religious

experiences and become respectful of those experiences.

One of the founders, Simon Greenberg ranked continuity with Bible study as equally important, followed by greater need for expression of religion, desire for integrated, secular, and religious education, and providing moral and ethical standards. It is interesting that the other two founders ranked moral and ethical standards as being third in importance on their questionnaires. All three agreed that symbol of status, social pressure to conform to friends, buffer against intermarriage, longer school day in one institution, and loss of faith in public schools played no role whatsoever in their efforts to establish the school.

Of the twenty-one original families that sent their children to Akiba in September of 1946, six parents and/or their children in loco parentis, (two parents actually responded and four children in loco parentis) responded to the questionnaire. All had been engaged in occupations such as clothing store manager, pharmacist, social worker (second family income), teacher (second family income), men's clothing manufacturer, all earning not less than \$15,000 per year and able to pay tuition. The \$15,000 a year income was a combined total in the case of the teacher and social worker. Only one female respondent mentioned needing a full-day program for her children since both she and her husband worked. Several parents commented that "they didn't think along those lines then," i.e., of needing child care.

All six respondents wrote that they respected the founders of the school, and that while they considered "social pressure" and "status symbol" as the least important factors in deciding to send their children, the fact that the founders were prominent was important and gave credibility to the institution. "The founders were men we respected, and we had faith in their goals," wrote one child in loco parentis.⁴³ It should be noted here that the data retrieved from children responding for parents reflects only what the children surmised their parents were thinking.

All families responding had been intact (no divorce), three were first generation American, two were second generation, and one was an immigrant. Only one of the families had been Orthodox, three were Conservative, and two were unaffiliated. In most cases, they were less observant than their parents had been, but all were intensely Zionistic. "I've been a Zionist all my life, long before Hitler, and am deeply concerned with Jewish survival," wrote one mother.⁴⁴

Two of the families were Sabbath observant, and one parent commented that he became so after he retired since his occupation prevented him from such observance and earning a living had been of primary importance. Only three of the six lived within walking distance of grandparents and relatives, and four of the six lived in Jewish neighborhoods. Three of the six had had no formal Jewish

education themselves, but all six felt that it was important for their children to receive a formal Jewish education other than in supplementary school. The three responded:

"It was an opportunity to send my son to a school where a real Jewish education was possible."

"The Hebrew education my son had received for the six years prior to attending Akiba (twice a week after school and on Sunday) was woefully inadequate. "

"This was the best possible answer to an intensive, secular Jewish education, both of which are of the highest priority for high school students."⁴⁵

Providing an integrated, secular Jewish education was ranked highest by the parents, with continuity and study of Bible and Hebrew tying for second place. Their responses lead to the conclusion that the Israel factor was very much on their minds, that Hebrew as a language was very important to them (although three of the six could not themselves speak Hebrew), that the study of Bible was important for continuity and that while they did not express concern about intermarriage, they were determined to pass on a strong Jewish heritage. These were families living in close-in suburbs of Philadelphia and Philadelphia itself; they regarded their neighborhoods for the most part as Jewish, but still wanted a good Jewish education for their teenagers.

From the twenty-one original students, twelve responses

out of seventeen contacted, were received; nine men, three women. Among those, four were and are Orthodox, three were Conservative and continue to be, one was Conservative and is now Reconstructionist, two were Conservative and are now Reformed, and two are unaffiliated.

Three are rabbis, two are physicians, one is a dentist, one a social worker, one a mohel (performs circumcision, as did his father), one a food technologist, and three are teachers (two in areas related to Jewish education, and one on university-level English.) In the main, this group is a professional one, as opposed to the businessmen their parents were.

Of the twelve students, nine responded that their parents had arrived in this country during the early part of the century (1902-1926), from Russia or Poland, though two were from Palestine. The remaining three students' parents had been born in the United States, making them second-generation Americans. Nine responded that their own parents were less observant than their grandparents had been because of pressure of assimilation and occupation, while four saw themselves as being more observant than their parents coming closer to where their grandparents had been. Six were similar in level of observance to their parents, and two were less, particularly since their parents had become more observant as time went on.

The group was fairly evenly divided as to the proximity

of their extended families. Seven did not live near grandparents, aunts or uncles, while five remember living within walking distance of their grandparents. This percentage of families not living near close relatives seems reflective of the moves occurring in the nineteen-forties away from the old neighborhood. Five thought that their public schools were good, two said that they were poor, two thought they were average, and three said they varied from neighborhood to neighborhood. They all commented, however, as to why they thought their parents chose to send them to Akiba.

"To receive an intensive Jewish education."

"To enhance and perpetuate my religious and cultural heritage."

"My parents were very much involved in Jewish life activities, and the day school was fortunately, available. My dad was a consultant to the founders of Akiba."

"Being Rabbi's children, my parents felt we'd be most comfortable in this environment."

"Did not want to subject me to Philadelphia Public School System and additional afternoon Hebrew school."

"I requested it."

"For a complete, well-rounded Anglo-Judeo education."

"They wanted me to receive the finest and broadest Jewish education possible."

"To afford me a better Jewish education and provide me with a deeper sense of

Jewish identification."

"Actually, my parents were less interested in the Hebrew program than in a good progressive school program. They felt they found it in Akiba."

"At the time it was a compromise -- I wanted to go to Palestine (1946) to study agriculture and live on a kibbutz."

"Rabbi Elias Charry recruited my parents and me."⁴⁶

The perceptions of the students with regard to the ranking of motivating factors closely parallel those of their parents and founders. They saw the need for Jewish continuity as most important with a desire for an integrated secular/religious education next. They ranked status symbol and social pressure with a number ten as least important; longer school day was relatively unimportant, as was concern with intermarriage. These factors also received a "ten" ranking.

Eighteen years after the school's founding, Solomon Grayzel, a well-known scholar of Jewish history, published a paper entitled, "The Akiba Hebrew Academy -- a Statement of its Goals and Methods" in which he provided a setting for the school. He presented Akiba as an experiment in the coordination of the general American and the specifically Jewish cultures.

It was clear from the very outset what the founders were after. They wanted to create an American Jew of the highest type, one who was thoroughly identified with Jewry and with Judaism through a knowledge of and a love for the culture and the traditions of our people; and one who was equally

identified with a knowledge of and a love for the culture and traditions of America. Such a person, they were certain, would be an integrated American Jew who would sense no conflict between his deep-seated identification with Judaism and his equally deep-seated identification with America and its democratic ideals.⁴⁷

If one wishes to make a judgment about this experiment, then a sampling of the comments of student respondents to Question 17 of the student Questionnaire is in order.

Question: In your opinion, what is there about your life today that was directly affected by your attendance at a community Jewish Day School?

Responses: "The need to educate my own children and my involvement in Jewish community affairs."
 "Everything. My home was nominally Jewish with virtually no religious content except for Passover and the High Holy Days. There is little doubt that I would have drifted into an assimilated culture."
 "My Jewish approach to living, ethics, education, etc."
 "A greater integration of religion and daily life."
 "I celebrate my capacity to appreciate myself and my life daily."
 "I have remained a committed Jew."
 "Just about everything. My ties to Jewish education, my involvement with Jewish concerns, including Jewish art, my level of observance, my social group, including ultimately my marriage to a Rabbi, all grew out of my attendance at Akiba Academy."⁴⁸

In the 1951-52 yearbook of Akiba, the second graduating class (those students who began in September, 1947) wrote that "most of all we have come to recognize the part played

by our Jewish heritage in our own lives. The influence of the integrated teaching we have received at Akiba will probably remain with us for the rest of our lives. Our understanding of the close inter-relationship between the Hebrew and secular studies will grow with the years."⁴⁹

Akiba Hebrew Academy reveals that in 1946 part of Philadelphia's Jewish community was seeking to solve the dilemma of finding a comfortable balance between separation and the loss of identity, of acculturation without total absorption, of a desire to belong to America without having to betray a Jewish past. Akiba also indicates that the idea of the "community" concept for day school education is directly related to the important value of "Klal Yisrael" (one Jew bearing responsibility for the well-being of his fellow Jew) and to the changing trends in American society.

The Jewish day school which emerged between 1917 and 1939 (twenty-eight single ideological Orthodox schools were founded during these years) did not need a tolerance of diversity in the surrounding society or a concept of cultural pluralism or a religious revival. These constituents were vehemently concerned with one goal -- that of providing an intense Orthodox Jewish education for their children. However, the Akiba Hebrew Academy with its diverse population seeking a transideological curriculum and philosophy and emanating from homes which were very sensitive to their surroundings, did need a welcoming

climate which could only be provided by its host society.

The bold concept as expressed in Akiba's early views with regard to religion have become the underpinnings for all Community Jewish Day Schools which followed. When finally the Network of Community Day Schools convened on January 21, 1986 (thirty-eight years after Akiba's establishment), Barbara Steinberg, first chairperson of that Community Day School network issued the following philosophical statement:

The community day school places the responsibility to educate for ideology firmly within the realm of the home or the synagogue...The responsibility of the school is to provide the students with opportunities to learn not only about how people function when they believe exactly what the students and their families believe, but also to learn about how different opinions have been developed and expressed and why people hold diverse opinions on issues of importance.⁵⁰

Footnotes

1. Michael Zuckerman, Friends and Neighborhoods Group Life in America's First Plural Society. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 4.

"Today it seems increasingly clear that the configuration of American civilization first found its essential contours in the mid and South-Atlantic regions, and especially in the province of Pennsylvania."
2. Information found in an untitled school brochure published in 1950 to attract students. Cover page simply named the school: Akiba Hebrew Academy
3. Saula R. Waldman, A History of Akiba Hebrew Academy, 1980, p. 1.
4. Dr. Leo L. Honor, "A Plan for a Progressive Jewish All-Day High School in Philadelphia," from the files on Akiba Hebrew Academy at the Balch Institute dated April 1, 1946.
5. John Higham, Send These to Me Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America (New York: Athencum, 1975), p. 195.
6. John Simpson, "Ethnic Groups and Church Attendance in the United States and Canada." Ethnicity, eds., Andrew M. Greeley and Gregory Baum, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), p. 20.
7. Charles E. Silberman, A Certain People American Jews and Their Lives Today (New York: Summit Books, 1985), p. 175.
8. Waldman, p. 1.
9. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, (New York: MacMillan and Co., 1916), p. 26.
10. Differences between the Geminschaft and Gesellscaft are discussed in the American Association of School Administrators publication. "Today's Community Educational Administration in a Changing Community," 1959 Yearbook, National Education Association, Washington, D.C. pp 35-53.

The Gemeinscaft is the type of community which is small and simple. It is characterized by:
A. A relationship between persons largely

- based on kinship;
- B. People who know most of their neighbors;
- C. Continuity brought on through informal controls;
- D. Little division of labor;
- E. A self-sufficient community;
- F. People with a strong sense of community identity;
- G. General absence of special interest groups.

The Gesellschaft is characterized by:

- A. A community tie based on territory rather than kinship;
- B. Lack of acquaintance with others, even neighbors;
- C. Formalized social controls set by laws enforced by police;
- D. Division of labor with great specialization;
- E. High inter-dependence with other communities;
- F. Anonymity of many persons, where few associate with community life;
- G. Proliferation of society and organization.

11. Thomas Bender, Community and Social Changes in America, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1978), p.146
12. Charles E. Silberman, pp. 177-178.

"Instead of atrophying, Jewishness was strengthened, for it was redefined along far more self-conscious and far more religious lines. Jews who had never thought about their Jewishness or who had done so only to reject it, Jews who were anti-religious on principle, Jews who had not been inside a synagogue in years -- all such Jews suddenly found themselves joining and even organizing synagogues wherever Jews moved."
13. Ibid., p. 76.
14. Vivian Gornick, "There is No More Community," Interchange, Vol. 2, No. 8, (April, 1977), p. 4 as cited in Charles E. Silberman, p. 173.
15. Kate Simon, Bronx Primitive Portraits in a Childhood, (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 3-4.
16. Eduardo L. Rauch, "Jewish Education in the United States," pp. 311-313.
17. Howe and Libo, How We Lived, p. 196.

18. Jonathan S. Sarna, Jewish Publication Society: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888-1988, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1988), pp. 219-220.
19. Ibid., p. 220.
20. Eduardo Rauch, "The Jewish Day School in America," Religious Schooling in America, eds. Carper and Hunt (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1984), p. 139.
21. Howe and Libo, How We Lived, p. 193.

The following is taken from the autobiography of Sol Bloom:

"Six days a week, rarely taking time off (and then nearly always to improve an opportunity to make extra money) I worked at the Brush Factory. After hours, I would peddle violets to theater goers, on certain evenings I would sell newspapers, and for a time I had a regular job in the folding room of the Chronicle, which then was housed at the corner of Brush and Kearney Streets. This was a morning paper, and the Bulldog edition started running through the press around nine in the evening; after coming off the press the papers had to be folded by hand, and I was one of the kids who performed that tedious but necessary task. On Sundays I usually worked too, at least during the part of the day, peddling novelties and souvenirs to picnic and excursion crowds.

At this time, I was also trying to make up for my lack of schooling by spending at least an hour daily reading and learning to write. My hours were so irregular that I seldom had any meal but breakfast with my family; I did most of my studying while eating lunch at the factory and again during my late supper at home...In the evening I learned Hebrew by reading, under my mother's tutelage, the old Testament, and English through the perusal of the Argonaut, a local theatrical review...

...One day in the early part of 1880, about the time of my tenth birthday, Ben Figer called me into his office and began to ask me questions. He found that I knew not only specifications and costs by piecework rates -- 'On Monday, Solly, I want you to start working in the office,' said Mr. Figer.

At the end of the week, I found that my pay had been raised to three dollars and a half. If that seems small, even for a ten year old, I can give my assurance that it loomed very large in the life of a family that paid six dollars a month for the rental of their house. It was not until some months later, after I had been raised another, that we felt secure enough to move from Brannan Street to a larger and more comfortable house around the corner on Sixth Street where we had to pay ten dollars."

22. This information was derived from the Archives at the Balch Institute (see foot note 35).
23. Information gathered from Survey and conducted in Philadelphia by the Philadelphia Council on Jewish Education and released on November 24, 1943 by Leo L. Honor and Morris Leibman.
24. Waldman, History of Akiba Hebrew Academy, 1980, p.2.
25. Honor, "A Plan for a Progressive Jewish All-Day High School" p. 1.
26. Louis Newman, "The Akiba Hebrew Academy," Conservative Judaism, Winter, 1961, p. 3.
27. News Release to the Jewish Exponent, September 12, 1946.
28. From a message delivered by Rabbi Charry (undated).
29. News Release to the Jewish Exponent, September 12, 1946.
30. News Release to the Jewish Exponent, September 12, 1946.
31. News Release to the Jewish Exponent, September 12, 1946.
32. This information was derived from the Archives at the Balch Institute (see footnote 35.)
33. Telephone interview with Rabbi Simon Greenberg
34. Stated in 1950 school brochure.
35. The Jewish Archives Center is housed at the Balch Institute on 7th and Market Streets in downtown

Philadelphia. The archives dated 1940-1952 were opened for my research. Events related to Jewish developments and history in Philadelphia during those years are found in these archives.

36. Undated statement entitled, "Religion in Akiba" from the Edwin Wolf papers at the Jewish Archives Center, Balch Institute, Market and 7th Streets, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
37. The Citadel Yearbook, published by the second graduating class of Akiba Hebrew Academy, 1951-1952, message of the Education Committee.
38. Questionnaire completed by Mindelle Goldstein.
39. Information shared by Sora Landis, daughter of Rabbi Israel Eisenberg.
40. See Akiba's original schedule in Appendix
41. Faculty Questionnaire Response
42. Rauch, "The Jewish Day School in America," pp 139-140.
43. Parent Questionnaire Response
44. Parent Questionnaire Response
45. Parent Questionnaire Responses
46. Student Questionnaire Responses
47. Solomon Grayzel, "The Akiba Hebrew Academy - A Statement of its Goals and Methods," 1964, pp. 1-3.
48. Gathered from seven of the Student Questionnaires.
49. The Citadel Yearbook, 1951-52, Students' Letter.
50. Barbara Steinberg, "Day Schools: Functioning in the Communal Framework and Setting," An Address to the Council for Jewish Education and the Network of Community Day Schools, January 21, 1986. (Barbara Steinberg was Executive Director of the Jewish Community Day School, Palm Beach County, Florida at the time.)

CHAPTER THREE

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHARLES E. SMITH
JEWISH DAY SCHOOL - 1972

The Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School originated as a result of discomfort with Jewish education as it existed in 1972 in the Washington metropolitan area. In addition to many supplementary (afternoon) Hebrew schools, there already existed three day schools in Greater Washington, namely, the Yeshiva High School (Orthodox), the Solomon Schechter School (Conservative), and the Hebrew Academy (Orthodox), none of whose philosophies was compatible with those of the men and women who wanted to establish an Upper School for the Washington area Jewish community.

These men and women were heirs to a time in which ethnic identity was regaining importance in America. They were living at a moment in America when ethnic differences were being strengthened and reinforced by religious differences along a tripartite Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish dimension.¹ By the 1960s, and even more so in the 1970s, religion was becoming a more respectable way of maintaining ethnic primary groups than ethnicity itself -- a remarkable legacy for Jews to inherit.

As early as 1959, Will Herberg perceived this turn toward religion in America. He cited a 140 percent increase

in distribution of Bibles from 1949-1953, in spite of the fact that often the very people buying these Bibles could not name the first books of the New Testament. Every aspect of contemporary religious life reflected this paradox for Herberg -- pervasive secularism amid mounting religiosity, "the strengthening of the religious structure in spite of increasing secularization. America seemed to be at once the most religious and the most secular of nations." ²

By 1960 Herberg was convinced that immigrants to this country were expected to change many things about themselves as they became American -- nationality, language, culture. One thing, however, they were not expected to change was their religion. And so it was religion within the third generation that became the differentiating element and the contact of self-identification and social location. Herberg's dedication to his book carried a powerful message to Jews and non-Jews in the 1960s and to the founders of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School: " To the third generation upon whose return so much of the future of religion in America depends." ³

Even newcomers to America in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were swept into the arms of an existing third generation, whose ethic accepted that to be Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish were alternative ways of being American.

Charles E. Smith, an immigrant to the United States in 1911, made the following observation in 1970:

My feelings about Jewish education had evolved over many years, but since my involvement in the community they had grown stronger. I realized that, despite years of reading about Judaism my own formal Jewish education was inadequate. I also realized that Jewish education was absolutely necessary to ensure Jewish survival.⁴

His presence among the founders of the school and his assumption of the chairmanship of the Jewish Day School's facility planning committee guaranteed success.

The founders were convening at a time when men like Charles Leibman, a political scientist, were writing that America is very comfortable in accepting and tolerating religious identity as a vehicle of self expression. He pointed out that while it is alright for a religious group to establish an educational system of day schools or supplementary schools, it is not alright for a political party or a national minority to do so. In the 1970s many Americans would probably not have been antagonized by the existence of Catholic parochial schools,⁵ nor would they have objected to enrollment in such schools coming only from Catholic homes. They would have found it understandable that such schools taught Latin since it was necessary for liturgical purposes. But they would not look kindly upon Italians establishing their own school systems and limiting enrollment only to the children of Italian-born parents or grandparents. They would consider such schools divisive and un-American, because they did not consider nationality a

legitimate basis for exclusiveness. Religious exclusiveness, however, was acceptable.⁶ This could easily be interpreted as a welcome to a Jewish Day School for families who, heretofore, might have been concerned with the level of comfort their host society would extend to them.

In November, 1969, eighteen months after the Six Day War in Israel, Hillel Levine, a conservative Rabbi and doctoral student in sociology at Harvard, speaking to 1,500 delegates at the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, urged a massive shift of philanthropic funds away from hospitals and other secular agencies and into support for programs of Jewish education and study.⁷

Such thinking changed the way United Jewish Appeals and Federations all over the United States distributed money. Within two years of that speech, in 1971, Mr. Meyer Brissman, Executive Director of United Jewish Appeal in Washington, D.C. called for a study of the status of Jewish Education in the metropolitan area. His request resulted in an invitation to the American Association for Jewish Education (AAJE), now known as Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), to assist the Washington Jewish community in its efforts to improve Jewish education in Washington, D.C. Dr. George Pollak, Consultant, Department of Community Studies, visited the Washington community on November 9, 1971 and decided that of all the issues to be looked at, the problems besetting day school education

required the greatest attention and financial resources of the community for the immediate future. Accordingly, the AAJE was officially requested on January 5, 1971, to proceed with the Day School phase of the study by the United Jewish Appeal.

The mandate as presented to Mr. Pollak and his committee called for a study of the needs of the community in Jewish education as they related to the three day schools which already existed, all having been established since 1944.

The specific areas to be studied were:

- a. An evaluation of the operational structure, administration, and current and future facilities, including possible new locations.
- b. An assessment of the programs existing on all levels of the Day Schools, including the viability of each school.
- c. An evaluation of the needs of the community in light of existing schools and of possible additional, new institutions of a similar nature.
- d. An audit of the financial picture of Day School education.
- e. An evaluation of the relationship between the community and the Day School in terms of guidance, supervision and financial subsidy.
- f. An evaluation of methods and techniques of

instruction, curricular content, goals, and achievements.

- g. An examination of enrollment trends.
- h. Prospects of Day School education in terms of ideological and trans-ideological pupil populations.
- i. An inquiry into possible areas of cooperation among the day schools.

This study, begun in 1971, uncovered the fact that whereas there existed in Washington an all-day institution which offered instruction in Hebrew and secular subjects as early as 1861, it was not until 1944 that permanent Jewish Day School education emerged.⁸ More important, a 1967 study showed that the earlier schools had never enjoyed the support of the community at large and eventually closed.⁹ In addition, there was a continuing lack of coordination of the various institutions, which instead of complementing each other competed with each other's activities.¹⁰

While the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School did not emerge until 1972, its foundation was laid in the parlor meetings of 1963 and 1964 from which emanated the Solomon Schechter School of Greater Washington, the first school in the area under auspices other than Orthodox.¹¹ The group associated with the founding of the Solomon Schechter School was religiously heterogeneous. Nevertheless, most were associated with conservative institutions. The older

children of several of the participants were forced to attend the orthodox Hebrew Academy, because Washington offered no alternatives.

It was believed that the time was appropriate for initiating an innovative approach to Jewish Day School education. The newly-evolved Solomon Schechter Day School national organization (under the auspices of the Conservative movement -- United Synagogue) was seen as providing comfortable guidelines for a group of initiators seeking change from the dogmatic approaches held by the single ideological, Orthodox schools.

Carol Holiber was present at the earliest meetings to discuss the establishment of a day school in 1963 and again in 1964. She remains active to this day as a member of the Board of Directors of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School and provides an unbroken historical resource for information that is nowhere officially recorded. She reports that in the early sixties two kinds of people emerged in the forefront of the movement to establish a new Jewish day school in Washington. A group of Conservative Jews came forward who wanted a Conservative day school and a second group emerged who wanted a broad community school. For neither of these groups was the existing option of an Orthodox day school acceptable. However, for the group espousing a broad-based community school, the fact that an Orthodox school already existed meant that no support would

be forthcoming from that segment of Washington's Jewish community. There was not much support from the Reform group at that time either since its members were beginning to think of establishing a school under their own auspices. The Conservatives emerged as the stronger faction and in February, 1965, a representative of the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education met with the Rabbinical Assembly of Greater Washington where it was decided that a Conservative school would be encouraged. The President of the Seaboard region of United Synagogue, Mr. Joseph Mendelson, undertook the lay leadership of the school, and as its first president, he opened the doors in September, 1965, to seven kindergarten children at the Montgomery County Jewish Center (now Congregation Ohr Kodesh). From its inception, the school aimed to serve as broad a segment of the Washington Jewish community as possible, providing partial scholarships to those who could not afford the cost of tuition. The result has been as great a degree of social, religious, and financial diversity in the parent group as would be possible in the Washington Jewish community, including numerous Israelis, some attached to the Embassy.¹²

During those early years, 1966-1971, there continued to be discussions, however, among those who never abandoned the concept of a community school and as more students representing the total diversity of Jewish homes (even the

Orthodox) enrolled each year, those discussion groups grew larger.¹³ The level of observance of Kashrut and of the Sabbath and holidays at the school was sufficiently masoretic (according to prescribed halachic law as observed by the Orthodox) to satisfy the pupil from an Orthodox home, while the approach to a philosophy of religion was broad. Not only did the student body represent a broad, diverse, religious population, but the board began more and more to reflect broad segments of the community.¹⁴

Although there is no formal documentation regarding the early Solomon Schechter school, it is evident from the interview with Mrs. Holiber that she and several others (Roberta Milgram, the principal of Ohr Kodesh Congregational School where the original Solomon Schechter school came to be housed; Mary Davis, early parent; Joseph Mendelson, first president; and Adina Mendelson, early parent) not only worked to make the Solomon Schechter school succeed, but enthusiastically pioneered the concept of serving a broad base of children in an upper school. Most helpful and supportive of the idea was Matthew Clark, head of the Jewish Education Council, which eventually became the Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington. This lay group, along with teachers at the school, never stopped working toward the establishment of an upper school and provided the stimulus for the 1971 study to be undertaken.¹⁵

When the Solomon Schechter school opened its doors in

1965 it was not clear where the Reform community stood. One of Washington's Reform rabbis, Jay Kaufman, made repeated pleas for Reform day schools. "It is my conviction," he said "that such a mind-saturating Jewish education is more likely in a day school than in our one day, or two, a week religious school."¹⁶ Specifically, he called for schools which would roll back creeping assimilation, by producing a youth educated in Torah, faithful to Judaism and true to the ideals of American democracy.¹⁷ This concern on the part of at least some in the Reform segment of the community is important to keep in mind, since no such school was ever established under its auspices in Washington. Where then would they choose to send their children? For children of Reform families it would make sense to attend a Conservative school rather than a school of Orthodox leanings and to hope that the school would reflect their orientation in the curriculum. Beginning in 1965, Reform families did send children to the Solomon Schechter school while working to make this Conservative institution comfortable for them, too.

According to its Articles of Incorporation, the Solomon Schechter School, established in 1965, intended to offer a combined Hebrew and secular religious education, including the teaching of moral and religious principles of Judaism as interpreted by the Conservative movement, the United Synagogue of America, and the Rabbinical Assembly of

America. It planned on "instructing and training children in their cultural, social and moral heritage from both Jewish and American sources in order that such students will develop and improve their capabilities as educated citizens of the community."¹⁸

The basic goal of the school was to instruct Jewish children in a unified program in Hebrew and secular education. It sought to enable the students to identify with a religious and community group beyond themselves, through development of an early spiritual orientation. As a by-product, the aim was to develop in students well-adjusted personalities in order to achieve emotional stability and personal self-fulfillment.¹⁹

The Reform community did indeed find a home for their children in this school, particularly when it became, in name and recorded philosophy, a community school. In May of 1973, Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman, a Reform Rabbi, parent and board member at the school, said the following:

The moral climate in the Jewish Day schools is far superior to that of other school systems. In the Jewish Day school there is an absence of violence, an absence of drug involvement, and the non-existence of sexual permissiveness which has permeated our youth culture. Consequently, this is conducive for the development of positive Jewish values.

Jewish values should have the chance to attain full flowering, so we can create more whole-body and whole-soul Jews -- not fractured Jews. We want people who are rooted in Jewish culture, yet are a part of the American scene and able to contribute to the mosaic of America. We must do our utmost to

create this human product.

This means there is a need for a high priority for educating Jewish youth, who will be able to draw on Jewish sources...In this respect, none can match the success of the Jewish day schools. It provides the proper environment. It requires a high commitment to Jewish values. Other forms of Jewish education are valid, but they cannot equal the standards of the day schools.

I am extremely happy that we are able to unite in the Day School all branches of Judaism, Reform, Conservative and Orthodox, thus giving it a broad community base. I have found more people in my own congregation who are looking with respect to the Day School as the place to send their children.²⁰

By 1970-71 the Solomon Schechter population had grown to 161 children, kindergarten through grade five. The kindergarten and grade one children met at Temple Shalom, while grades two through five were at Temple Ohr Kodesh. It became clear from the founding of the school in the fall of 1965 that a single physical plant was needed. By 1971 both the enrollment and the number of classes had increased. To function successfully and to develop further as a unique institution, it was officially determined that a new building was essential.²¹

In March 1971 the Day School Study Committee and the United Jewish Appeal Executive met to discuss the contributions by day schools to the Jewish Community and to society at large, the reputation of the day schools, the possibility for communal financial aid and attitudes toward the founding of additional day schools, including the

possibility of one or more under the auspices of the Reform group.²² Among those present were representatives of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and secular organizations. There were gathered business leaders, various types of professionals, rabbis, and an array of communal functionaries, under the chairmanship of Charles M. Pascal, Co-Chairman of the Day School Survey Committee. Also present were Rabbi Clark and Dr. Pollak. The participants expressed concern about the receptivity of the Jewish community to the day school and the degree to which cooperation might be forthcoming. Mr. Charles E. Smith, a successful Washington builder with a strong interest in Jewish education, proposed the establishment of a bicultural day school for all groups within Judaism which would be a model institution for other communities.²³

At this same meeting, Dr. Max Kossow stressed the need for an upper school where Hebrew, Jewish history incorporating the establishment of the state of Israel, and religion would be taught more effectively than it was at the time. Among his suggestions was that of a single school building with parallel sections for the three religious groups (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform), which resembled in principle the simultanshule of Weimar, Germany, wherein religious instruction was given in separate classes for the respective religious groups. Rabbi Hillel Klavan of the Ohev Shalom Talmud Torah Congregation, and president of the

Rabbinical Council of Washington, opposing such a plan, stressed the uniqueness of the Orthodox ideology of the Hebrew Academy and warned that nothing must be done "to compromise its status."²⁴ He was not ready to merge that already existing Orthodox school with an institution where children of all Jewish denominations might attend.

Dr. Isaac Franck, executive director of the Jewish Community Council, with which the Board of Jewish Education was affiliated, stated that many opposed the Hebrew Academy, purportedly because of their feeling that it segregated itself from contacts with the non-Orthodox by reason of its policy of "narrowness and provincialism."²⁵ However, he viewed the success of the Conservative Solomon Schechter Day School since 1965 as a sign of greater acceptance of the principles of day school education. Dr. Franck sensed less of a fear of self-segregation than heretofore and a reduction of general opposition to this more intensive form of Jewish education. He saw Jewish parents searching for a better Jewish education for their children to combat the impact of the New Left, alienation, the drug culture, and similar tendencies in the America of 1971.²⁶

At a follow-up meeting, Dr. Max Kossow made a case for a community day school with common instruction, on a non-ideological basis, of Hebrew and Jewish history, but with separate teaching of religion in accordance with the respective convictions. Mr. William Levy of the Jewish

Community Council, representing the Reform perspective, pointed out that his group had dropped its opposition to day schools in principle, and now favored a community, rather than a single denominational Reform day school. This support from the Reform community caused the conference to conclude with a call to the community to support a single school for the moderates of all religious groups.²⁷

On May 21, 1971, Charles E. Smith met with Mr. Wiseman and stated that, "The community needs what is good for the majority, and it will not support a day school based on the principles and practices of strict Orthodoxy."²⁸ To his way of thinking, the community needed a unified Jewish educational system, which would be supported "in a big way." He envisioned a school "of the Solomon Schechter type" which would emphasize the Hebrew language and culture and "would identify with Israel." Repeatedly he stressed that communal support would not be forthcoming for a school serving only "a segment" of the Jewish population.²⁹

To obtain further information on the needs of the community with regard to Jewish education, the Day School Study Committee sent out a postcard questionnaire in May of 1971 to parents within the Greater Washington community. This instrument was mailed to twenty-two thousand families on the mailing list of the United Jewish Appeal. Approximately sixteen hundred responses were received within twenty days of the mailing. Of the total responses, many

were from respondents who had no children, but who expressed an opinion about establishing or maintaining day schools. One thousand responded in the negative, expressing no interest in day school education, but three hundred and seventy expressed an interest in day schools. Of those, only two hundred and fifty-nine responses represented new expressions of interest. The committee found that schools of specific ideological positions, i.e., Orthodox and Reform, interested only forty-three families. A school of any combination of Conservative and other ideological philosophies was acceptable to the majority of respondents, giving an indication of the desirability of a truly communal day school.³⁰

According to George Pollak the responses also indicated that parents were interested in a school which would have a junior high and high school. To the committee it became clear, that in view of what they saw as the deteriorating educational and social condition of the public schools, the need for day schools would become greater in time. In addition, the consensus emerging from the responses was that a shift had been taking place in Jewish circles from interest in public schools to private schools. The committee also discovered that there was a growing realization that the conventional afternoon school with only a few hours of instructional time had not fulfilled the hopes vested in it, and the education received there was

deemed insufficient. Several of the founders made the following statements in 1971.

"I was not thrilled with sending my children to a public school followed by an afternoon or Sunday morning Hebrew school; I was thrilled with the idea of a community Jewish day school and was happy to serve as a founding board member."

"The 1971 study was my mandate to move ahead in the endeavor to establish a community school. It appealed to me precisely because of its community nature, serving as a unifying force of all segments of the Jewish community and manifesting the concept of 'Klal Yisrael'."

"I was attracted to the concept of a community school as an institution devoted to inculcating the cultural, spiritual, and ethical values of the Jewish people and to fostering an appreciation for Jewish religious practice, to the point where students of their own volition will affiliate, within the breadth of the denominational spectrum they find most comfortable. I wanted such an institution to assure that my progeny would lead a creative Jewish life."

"I wanted a community school for my own children and was thrilled with sending my children and was thrilled that Washington wanted such an institution, too. Before this, we sent our children to an Orthodox school as there were no options available in the city where we lived."³¹

At the end of the study, George Pollak emphasized the point on which there was agreement, namely, the need for a more advanced form of Jewish education for more Jewish children and adolescents if the Washington Jewish community was to ensure its existence.³² He recommended that the Greater Washington Jewish community begin to furnish financial aid to the Day Schools. He further recommended that an ideologically unaligned Junior High Day School and

Senior High Day School be initiated covering Grade Seven through Twelve. Such a communal school should be established by the central agency of Jewish education and the Board of Jewish Education, which would establish policies and standards. The school would be governed by a Board of Trustees representing the various denominational groups, the community at large, the United Jewish Appeal leadership, the Jewish Community Council and the Board of Jewish Education. For such a school to be established, adequate facilities should be secured through community funds. The committee also recommended that financial support be provided to the Hebrew Academy and the Solomon Schechter Day School, although not to the Yeshiva High School which was judged to be an inviable institution,³³ not meeting the standards of accreditation as set forth by the State of Maryland.

According to Carol Holiber, the development of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School had most of its roots in the desires of people (only some of whom were officers of agencies such as United Jewish Appeal) who believed in strong Jewish education for children not under strictly Orthodox auspices. These people were often educators themselves, lay as well as religious leaders, afternoon Hebrew school teachers and rabbis. The majority of the people who were very active in the development of this school were not all leaders in the establishment sense, i.e.

they were not representatives of the United Jewish Appeal or Federation of Jewish Philanthropies or major philanthropists themselves, but they did the work, laid the foundation and persuaded members of the establishment to join them.

Critical to the cause, according to Mrs. Holiber, was the role of the professional educators who worked in the school from its inception as a Solomon Schechter institution:

There was no way that the school would have evolved into the institution it has become without the dedicated investment on the part of the people who worked in the school. These were the people who caused the 1971 study to be undertaken by the UJA and moved the community to act.³⁴

The founders of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School articulated that not only were they responding to a study that concluded that day school education had become essential in providing for the survival of Judaism in the diaspora and that only this form of education would be able to provide a meaningful experience in applying the traditions of Judaism to modern American life, but that they were strongly committed to a plurastic environment concerned with broader community interests.³⁵ In this they were confirmed by the 1971 study, which produced evidence that what was being sought was an institution where all denominations could be comfortably accommodated.³⁶ Most importantly, for there to be a possibility of a first-rate day school at the higher grades, it was deemed essential that all segments of the Jewish community pull together to

the maximum extent. The institution must have the image of a place where all denominations may be comfortably accommodated. Pollak cited examples in Rochester and Milwaukee where such institutions were operating and had flourished to the benefit of the community.³⁷

On December 16, 1971, the final meeting of the United Jewish Appeal of Greater Washington, Inc., was held and chaired by Morris Rodman. The minutes reflected the conclusion that "day school education in the Greater Washington area is to be recognized as the responsibility of the Jewish community, that a communal elementary, junior high, and senior high day school be organized and operated, and that a Capital Funds Committee be established by UJA to develop plans for housing this school."³⁸

In September 1972 twelve students in grade seven met at the Jewish Community Center on Montrose and East Jefferson Streets in Rockville. They were joined by seventeen students in grade six, while the kindergarten through fifth grades remained at Ohr Kodesh Congregation and Temple Shalom in Chevy Chase. The Upper School began in 1972 as a community school; the lower Solomon Schechter School was invited to become the elementary division of the larger community school in 1973.³⁹

The concept endorsed by the UJA Federation and subscribed to by the School was that the pluralism reflected in the general Jewish community was representative of the

spectrum of pupils attracted and in accord with the educational principles that had been formulated over time.

Since it was a communal school, the Jewish Day School directorship included members of the entire Jewish community. A curriculum was put in place whose objectives were the creation of knowledgeable and committed Jews and American citizens. The high school provided a full range of general courses and Jewish curriculum including both traditional courses in Bible, Hebrew Language, Jewish history, values and Talmud, alongside modern courses on Israel, contemporary Jewish philosophy and Jewish identification. The entire school, kindergarten through twelfth grade, attempted to integrate the Judaic and general studies components into a unified educational program.⁴⁰

As an institution with a Klal Yisrael approach, the religious atmosphere in the school was one that permitted each student, regardless of religious background, to fulfill and enrich his/her views and understanding of Judaism. The school sought to develop a sense of pride in Jewishness and a feeling of identity with the Jewish people. The religious ideological views of all elements of the Jewish community were respected. While there was no attempt to impose any particular religious philosophy, enough traditional observance with regard to kashrut was mandated so that a child coming from an Orthodox home would also feel comfortable (for example, all foods and lunches brought from

home needed to be dairy to avoid any halachic dietary questions.)⁴¹

On September 19, 1974, an official merger occurred joining the (Upper) Jewish Day School of Greater Washington, Inc., and the Solomon Schechter School of Greater Washington, D.C., Inc. As a result, the primary (or elementary) educational program previously carried out under the Solomon Schechter School was extended to the secondary level consisting, at first, of a junior high -- which like its elementary counterpart added grades in successive years -- and, subsequently, on up to the twelfth grade.

The Federation's enthusiastic support, coinciding with a period of greater local involvement on the part of that organization, was reflected in a pledge to provide financial assistance similar to that afforded other delegate agencies. In return the community school designation gave rise to a new name, the Jewish Day School, to reflect the intended wider institutional appeal. This, in turn, spurred on still greater growth than had been the case in earlier years.

By the mid-1970s the school was housed in three locations. The lower division operated in a two facility complex consisting of Congregation Ohr Kodesh (Silver Spring), and nearby Temple Shalom, with seven sections at the former location and four at the latter.

Certain facilities such as offices, library, music and art rooms, were duplicated at each of these religious

institutions.

The upper division, incorporating the expanding junior high group, was initially established at the Jewish Community Center at Montrose Road (Rockville). Because it continued to grow along with the overall pupil enrollment at the elementary level, it was necessary before long to relocate to another facility. Because the then-available options consisted of shared space in buildings not expressly designed for school purposes, a great deal of improvisation was clearly called for.

The momentum to provide new accommodations for the School was temporarily set back by the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and its aftermath. The Jewish community was heavily affected by those events and focused much of its efforts on overseas aid. This meant that previously established, ambitious capital fund-raising targets for the school would have to be modified downward. As a result, only a tentative space commitment on the order of 45,000 square feet was established for the Montrose Road site. That commitment, however, eventually served to guide efforts associated with a "new building" a few years thereafter, when momentum once again returned and specific actions were initiated.⁴²

Counting the initial construction (completed in 1976) and three subsequent expansions of 14,000 square feet (1987), 19,000 square feet (1982), and 28,000 square feet (1990), respectively, the total school plant "under roof"

eventually came to almost 61,000 square feet.

In 1972 Charles E. Smith became chairman of the Jewish Day School's facility planning committee on the condition that the school be for all Jews: Orthodox, Conservative, Reformed, unaffiliated, and non-practicing. At the first campaign dinner of the school, Mr. Smith expressed his views on the importance of Jewish education.

I believe that the survival of the Jews will not depend on orthodox, conservative, or reform Judaism, but on Judaism or no Judaism. There is an alarming ignorance among Jews concerning their history, culture, tradition, and values. A people without a tradition is a people without hope.⁴³

In October of 1980, in honor of his service to the community and to the school the Board of Directors renamed the institution the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School and coincident with that change, the school also added a Hebrew reference to Mr. Smith, "Beit Midrash Tzurriel" (the Charles E. Smith House of Learning).⁴⁴

The Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School evolved from the Solomon Schechter School of Greater Washington. However, the original founders of the Solomon Schechter school (1965) were not contacted for this study unless they were still active during the transition period in 1971-1972 when the upper school was established as a community school. Of the ten founders contacted, six responded, four male, two female. The six respondents were a highly professional group; three attorneys, two economists, and one social

worker with salaries ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000 in 1972. For that time, these were very comfortable salaries, well within the range of an ability to pay tuition. In contrast to the founders of Akiba, not one of these people was professionally involved in Jewish education. Four were conservative, one was reformed, and one was unaffiliated -- clearly a pluralistic representation of the Jewish community.

Two believed they were more observant than their parents had been, two were less and two were the same. At least two commented that although they were less observant, they were better educated. All six had good Jewish educations; one had graduated from the Jewish Theological Seminary, one from the Hebrew University, four from Talmud Torah followed by short periods of study in Israel. Three responded that they were more "traditional" than their grandparents had been (rejected the word observant) because of the strong acculturation process taking place during their grandparents' early years in the United States. A contributing factor cited was their grandparents' need to adapt to the various pressures of trying to earn a living and make ends meet in a rapidly changing world at the turn of the century. Two of the respondents were second generation Americans, four were first generation.⁴⁵

For this group of founders, as was the case with those founders at Akiba, a community school meant maintaining an

unaffiliated, pluralistic status; providing a dual, integrated education; having an independent board; and espousing cultural, spiritual and ethical values, particularly that of "Klal Yisrael."

In their own words, the founders described their vision of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School as an institution with an independent board of directors composed of members of all five groups (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and unaffiliated) and not affiliated with any specific national organization. The board was to serve as a unifying force of all segments of the Jewish community. In addition, the six respondents all agreed that such a school should inculcate an appreciation for Jewish religious practice to the point where students of their own volition would affiliate within the breadth of the denominational spectrum where they felt most comfortable.

The founders joined an already existing board of directors of the Solomon Schechter School to help develop a Jewish community high school because they were adamant about establishing such a community school, which was nowhere to be found in the Washington metropolitan area. They were unanimously opposed to only Sunday school Jewish education for their children, and all but one of the six sent their children in 1972 to the first seventh grade class or to a later class. The one founder whose children did not attend, made that decision because his children had started at the

Hebrew Academy, and he allowed them to remain there.

Each founder stated that the local public schools were excellent for the most part, the exception being some in Washington, D.C., itself. However, they were desirous of a second curriculum which would assure maintenance of Jewish heritage and religion for the next generation and re-acquisition of such heritage for those children whose homes had already lost it.

The six founders lived in communities that were predominantly Gentile, although comfortable for Jews. The majority (four out of six) no longer lived near relatives. And none claimed that their neighborhoods were providing any sort of Jewish ethnic or religious atmosphere.⁴⁶

In their ranking of factors important in the founding of the school, this group ranked provision of an integrated secular and religious education highest with study of Bible, Hebrew, creation of ethnic identity and Jewish continuity tying for second place.

For this group of founders the importance of moral and ethical values emerged in third place. This was an area that Jews were becoming concerned with. The lack of ethical (values) education in the public school curriculum was on their minds. As early as 1953, Marvin Fox began arguing for a genuinely distinctive Jewish school opposing the strong trend in public schools toward the philosophy of scientific naturalism. He suggested that the day school become an

important bulwark against the terrible moral confusion of the time and felt that the development of moral sensitivity was something the public school simply could not teach.⁴⁷

Least important for this group, just as it had been for the founders of Akiba, was status symbol and pressure. Not one founder felt pressured by friends to conform by sending their children or to join the group because it was the correct thing to do "socially." Interest in a longer school day was not a factor either.

Of the original six parents of seventh graders in 1972 who were contacted, only two responded who provided new information, since four of the others were already among the founders. Both of these respondents were male, a rabbi and an engineer with incomes in 1972 ranging from \$35,000 to \$50, 000+. Both were conservative, second-generation Americans, one more observant and one less than his parents. Neither lived near relatives. One lived in a Gentile neighborhood, the second in an area "open to Jews." Both believed that their public schools were excellent, but both wanted more than just a good secular education. The rabbi had been a member of the original class of students at Akiba in Philadelphia. For him, there were no other options for the education of his children once a community school had come into existence.

Of the factors that were of greatest importance to them, once again the need for an integrated, secular/

religious education and study of Hebrew and Bible were highest, while social pressure and status symbol were least important. For one of the parents, need for ethnic identity was ranked equally as low as the latter factors. There also was little concern about intermarriage. What emerged as a result of conversations with several of the parents was an echo of Charles E. Silberman's description of changing life styles, demanding new and more intensive forms of education for the young and a guaranteed source of Jewish friends to replace the now scattered families.⁴⁸

Of the twelve original seventh graders in 1972, four responded, three male, one female. One is currently a journalist/musician, the second a research associate, the third a stockbroker, and the female is a full-time mother and housewife. Two described themselves as unaffiliated, and two are conservative. Two are third-generation Americans, one is second generation, and the female is an immigrant herself to this country from Israel. They defined a community day school as necessary for achieving assimilation without losing ethnic identity. All four cited loyalty to a well-integrated Judaic/General curriculum, intended to serve the secular and religious needs of the largest part of the Jewish spectrum -- not just the ultra-Orthodox.

All four think that their parents chose to send them to the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in 1972 in order to

strengthen their Jewish identity and to impart the religious values of the home. It is significant that the two emphasizing carryover of the values of the home came from different religious backgrounds. One was Orthodox, the other Conservative. Both believed that this school was supportive of their homes' values. This could only be expected to occur in the classrooms of a trans-ideological institution.

None of these four students grew up living near grandparents or close relatives. Their neighborhoods ranged from predominantly Gentile to very Jewish. In each instance they stated that their parents were more observant than their grandparents had been, and in three of the four cases, they themselves are now less observant than their parents, although they identify strongly with Israel, are self confident about their Jewish identities and feel knowledgeable about their ethnic and cultural history and religion. All ranked symbols of status, loss of faith in public schools, longer school day in one institution, and buffer against inter-marriage, as the least important factors in motivating their parents to choose the school. The expectation that the school would provide Jewish continuity is cited by two of the students as the most important factor with a greater need for ethnic identity and learning Hebrew cited by the remaining two. Next in importance was the desire for integrated secular and

religious education, followed by the provision of moral and ethical standards and the learning of Bible. It is interesting that here, too, is a concern about morals and values. While there was no dissatisfaction with public school expressed, there must have been a sense even among these students that their parents were seeking a stronger moral environment.

Their teachers, four who began in 1972 as Upper School teachers and two who had been with the lower school prior to that, claim that the desire to preserve Jewish continuity was the most important factor influencing the establishment of the school in 1972. A greater need for ethnic identity, an integrated secular and religious education and the provision of moral and ethical standards tied for second place in their rankings, with learning Hebrew, Bible, and a greater need for expression of religion following. Least important in their perceptions was the social pressure to conform to friends.

This faculty viewed the community day school as an institution supported by the entire community for the entire community (not only for all segments of Judaism, but also for children of all intellectual capabilities). This was an innovation for Jewish day school education in that prior to this time, students were screened for intelligence with the understanding that below an I.Q. of 110 a child could not succeed in a dual curriculum program. The Charles E. Smith

Jewish Day School was committed to providing a Jewish education for all who wish to attend. Those who had been with the Solomon Schechter School commented that the selection process of students for admission changed in 1972-1973. Whereas the original school admitted students who had successfully achieved on the basis of rigorous testing, the new philosophy driven by a community approach meant admitting students with learning problems as well. The lesson of the first century, i.e., the triumph of educational opportunity for all, began to emerge once again for Jews as a standard in the twentieth century.⁴⁹

Footnotes

1. Charles H. Mindel and Robert W. Habenstein, Ethnic Families in America Patterns and Variations (New York: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), p.5.
2. Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew, (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1960), p.2.
3. Ibid., p.1.
4. Charles E. Smith, Building My Life, edited by David Bruce Smith, (Washington, D.C.: Wolk Press, 1985), p.79.
5. Charles S. Liebman, The Ambivalent American Jew Politics Religion and Family in American Jewish Life (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), pp. 43-44.
6. Ibid., p.44.
7. Charles E. Silberman, pp.209-211.
8. George Pollak, The Study of the Jewish Schools of Greater Washington, D.C. (New York: American Association for Jewish Education, 1971).

"...in 1861 there existed in Washington the Washington Hebrew Elementary School, an all-day institution which offered instruction in Hebrew and secular subjects from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This school was founded by immigrants from Germany -- a probable reason for the prominent place of German in the curriculum. As the problems of finance multiplied, and more especially with the improvement of public education, Washington's Jews reconsidered maintaining an expensive school which they felt perpetuated differences and served as a barrier to acculturation to the community at large. In 1870 the Washington Hebrew Elementary School closed and religious education continued to be provided by four supplementary schools attached to four congregations -- Washington Hebrew Congregation, Mt. Sinai, Adas Israel and Ohev Shalom. The Adas Israel School turned out to be the only Jewish educational institution in Washington with any degree of success and acceptance in terms of numbers of pupils, extent of curriculum and duration of existence. It was established in 1872 as a two-hour, four-day

afternoon school, supplemented by two hours instruction on Saturday afternoons. In 1880, classes were even conducted during July and August for two hours on Wednesdays."

9. Nathan M. Kaganoff, "The Education of the Jewish Child in the District of Columbia, 1861-1915," The Record (Publication of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington), Vol. 2, January, 1967, pp.43-50.

"A final effort at Jewish Education prior to 1944 was the establishment in June, 1910, of a free, community sponsored Talmud Torah by the three orthodox congregations of Washington. Due to the financial problems, however this Hebrew Free School closed in 1911. Its chief failure lay in not proving to the community the need for its existence, and in not securing the support of the wealthier elements in the city."

10. Kaganoff, vol.31, p.51.

11. Pollak, p.9.

12. Interview with Carol Holiber on February 28, 1991.

13. Ibid., February 28, 1991.

14. Brief History of the Solomon Schechter Day School, September 1971.

15. Holiber, February 28, 1991.

16. Jay Kaufman, "Day Schools; Not Whether, But How?" Central Conference of the American Rabbi Journal, October, 1964, p.17.

17. Ibid., p.5.

18. Amended Articles of Incorporation of the Solomon Schechter School of Greater Washington, D.C. Inc. signed by Leonard Kapiloff, Joseph L. Mendelson, Rabbi Tzvi Porath, and Seymour D. Wolf, Chevy Chase, Md., April 22, 1969, pp.1-2.

19. Solomon Schechter School of Greater Washington, D.C., Chevy Chase, Md. Attachment to Form 1023 (Exemption Application, U.S. Treasury Department - Internal Revenue service), signed by Joseph L. Mendelson, pres., September 4, 1969, p.10.

20. Interview with Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman, Reform Rabbi of Washington Hebrew Congregation, conducted by Murray Frank for The Jewish Week, May 10, 1973.
21. "A Brief Narrative of Essential Background Data." Memorandum to the Board of Regents of the Solomon Schechter School of Greater Washington. (Chevy Chase, Md.), January 8, 1971, p.5.
22. Pollak, p.73.
23. Ibid., p.74.
24. Ibid., p.75.
25. Ibid., p. 75.
26. Ibid., p.76.
27. Ibid., p.78.
28. Smith, "Building My Life," pp. 79-80.

"The more I thought about the issues of Jewish survival, the more I recognized the importance of educating the young in our cultural and religious heritage. I realized too that "Klal Yisrael" (feeling of community) is of equal importance.

Until the early 1970s, the only Jewish day schools in the Washington area were the Orthodox Hebrew Academy and the Solomon Schechter School. Only the Academy had a secondary school. The Solomon Schechter School was the Washington Jewish Community's first response to the need for a broader kind of Jewish education than could be found at the more Orthodox Hebrew Academy.

In 1972 the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) asked me if I would be interested in helping to establish a Jewish day school for kindergarten and elementary, as well as junior and senior high school students....I told the UJA that I would be interested in helping on the condition that the school be for all Jews: Orthodox, Conservative, Reformed, unaffiliated and non-practicing."

29. Ibid., 81.
30. Pollak, p.78.
31. Several of the founders responded on their questionnaire

that while their words may be cited, they wished to remain anonymous.

32. Pollak p.88.
33. Ibid., p.100.
34. Holiber, February 28, 1991.
35. Memorandum to Leon Gerber from Paul S. Berger Re: United Jewish Appeal and Day School Education, May 31, 1972

"....Many of us believe that at the higher grade level a strong, viable quality day school institution will be of interest to many who will come from traditional homes, be they graduates of the Hebrew Academy or elsewhere and such a school will satisfy their needs more adequately than any other alternative in the community...the school run under Orthodox auspices would not satisfy the mass of the community and, in fact, would prevent the development of a first-rate, upper-class day school facility in greater Washington."
36. Pollak, p.103.
37. Ibid., p.103
38. Minutes of December 16, 1971 UJA Meeting.
39. The Jewish Week, Washington, D.C., March 18-24, 1976, p.6.
40. Statement of Philosophy and Purpose published in 1973, found in files of Paul Berger at law offices of Arnold and Porter, Washington, D.C., p.12.
41. Ibid., p.3.
42. Smith, pp.80-81

"I became the chairman of the Jewish Day School's facility planning committee, whose members were appointed by the United Jewish Appeal, the Jewish Community foundation, and the ad hoc planning committee of the Day School...

We selected a site for the school on East Jefferson Street across from the Jewish Community

Center. This was done for two reasons: first, the location was close to major Jewish population areas; and second, the school could take advantage of the facilities at both the Center and B'Nai Israel Congregation.

We estimated that the cost to build would be \$2.7 million to accommodate a potential 500 students. I then researched how much money I thought we would be able to raise by making a list of potential givers and how much I thought they should donate. My total was only \$2.2 million.

I told Bob [his son], I'm not going to proceed with the building unless the UJA contributes \$500,000.00

Bob advised me to discuss the matter with UJA. I explained the problem to the executive director, who countered, "How are you so sure that you can raise only \$2.2 million?"

I just know that is all I can raise.

After weeks of committee discussion, the UJA finally agreed to give us the \$500,000 provided we raise the \$2.2 million.

Without their contribution, the \$2.2 million would be useless because there would be no other way we could cover the school's costs. I told the UJA that I wanted our agreement confirmed in writing. Don't you take our word for it? They asked.

I would prefer it in writing, I said.

Once the UJA made its commitment, I started the Day School campaign with Vivian Rabineau. I knew it would be difficult to raise the money because people in Washington were generally not in favor of parochial schools. Traditionally, they have been ardent supporters of the public schools. But, I hoped that once I set the example of contributing a large sum of money, others would follow.

Through hard work, we raised \$2,190,000. I then went to the UJA and told them that the remaining \$10,000 would have to come in small amounts, and then I would be finished. But I needed their \$500,000 now.

They gave me the money, and we proceeded. The groundbreaking ceremony was in March of 1976. The building was completed the following December and occupied in January of 1977. The Jewish Day School signed a dollar-a-year lease with the Foundation. I decided to name the building in memory of Leah, my wife.

I was proud of the school and its philosophy. It provides a multi-faceted program with strong academics and an opportunity for all the students to learn about their Jewish heritage and religion, in addition to a fine secular education."

43. Ibid., P.81.

44. Ibid., p.81.

"In October of 1980 the Board of Directors voted to name the school the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School of Greater Washington. I was overwhelmed. It is the most cherished honor I have ever received."

45. Information gathered from Founder questionnaires appears to parallel the patterns of behaviors described by both Charles E. Silberman and Irving Howe.

46. These admissions were in keeping with Charles E. Silberman's account of changes occurring in the immediate surroundings in which Jewish families began to find themselves.

47. Marvin Fox, "day Schools and the American Educational Pattern, " The Jewish Parent, September, 1953, p.12.

48. From a conversation with a parent who wished to remain anonymous:

"As a child growing up in the fifties, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, meant new shoes -- shiny black patent Mary Janes that were so slippery my father had to roughen their bottoms on the fire escape. I wore them with a new dress to the crowded synagogue, where I held tight to my mother's hand as the blowing of the shofar (ram's horn) announced the holiday. Our shofar-blower was a rotund man, and his face inflated and turned bright red as he sounded the ancient notes. It was an awesome moment for a seven year old. Afterwards, our family -- grandparents, aunts,

uncles, and cousins -- gathered for a festive meal: round, rasin challah, apples dipped in honey, and chicken soup with fluffy matzo balls. I didn't understand much about the holiday's significance, but I sensed something important was happening within our family and the Jewish community. When my sons grew up in the seventies, they, too, wore new shoes to synagogue. But there were special children's services where they blew the shofars they had made in day school and sang songs about 'being friends and making amends.' Our uncles and cousins were scattered, but our friends composed our extended family for the festive meal. And it was very important that they attend a school where they would make friendships that would enhance their Jewish identity."

49. For Jews the issue of education being exclusive or communal (inclusive) is not new, as stated earlier in this dissertation. See Chapter One, p. 21.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FOUNDING OF THE GESHER SCHOOL - 1982

Between 1972 and 1982, from the time that the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School was established to the founding of the Gesher School in 1982, twenty-eight community Jewish day schools had been established in the United States. The circumstances and conditions giving rise to Akiba in 1946 were strengthened and reinforced over the years, and, where once pioneers had struggled with a new concept of Jewish education, the students of those pioneers were now implementing a successful model. While the faculty of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School had already discussed the changing face of their student population in terms of varying ability levels ten years earlier, the general population witnessed the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) signed into law by the United States Federal Government on November 12, 1975. It soon became known as the "Bill of Rights" for youngsters with learning disabilities and other handicapping conditions. If public education was making a place for these children, a school established by and for the community could certainly do no less. By the time Gesher was established in 1982, the concept of education in a community Jewish day school was totally inclusive. Every

effort would be made to accommodate each family who elected a Jewish education for its child(ren).

The 1980's were a time when there emerged for Jewish parents a concern for a lack of values-based education in the public schools. Not only were these parents and founders of Gesher examining the quality of academics available, but they also became heirs to a call for a values-laden education.¹

The Gesher School of Alexandria, Virginia, presents us with a history that is somewhat different from that of Akiba and the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. Since no formal records or minutes exist, the facts recorded in this chapter are derived totally from conversations with the key founders of the school, original parents, and faculty. According to Marshall Levin, then Executive Director of Beth El Hebrew Congregation and founder of Keshet Child Development Center at Beth El, the Gesher School grew out of the already existing Keshet Center. Keshet had been a response to an unmet need of the young Jewish community in Northern Virginia for a pre-school Jewish nursery. Interestingly, Keshet was established as a community nursery school, since it was a joint venture between Beth El (Reform) and Agudas Achim Congregation (Conservative), although the physical plant was located at Beth El. Keshet came into existence under the direct leadership of Marshall Levin, who needed a pre-school setting for his own toddlers at the time and was

convinced that a joint effort of Beth El (his employer) and Agudas Achim (his choice of personal congregation) would attract enough young families needing child care while both parents were working. Levin was correct in his assumptions.

If the parents wished to continue a Jewish education such as the integrated program that Keshet offered beyond kindergarten, their only option was to bus or carpool the child to the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, Maryland, twenty-five miles away. Many families had been doing this since 1966, once the Solomon Schechter School came into existence. Other families, for whom the Jewish component was less important, could send their children to the local public school and in the afternoon to a synagogue-affiliated school closer to home in Northern Virginia at Beth El or Agudas Achim.

With a strong population of students and parents from Keshet nursery school in place, Mr. Levin, Rabbi Fink of Beth El and Rabbi Elster of Agudas Achim congregations were joined by three other families to found the Gesher School. It was their premise that enough of the Keshet families would elect to continue educating their children in a day school program reflecting a community philosophy much like that of Keshet and similar to that of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. It was the intention of this group of founders that the Gesher School would start at the kindergarten level and add a grade each year through third

grade at which point the children would feed into the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. To effect that transition comfortably, the author of this study (principal of the Lower School at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School) was called in to assist with curriculum and instruction. It was hoped, with a parallel curriculum, the children would come well-prepared into fourth grade at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. At the same time, for the first three years of elementary school, they would avoid the long trip to Rockville. Three of the founding families of Gesher either had one or two older children at Smith or were fully intending to send their children there later on. It was, therefore, important for Gesher to reflect the pluralistic, community tenets of the Smith School. As an outgrowth of Keshet, Gesher also needed to continue the "community" approach that was already in place there.

With the hard work of the initial six founding families, Gesher opened for the 1983-84 school year with eleven kindergarten children, housing them at Agudas Achim Congregation at Valley Drive, Alexandria.

Rabbi Shelton Elster, believing strongly that it was time for Northern Virginia to establish a Jewish Day School, took the lead in persuading his congregation, Agudas Achim, to house the school, to make physical changes in the synagogue's structure, and to absorb the inevitable cost overruns that accompany such an undertaking.

The founders of Gesher, unlike those in the other two schools all provided hands-on help during Gesher's first years. Marilyn Davis served in a volunteer capacity as head of the school for curriculum, staffing, and architectural planning for the kindergarten room, while Liz Frommer became the bookkeeper, also in a volunteer capacity. Emily Lurie took care of transportation and fundraising. All three worked as volunteers without salary until 1987. Mrs. Davis called it a labor of love for all of them. William Davis (now deceased), then an active member of Agudas Achim, single handedly built most of the furniture needed for the original kindergarten classroom during the summer preceding September 1983 and became its first president. He immediately saw to the incorporation of Gesher. While one of his daughters was already at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, he was helping to found a Jewish day school for his two younger ones. In September, 1983, his daughter counted herself among the seven kindergartners alongside the son of Liz and Paul Frommer and the daughter of Emily and Mark Lurie. The founding families of Frommer, Davis and Lurie worked hard to gain access to United Jewish Appeals Foundation funds for Gesher and succeeded in doing so. Gesher became a constituent agency after five years; before that it received annual stipends.

It had been agreed by the founding families that Gesher would open its doors if ten students enrolled. It opened

with eleven, however it never made the same impact upon the Northern Virginia community that Keshet nursery had.

Whereas Keshet had achieved and surpassed all its projections with regard to enrollment and funding in its initial years, Gesher never did. It is Marshall Levin's assessment that the Northern Virginia Jewish population, while drawn to a pre-school because it met their economic and time-frame needs, had many wonderful "free" alternatives for elementary education in the public sector. According to Marilyn Davis, while both schools assumed a community philosophy, Keshet was more of a "Reform/Conservative" institution, and Gesher, because of its early faculty, felt more like an "Orthodox/Conservative" School. The phrase, "too Jewish" was often heard by the faculty. The kindergarten at Gesher, however, did grow nicely, since the Alexandria and Arlington (areas from which students were expected to attend) public schools only offer a half-day kindergarten program and the possibility of a full day of school was alluring for working parents. Those who were drawn to Jewish education were far more impressed with the older, larger Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in spite of the commute time involved.² Mr. Levin's own children attended Smith once they were of kindergarten age. Other families have chosen to go so far as to move to Maryland in order to send their children to the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. And so, while Gesher continues to exist in

Alexandria, it also continues to struggle and is confronted with the continuing concerns for recruitment and retention of students year after year.

A desire for an integrated, secular and religious education emerged as the most important factor for the six founders of Gesher, with the expectation that such a school would provide Jewish continuity and moral and ethical standards for their children. These six founders established Gesher in keeping with Eduardo Rauch's theory that for modern families formal education had become the most powerful, and sometimes, the only tool for the retention of ethnic or religious identity. For them, school provided the only place where their children could come in contact with a living Judaism and its values. "The concept of a school in which Jewish identity could be strengthened and allowed to flourish is the appeal."³

Although the importance of studying Hebrew and Bible are mentioned, as is the need for a greater expression of religion, there is no consistent ranking of these factors. What is significant and different about the results of this founder questionnaire is that for the first time school as a buffer against intermarriage received a ranking and a strong one at that, as did a loss of faith in public schools, and a dissatisfaction with alternatives. The need for a full-time day program in kindergarten emerged several times. For the residents of northern Virginia, factors

which were not even acknowledged by the founders and parents of Charles E. Smith (1972) were emerging.

The founders of Gesher defined their community day school as serving the entire community in which all denominations of Judaism should be able to feel comfortable and where no judgment is made by the curriculum as to a correct and only way to practice Judaism. The emphasis is on integrating Jewish teachings (values) with secular studies. Rabbi Sheldon Elster stated that the "community day school is the true hope for meaningful, knowledgeable Jewish survival."⁴

One of the founders, who was also a parent and had become involved in order to establish such an institution close to home, said,

My concern was prompted by my own children. I, myself, was brought up with no Jewish training, and while I always knew I was Jewish, it held no importance. As an adolescent, I floundered while my peers appeared to know who they were. Transmitting Jewishness to children is one thing if you have experienced it yourself; trying to transmit that without having lived it, requires a support system that I sought in the school to which I would send my children.⁵

These people were second and first generation Americans with incomes ranging from \$35,000 to \$50,000 and more. They were all Conservative with the exception of a Reform rabbi from Northern Virginia, who enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity for Reform and Conservative cooperation. And for the most part, they claimed that they were all

practicing Judaism to a greater degree than their parents had.

Seven additional parents were contacted who had not been among the founders; four responded. All were earning from \$35,000 to \$50,000 and more. Those who responded for both spouses, all indicated family incomes in excess of \$50,000. These were very comfortable incomes. In terms of inflation they were probably in keeping with the incomes of parents in both 1946 and 1972. In one case the husband was a civil engineer and the wife a legislative aide to a United States Senator. A second couple consisted of one working at the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) while the partner was a science policy analyst. A third was a part-time bookkeeper and housewife, and the fourth respondent was a computer systems analyst. The majority considered themselves Conservative with one Reform family. They were all first generation Americans.

All of these families had both spouses working, and the requirement of a longer school day was beginning to emerge for two of the families. For these parents, however, the greater need for ethnic identity was even more important, along with providing moral and ethical standards and an integrated secular/religious education (top ranking). A greater need for expression of religion was ranked second. The expectation that the school would provide Jewish continuity and a loss of faith in public schools were ranked

third. "It has been my hope that this environment would strengthen our children's self image and their respect for their tradition, and that at the point in their lives that they encounter the Christian world they would know well who they are," wrote Mrs. Frommer. One parent listed her public school as being excellent particularly with regard to Christian holiday celebrations. "The unit on Santa Claus is outstanding."⁶ This type of ranking calls forth the thinking of historians, such as Bernard Bailyn and Michael Zuckerman, who questioned the capacity of the family to socialize the child. In the case of the parent/founder quoted earlier, the capacity had indeed disappeared. These parents no longer felt capable of transmitting Jewish heritage. By 1982 the society that the children would be entering had undergone massive changes too. With Watergate behind them, but with a clear void in the moral and ethical practices of high government officials still lingering, it is not surprising that a search for moral and ethical values would emerge as important.

With most of these families living in predominantly Gentile neighborhoods (even if they were open to Jews), they felt, and expressed, that their surroundings were not providing Jewish continuity. No longer was there a parallel situation to the one described by Charles E. Silberman of his neighborhood in New York's upper West Side where on Jewish holidays even Gentile children stayed home. The

public schools in Arlington and Fairfax celebrate Christmas and Easter to such an extent that it causes discomfort for many Jewish families. For the first time, this set of questionnaires yielded references to the public school as "enemy" in the same way that Sanders found Catholics' perceiving their public schools. This Jewish day school is beginning to emerge as a school of alternatives as interpreted by Sanders, Butts, and Lines.

The students who responded thought their parents sent them so that they could follow their ancestors' customs and to have a Jewish identity to pass down to future generations. These students are still children with the oldest being only a sixth grader. Those responding to the questionnaire are now students at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School.

The views of these founders and parents, as well as those of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in 1972, are reflective of Marvin Fox's 1953 article arguing for a genuinely Jewish school opposing the strong trend in public schools to follow the philosophy of scientific materialism.

The majority of these families stated that they are more observant than their parents and grandparents. This may be in keeping with Horace Kallen's thesis⁷ that people cannot successfully change their ethnic identity. While their parents and grandparents may have assimilated in their search for economic independence, once reached, the process

is slowed and the group re-emerges.

Very important for the founders and parents in all three institutions is the attempt, as Sarna phrases it, to be both Jewish and American in the modern world, thus the high ranking of an integrated curriculum.

Just as Bernard Steinberg saw ethnicity and religion assuming prominence, these factors also emerge from the more recent questionnaires as more important than on the Charles E. Smith questionnaires. Herberg believed that religion was a more respectable way of maintaining ethnic primary groups than ethnicity itself,⁸ and while this may have been true with the single ideological schools, the parents and founders of these community Jewish Day Schools, particularly since 1972, feel strongly about ethnic identification. For these Jews, living ethnically and culturally is so intertwined with religious heritage that Herberg's interpretation becomes too narrow and confining.

The two students and one faculty person responding to the Gesher questionnaire affirmed the importance of continuity, ethnic identity, the study of Hebrew language and Bible, and a greater need for expression of religion, in keeping with their parents and founders.

When Alexander Dushkin chided himself in 1948 for having entertained negative views in 1918 about day school education, he was too hard on himself. In 1918 he was probably correct in assuming that parochial education on a

large scale was unwise and dangerous; it was also impractical from a financial point of view. Subsequent developments, changes in the host society, the Jewish home and neighborhood, and in the world, all contributed to a new scenario. The community Jewish day school, and Gesher in particular, reflected a time when formal Jewish education had achieved a clear priority for at least some families and was considered by many lay leaders and professional educators to be a vital means for retaining ethnic religious identity. The conditions of the home and family seemed to some to demand an institution where children could come to experience a living Judaism with its ethical and spiritual values, with its high esteem for community service (Klal Yisrael), and with provision for returning to a positive identification with Judaism.

Footnotes

1. Marvin Fox, "Day Schools and the American Educational pattern," The Jewish Parent, September, 1953, p. 12.
2. Marilyn Davis, Interview, December, 1990.
Marshall Levin, Interview, June, 1990.
3. Elizabeth Frommer, Founder Questionnaire, December, 1990.
4. Rabbi Sheldon Elster, Founder Questionnaire, June, 1991.
5. Frommer, Parent Questionnaire, December, 1990.
6. Sharyn Stahl, Parent Questionnaire, June, 1991.
7. Horace M. Kallen, "Democracy Verses the Melting Pot," The Nation, Feb. 1915, pp. 217-220, as it appears in John J. Appel, ed. The New Immigration (New York: Jerome S. Ozer Publishing Corp., 1971), p. 111.
8. Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1960), p.2.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Based on this study of the founding of three community Jewish day schools over a period of almost four decades, this research has led to the conclusion that for some Jews in America the community Jewish day school was a logical outgrowth of the American Jewish community solving its dilemma of finding a balance between separation and assimilation, of acculturation without total absorption, of a desire to belong to America without having to betray one's past.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, education was viewed as a vehicle for the absorption of peoples. The model for American society became the melting pot. All populations were expected to blend together and become homogenized, to conform to the definition of what it meant to be an American. With this as a focus, Jewish leadership attempted to fit the Jewish child into society. The emphasis was on becoming American; the accent was on the secular. The trend in Jewish education was to (in many instances) ignore the "Jewish", to reach out to the rest of the world to embrace and understand all other religious and ethnic groups. At the same time certain change factors were occurring in American Jewish life which weakened family ties

and family structure. The American mentality of metropolitan life with its anonymity and wealth replaced the norms of the shtetl, of sociality and interdependency. The cultural pluralism of twentieth century America allowed the Jew to live freely as a Jew while simultaneously permitting him to lose all signs of his Jewishness. It also, however, encouraged the American Jew to re-examine his place in American life; it permitted the need for reinforcement of Jewish identity to surface. By experiencing a weakened Jewish identity, a deflated Jewish pride and a perceived inferiority of Jewish leadership it led the American Jew to conclude that one of the institutional ways that Jews could possibly maintain their survival as a group was through education.

The information derived in this study leads to the conclusion that concern for the future of Jewish continuity, a perceived need to pass on Jewish heritage and culture (coinciding with an incapacity of the family to do so) in a formal structure of education that would integrate this learning with what children were already learning in public school and would serve all Jewish children who wished to attend gave rise to the community Jewish day school in America. There also emerged an ability to pay for this education on the part of the family together with a nationwide platform to begin to raise and allocate funds by United Jewish Appeal Federations specifically for education.

Intertwined with continuity, heritage and culture was the concern for preservation of Hebrew language and mastery of Bible Study.

The need for a values-laden education does not emerge as paramount in 1946, but it does become increasingly important in 1972 and even more so in 1982. It is accompanied by an erosion of faith in the ability of the public school to deliver a values education, to be unbiased enough in its treatment of Christian holidays as to make itself comfortable for Jewish children and to simply deliver a first-rate quality general education.

Concern with the high rate of intermarriage does not emerge as a factor until 1982 with the Gesher questionnaire responses. A need for a school to act as a buffer against intermarriage and a loss of faith in public schools, as well as a dissatisfaction with alternatives were also revealed by the Gesher school data.

These emerging factors call forth the thinking of such historians as Bernard Bailyn and Michael Zuckerman who had also questioned the capacity of the family to socialize the child. We learn from the statistics cited by Sydney Goldstein in 1989 of alarmingly low fertility rates among Jews, high rates of intermarriage and lower residential density through population redistribution. Each of the schools from 1946 to 1982 increasingly yielded information confirming lower residential density statistics. In 1946

some families no longer lived in "Jewish" neighborhoods and near relatives; in 1972 this was more the case than the exception and in 1982 this was almost entirely the reality. This coupled with lower fertility rates, which is not dealt with on the questionnaires, may have served gradually to heighten the concern with intermarriage since all three negatively affect growth, and no growth or negative growth can result in decline. In any case the founders of the Gesher school in 1982 were concerned about intermarriage.

Many of these findings could explain the rise of Jewish day school education in general, but specifically in 1946, 1972 and 1982 we are confronted with groups of people who were interested in an intensive form of Jewish education but only under certain conditions. They wanted their children to feel comfortable in a setting in which their home practices would be respected and shared. They also were seeking a pluralistic setting in which all Jewish children could find a place; children coming from a variety of Jewish orientations with varied abilities. A single ideologically oriented school was not an option for these groups; the new community, trans-ideological Jewish day school defined itself according to their needs.

The founders of Akiba established their community Jewish day school in 1946 for a variety of reasons. They were concerned with ensuring the future of Judaism (continuity). They knew by 1946 that future Jewish

leadership would need to be home-grown. None of the existing schools in Philadelphia at that time were thought to be providing adequate education in terms of curriculum, enthusiasm and appropriate developmental timing (teenage years). Furthermore, the founders knew that they were establishing a school that would have a constituency because it was happening at a time when Jews were feeling comfortable as Jews and as Americans. According to Charles E. Silberman, immediately after World War II Jews began to want to formally educate their children to be Jews because they could not do so themselves and because they felt it was alright to do so. The founders of Akiba from whom information was received had Jewish educations themselves, but it has not been established what educational backgrounds the other nineteen had had. They were coming together from a host of Philadelphia neighborhoods and suburbs where outward signs of Jewishness had already disappeared and knew that the next generation would not learn how to be Jewish at home or from the neighborhood streets according to Simon Greenberg (founder who provided a telephone interview). One of the founders responded specifically that his was a Gentile neighborhood and the other two no longer lived near relatives, meaning that the natural, hands-on transmissions of heritage and continuity that often took place in the home of a grandparent or an uncle was not available.

Akiba's first students also confirmed this neighborhood

pattern; four living in Gentile communities, two in mixed neighborhoods (some of whom had already experienced anti-semitic incidents at their local public schools), and only five describing their neighborhoods as Jewish. The majority of these children were a minority in their public school classrooms. When they attended any one of the ninety-one supplementary schools that were available in Philadelphia in 1946, they were doing so after 3:30 p.m. or on Sunday mornings, sacrificing time that could have been spent in sports, music lessons, and other activities, and they were doing so only until age thirteen or fourteen, for the most part. The ages fourteen to eighteen were considered by the founders and parents to be crucial times to be exposed to Jewish learning if Jewish identity and Jewish continuity were to flourish. Also important, however, for the founders and parents, was the maintenance of relationships with non-Jews for their children. They worried that isolating their children for a kindergarten through twelfth grade education would ghetto-ize them. This group comprised of a diverse body of Jews, was very careful to preserve what they perceived as a healthy balance. They believed that leadership could be developed and that the period of adolescence was most important to this development.

This group never lost sight of their diversity and the importance of teaching their children in a pluralistic, trans-ideological environment. They believed that there was

a rich and significant Jewish culture to be perpetuated, that the significance of this culture is most effectively grasped through the study of basic classes in Hebrew and that this culture must be integrated with the total education received by the American Jewish child (Akiba Academy Brochure, 1950). This belief demanded the creation of one institution where both Jewish and American studies would happen together (thereby avoiding a split in the pupil's mind between his general and Jewish education), for all segments of the Jewish community. Their way of achieving this was to drive "a middle course, taking into due consideration a respect for tradition and a recognition of differences." (Undated statement entitled "Religion in Akiba," from the Edwin Wolf papers at the Jewish Archives Center, Balch Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).

The study of Catholic education conducted by Sanders in Chicago teaches us that a private system of education occurs when its constituents are able to afford to pay for it. In 1946, the Philadelphia Jews who participated as founders and parents of Akiba were able to contribute, pay tuition and interest others in contributing. A bottom line figure of a \$15,000 income emerged; in 1946, it was a very comfortable one. While the three founders responding were all involved in Jewish communal service careers (rabbis, professor) we learned from the archives that there sat on the board of directors a judge, attorneys, many successful businessmen

and a housewife. The body of parents was made up of mainly businessmen, retailers and mid-management level workers, plus a pharmacist (self-employed) and a teacher.

Unlike Sanders' study which cites the public school and its biases as factors in hastening the advent of the Catholic School in Chicago, the founders of Akiba in 1946 viewed the public school positively. They were satisfied with the education it provided. They were more concerned, however, with preservation of Jewish heritage and continuity for the future. It was this that made the public school setting inadequate for them. Nowhere in a public school setting could a child study Hebrew language and Bible which were deemed vital to Jewish continuity.

1946 was also unique in that it was a time when the much hoped for establishment of a Jewish state created excitement. The zionism of the forties affected all types of Jews, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and even the unaffiliated. Jews who had, heretofore, wished to think of themselves only as Americans began to re-establish themselves as Jews. Many of them were Jews who had not themselves received exposure to their heritage and they worried that they could not answer their children's questions nor would their homes provide enough to assure a future generation of knowledgeable Jews. The data generated from the questionnaires suggest a strong feeling about the importance of acquiring fluency in the Hebrew language.

Several of the Akiba students wrote that they were planning to move to Palestine or spend time there. The original faculty wrote of the ties to Palestine and later to Israel as being an important aspect of the curriculum. Israel as a rallying point for Jews has remained strong throughout the 20th century and continued to be a focus in 1972 and 1982 as indicated by responses to the questionnaires and utterances of the founders of each of the schools.

Several areas mentioned on the questionnaire received low or no rankings on a basis of one to ten (one being the highest, ten the lowest). Over the four decades the areas that remained unranked were the school as a status symbol and social pressure to conform to friends. They also were not concerned with having a longer school day than that provided for in public school; they were concerned with having a more planful, better organized, curricularly-integrated day which would have the effect of actually shortening their children's day (at least for those who had been attending public school and afternoon Hebrew school).

The religious commitment of the first families coming to Akiba was varied, Orthodox, Conservative and non-affiliated. The parents all stated that they were less committed than their parents had been, but wanted their children to be formally educated. They were determined to pass on a strong Jewish heritage. It is interesting that one parent drew attention to the fact that he became

observant late in life when retirement from his work allowed him to do so, emphasizing that earning a living while he was raising a family took precedence. He, nevertheless, wanted his children to become educated, committed Jews. He also believed that his children were not learning about or experiencing Jewish tradition at home.

The first students at Akiba validated their parents' responses. Nine of the twelve responding said that their grandparents had been more observant, their parents, because of pressures of assimilation, Americanization and occupation, less so, and four saw themselves returning to their grandparents' level of observance (all of whom had been immigrants to America).

All constituents of Akiba agreed on the reasons for its establishment: to ensure Jewish continuity and guarantee a future generation of Jewish leaders, and to offer an integrated secular/religious education in one institution for all types of Jews.

What has emerged from the questionnaires and data provided from interviews is that by 1946 Philadelphia presented its Jewish community with the four-pronged configuration necessary to build a Jewish day school. There was a strong expression to intensively educate their children outside the home in an institution that could integrate both General and Judaic studies (commitment). There also was present an ability to pay for private

education and a sufficient population ready to leave the public school for a period of time. Philadelphia in 1946 also provided a comfortable host environment in which Christian neighbors were doing similar things for their children. The families who came forward were of varied religious backgrounds requiring a pluralistic setting. The traditional, single ideological school was not suitable. The diversity of the first families demanded a respect for Jewish heterogeneity, a bold concept for 1946.

Jews, all Jews, whether Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, Orthodox or even unaffiliated, had wanted to be full members of American society. They did all the "right things": sent their children to public schools, worked hard and attained financial stability and social status, moved to suburbia, and, in some cases, sent their children to private schools. And with all this, many suddenly discovered that they still wanted to be Jewish. This nagging desire occurred at a time during which Judaism emerged as one of America's three great faiths, according to Jacob Neusner. The standing of the Jews was enormously increased by mid-century; every public ceremonial routinely included benedictions by a rabbi as well as a Protestant minister and Catholic priest. The decades of the 1930's and 1940's had clearly demonstrated that in no European country was a Jew accepted as part of the majority culture; the exceptions in Western Europe were few in number. Even those

Jews who had been willing to relinquish their ties to their religion were not truly accepted. But Jews in America were members of a group which was simultaneously religious, cultural and ethnic and accepted, particularly by 1946. Having seen where anti-Semitism could lead, America, as a host society, was ushering in a benign environment encouraging for Jews.

This kind of thinking not only provided a comfortable setting for Jews in 1946 who had the funds and the desire to establish a school to educate their children religiously, secularly, culturally, and ethically but also for Jews later in the century. It was imperative to those pioneering Philadelphia Jews who were establishing Akiba that they produce a new generation of leaders, leaders who would need to be knowledgeable in Hebrew, Bible, Rabbinics, and Jewish history, for they could no longer rely on Europe for their leaders. The need did not disappear and continues into the second half of the twentieth century.

Eduardo Rauch points out in his research that day schools in the forties and thereafter may be a reflection of a move from an ideology favoring homogeneity to a greater tolerance of diversity. Akiba became the pioneer in this effort. It opened its doors to students coming from all denominations of Judaism and it considered it vital that those students receive a variety of religious experiences (that did not necessarily reflect that of their own homes)

and become respectful of cultural differences.

Akiba in 1946, while considered a pioneer in Jewish day school education for its trans-ideological, pluralistic and communal approach, did have a precedent. The earlier form of the supplementary Talmud Torah had also stressed not exclusive and conflicting loyalties, but an inclusive multilicity of loyalties (educationally and religiously). It, too, in its time in the first half of the twentieth century was the least identifiable ideological school, serving the most varied elements of the community.

What has emerged from the data on Akiba is similar to what we learn in looking back at two hundred years of Jewish history in America. Jewish day schools emerged when critical masses of Jews in an area felt the need to seek an avenue other than the home in which to educate their children in order to preserve their heritage, and they could afford to do so. Another essential component was the degree of comfort they felt in establishing such an institution. In each of the instances where Jewish day school education thrived, even if only for brief periods of time, the demographics, cultural and religious needs, economic resources and hospitable environment merged to encourage this type of schooling. Numbers, a strong commitment, an ability to pay and a comfortable host environment were the four necessary factors. As soon as even one of the factors changed in this configuration, the day school disappeared.

An example of this is visible after the Civil War when the quality of education in public schools improved dramatically and the mentality of the government began to favor state rather than church control of schools. Concepts of freedom and less restrictive environments dealt a blow to non-Jewish religious schools which had an immediate domino effect on Jewish religious schools. The level of comfort (hospitable environment) was removed from the configuration and Jewish day schools closed.

During the twenty-year period between 1946 and 1966 very few community Jewish day schools were established in any city, although Akiba continued to flourish. During that twenty-year period, as the next generation of American-born Jews became more American and less Jewish in identifying outlook, both the home and the Jewish supplemental school came to be judged as ineffectual. Cultural continuity rather than cultural adjustment came to be the central problem of American Jewish life.

The parents of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in 1972 in Washington, D. C. identified a need for an education which would specifically reinforce their cultural heritage because they were no longer capable of doing so at home, and the communities they lived in had indeed changed. Families were dispersed to an even greater degree than they had been in 1946. The close familial relationships of previous generations which had been responsible for

providing so much of Yiddishkeit were disappearing. Some Jewish parents were looking for a more intensive form of Jewish education as a vehicle to ensure the preservation of Judaism. Certain of these parents chose Jewish day school education for their children because they had often been dissatisfied with their own Jewish supplementary school educations. In addition, the after-school time slot often conflicted with sports, music, dance and athletics, therefore, breeding resentment, rather than enthusiasm among the students.

Since the purpose of a Jewish education was regarded as not only to impart cognitive knowledge but also to instill emotional commitment to Jewish tradition, the issue of resentment became relevant and disturbing to many parents. Community Jewish day school education came to represent an option for integrated, secular and religious education in which religious subjects were not put at a psychological disadvantage by their placement in the day. This form of education came to be seen as a determinant of Jewish identity and continuity, and for parents who were not Orthodox, the community Jewish day school became a comfortable enculturation agent, much as it had been in Philadelphia twenty-five years earlier.

The founders in all three schools were people who believed in an institution where all Jews, even those who had, heretofore, been hostile to or, at the very least,

indifferent towards this type of education, would feel comfortable educating their children. And, as the pressures accompanying the drive for Americanization began to lessen, those very Jews who had at one time shunned their traditional roots began to feel comfortable with and sought out this more intensive form of Jewish education that accorded respect to all Jews. Jews no longer felt compelled to train first generation immigrants to become Americans nor did they have to seduce third generation Jews out of American life and into a withdrawn Jewish society. Jews were feeling equally at home in both worlds, so much so that the two worlds were becoming an integrated whole. The founders of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School emerged at a time during which ethnicists and sociologists were busy recording studies among Irish, American Indians, Catholics, Baptists and Blacks. While it may have been uncomfortable to legitimize institutions which were defined in ethnic and cultural terms earlier in the twentieth century, it was acceptable by 1972. Whereas Judaism had existed in the United States as early as the eighteenth century with a self-definition that was religious, and while this was adequate enough for the single ideological school, the founders and parents of community Jewish day schools needed and received a comfortable arena for an institution that also could define itself as ethnic and cultural. By 1972 religion had become so intertwined with the ethnic and

cultural that all three had become respectable.

The establishment of the State of Israel influenced the way Jews felt in the nineteen-forties and fifties. The Six Day War influenced the way Jews felt; Jews appeared to stand taller and walk straighter, wearing their Jewishness as a badge of honor. And since the Six Day War, not only the survival of Israel, but also the survival of Judaism assumed paramount importance to Jews. From several of the student respondents in both Akiba and Charles E. Smith came statements about the Six Day War emerging as a rallying point of mobilization of feeling for Israel and toward a unification of Jews all over the world.

Much as Akiba originated in Philadelphia in 1946 as a result of discomfort with Jewish education as it existed then, the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School originated for similar reasons in 1972 in Washington. The Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, like Akiba, was founded as an upper school, grades seven through twelve, but had a base of supporters emanating from the elementary Hebrew Day School of Greater Washington, the majority of whom were Conservative but were strongly in favor of a community school. As they watched more and more students representing the total diversity of Jewish homes enrolling in the kindergarten through sixth grade since 1966 at the Hebrew Day School of Greater Washington, they became convinced that a community Jewish Day High School was the direction they

needed to pursue. By 1971 the Reform Jewish community, in principle, had decided not to establish a Reform school of their own and joined those favoring a community Jewish Day High School. The Reform community, as was the rest of the Jewish community, was concerned with Jewish education for teenagers to combat the impact of the New Left, alienation, and the drug culture (as revealed in George Pollak's Study of the Jewish Schools of Greater Washington, D.C., 1971).

A study of the need of Jewish education commissioned by the Washington United Jewish Appeal Federation in 1971 noted that parents were interested in a school which would have a junior high and high school; the study also asserted that a shift had occurred in Jewish circles from interest in public schools only to private schools alongside a discomfort with the conventional afternoon Hebrew school.

Just as in Philadelphia, in 1943, the 1971 study in Washington established the need for a more advanced form of Jewish education for adolescents if the Washington Jewish community was to ensure its existence.

The founders of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School concluded from the study that only a communal Jewish day school education would be able to provide a successful experience for the teenager of the nineteen-seventies.

This group of founders consisted of professionals -- attorneys, economists, and a social worker with very comfortable incomes ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000

(uncombined incomes) in 1972. Such salaries placed these people among those able to contribute and certainly to pay tuition. In contrast to the founders of Akiba, these founders were in no way professionally involved in Jewish education.

As in Akiba, the six responding founders also reflected a fairly pluralistic picture of the Jewish community; four were Conservative, one was Reformed, and one was unaffiliated resulting in a pluralistic board of directors (composed of members of the entire Jewish community -- Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and unaffiliated). Reconstructionism was officially established in 1922 and was not particularly strong until after 1967 when its own Rabbinical College was founded in Philadelphia. No Reconstructionists are present at Akiba's opening whereas there were several in 1972.

This group of founders, like the three who responded at Akiba (but unlike the rest of Akiba's founders) had received Jewish educations and responded that they were more traditional than their grandparents had been because their grandparents (like the parents at Akiba) were busy acculturating themselves and earning a living.

These six founders believed that their public schools were very good, but they were looking for a second curriculum to assure Jewish continuity. They had been living in Gentile communities and felt keenly the need to

provide a Jewish environment in which an integrated curriculum could be presented. For this group providing a dual curriculum with Hebrew and Bible was most important. Providing an integrated, dual curriculum as a factor gained the edge over Jewish continuity in 1972 although if one looks carefully at the two, they are closely linked, one resulting in the other.

An area of concern emerging in 1972 as rather important was the role of the school in providing a moral and ethical education. These Jews were becoming alarmed at what they perceived to be a lack of ethical education in the public school curriculum.

The incomes of the original parents at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School were quite high ranging from \$35,000 to \$50,000 (single incomes) placing these families in a comfortable position to pay tuition. They, like the families at Akiba, were not living near relatives and had already moved to Gentile neighborhoods. They, too, found their public schools to be excellent, but wanted more than a single curriculum. The original students iterated their parents' priorities in seeing the school as an establishment that would strengthen Jewish identity through a well-integrated curriculum, assure Jewish continuity and ethnic identity and teach Hebrew. They also mentioned the importance of providing moral and ethical values. Only one student mentioned that she thought her parents were somewhat

concerned with the school serving as a buffer against intermarriage.

From the time of the establishment of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day school to the time of the establishment of the Gesher School, the number of Jewish day schools in this country had more than doubled. As part of this expansion, community Jewish day schools emerged and proliferated. In their admission policies the three schools in this study reflected the pluralistic makeup of the Jewish community; all socio-economic strata were to be accepted including children of varying academic abilities. Religious practices as observed by the various movements (Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, Orthodox) are to be taught from a positive point of view. Teachers are expected to explain the reasons for the differences, while giving legitimacy for all approaches with the goal of developing respect and appreciation for one another. In the founding documents and philosophies of these schools one can see that equality is to be provided to all students in all respects, including prayer assemblies and the study of Jewish texts. The students may belong to different synagogues and their parents may practice Judaism in different ways but the schools' goal is that to each other they are not Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist or Orthodox Jews but rather all part of the community of Jews and hopefully friends.

In the ten-year period between 1972 and 1982 there

emerged widespread concern over the rising rate of intermarriage among Jews, a blatant need for values education and a perceived decline in the quality of public education. These concerns, added to those that had already been on the Jewish agenda, served to heighten the passions of these Jewish parents who came to regard the Jewish day school as the only institution with the potential to instill heritage and values and to retain and re-acquire ethnic religious identity.

The parents and founders of the Gesher school in 1982 saw the importance of an integrated secular and religious education as paramount in their decision to establish the school because they felt that such a curriculum would result in strong Jewish continuity and moral and ethical standards for their children. All six founders spoke of the need for formal Jewish education and recognized school as the only place where their children could experience a living Judaism.

As mentioned earlier, for the first time, Jewish day school as a buffer against intermarriage received a strong ranking, as did a loss of faith in public schools. This founder/parent group also mentioned the need for a full-day kindergarten program. Factors which had heretofore received little or no recognition were suddenly a reality in 1982.

This group had comfortable incomes paralleling those of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School and in some cases

exceeding the 1972 level of income (a group easily able to pay tuition).

The parents were all Conservative with the exception of one Reform family. This same configuration was true for the founders. For the first time these parents openly verbalized their own inadequacies to transmit Jewish heritage. They hadn't experienced a living Judaism during their childhoods and were strangers to the Hebrew language and Bible study. They were alarmed at the Gentile celebrations of Christmas and Easter in their local public schools and came close to expressing an anger and fear similar to that which Sanders found among the Catholics in Chicago with regard to the public school.

Both founders and parents saw themselves as becoming and being more observant than their parents and grandparents had been. They saw themselves as an ethnic group re-emerging.

For this group of Jews formal Jewish education has become a vital means for retaining ethnic religious identity. The conditions of the home, the family and the neighborhood demand for them an institution where children can experience a living Judaism with its ethical and spiritual wealth, with its high esteem for community service (Klal Yisrael), with provision for a way back to a positive identification with Judaism.

Of all the readings discussed in this thesis, many of

which provide the traditions of change yielding forth a community Jewish day school, Jacob Neusner is a representative of that group of Jews who chose Jewish education not for purification but for preservation. That same group of Jews view the time in which we live as demanding of us an institution that will preserve Judaism for our children by reclaiming the Jewish heritage and communicating it in the classroom. The goal is an institution that is ethnic and religious at the same time that it is also American.

Most of what this study has yielded agrees with the theories that emerge from the literature. Several surprises have been encountered, however. The lack of concern with a longer school day in one institution leaves one puzzled in light of the fact that many families now have both spouses working. One of the questions admission directors are asked often today by parents inquiring about registering their kindergartners is about after-school care.

A far higher ranking for the school as a buffer against intermarriage was expected. While it did receive a strong ranking in the 1982 questionnaire, it was not even ranked in 1946 and only barely in 1972.

Of interest was the insignificance of the generational status of the respondents. There were all immigrant founders at Akiba in 1946 joined by some first generation parents; there was a mix of immigrant and first generation

at Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School and first and second generation people involved with the Gesher School. Although it was not the focus of this study to do a careful analysis of how generational status affected answers on the questionnaires, it became clear that the responses seemed not to be related to generational status, but rather to the time and place in which the founders were acting.

The founders in all three schools agreed during these four decades that it is through education in the environment of a Jewish day school that an emotional and intellectual identification can be guaranteed over time. For some Jews the single ideological institution was comfortable; for the group studied here the trans-ideological Jewish community setting proved to be the answer.

In 1946 the founders of Akiba were representative of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform segments of the community, the families sending their children were Orthodox, Conservative and unaffiliated. In 1972 the founders of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School were Conservative, Reform and unaffiliated Jews as were the parents. The majority were and remain conservative. It wasn't until later on that Orthodox families began sending their children also. We should bear in mind that there did already exist an Orthodox day school in Washington whereas in Philadelphia there had not been any other day school at all. In 1982 the founders and parents at the Gesher School