

THE B'NAI B'RITH HILLEL FOUNDATIONS FIVE DECADES OF SERVICE

the hillel director's half-century from the periphery to the center by rabbi richard n. levy

The B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations came into existence at a time when the university was regarded as the secure,

luxuriant garden of Western culture, entrance into which would guarantee the young Jew full access to the economic

and cultural benefits of American society. At that time, the Hillel director occupied the lone outpost of Jewish civi-

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one student's journey from western philosophy to the rabbinate by peter ochs

It was philosophy class that excited me freshman year at Yale. To sit my mind down before Kant and Hegel and

hear their every word filled with ultimate seriousness, their every phrase proclaiming an ultimate Truth! I thought

I had arrived, at least to the outer chambers of Reality Itself.

Why, then, did that one *Shabbat* eve-

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how hillel began an interview with abram l. sachar by akiba pincus

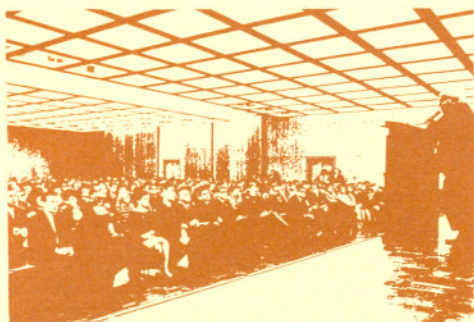
Of the founders of Hillel—those present at creation—only Abram L. Sachar is alive and active. At 73, he is vigorous,

eloquent, courtly. He is one of the few historians who has also *made* history. He is now the Chancellor of Brandeis

University—another great cause he championed.

Dr. Sachar reminisced recently about

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the 1920s—years he considers crucial for American Jewry. Talking about the birth of the Jewish presence on the campus, he looked out at the wooded Brandeis campus with its huge jagged boulders standing in counterpoint to the neat modern lines of the buildings.

As a history instructor at the University of Illinois in 1923, Sachar was a friend of Rabbi Benjamin Frankel, a genial giant who had a vision of an institution serving the Jewish student. The two young bachelors shared an apartment and spent much time discussing why Christian denominations—but not the Jews—had powerful foundations on the campus. Yes, they noted, there were Jewish leaders who called for a sustained program for the Jewish student. There was a Menorah Society founded at Harvard in 1906. But the Menorah Society depended on the student volunteer; it had no professional direction, no programming, no regular institutional support. “We were not a college-going group yet,” Sachar observes. “We were still mostly an immigrant group.”

Sachar—the historian, the eye-witness and the participant—speaks warmly about the men who are most often mentioned when Hillel’s beginnings are discussed.

The first was a romantic—Edward Chauncey Baldwin, a righteous Gentile, a distinguished professor of English at the University of Illinois, a lover of the Bible and Hebrew civilization. Jews—insecure as a group and fighting anti-semitism, Henry Ford and the Protocols—were overjoyed hearing a devout Christian urging rabbinical and lay leaders to help the Jewish student achieve self-respect.

If Baldwin’s exhortations constituted Hillel’s Balfour Declaration, it was Rabbi Frankel who played the role of David Ben-Gurion. “I watched Ben with tre-

mendous admiration,” Sachar remembers. “He was not talking only in terms of ethereal conceptions. He went to the people who counted to raise the money. He declined offers to prestigious pulpits and high salaries.

“I understand why Jews once felt the need to attach more importance to Baldwin’s role. But no movement is born out of talk only. Somebody has to do the work. Frankel did that. He staked his career on his commitment to a concept which was purely speculative and had not yet come into being. He is the true founder of Hillel.

“Ben came out of Peoria, Illinois. All his brothers were businessmen—fine Jewish lay people. They considered Ben naive for wanting to be a rabbi. They could never understand it.

“Ben was a great raconteur and enormously popular. He had an infectious laugh. He might have made a great politician. But there was no connivance about him. This was a wholesome man.

“He was interested in the Jewish student no matter how marginal. But there was nothing missionary about him. He was not a driven man. He was a man with a committed attitude about Jewish pride. He was no great scholar. At Hebrew Union College he was looked down upon by the snooty, austere people.”

In 1921, Frankel, a senior in the Hebrew Union College, was assigned the Champaign-Urbana Sinai Temple as his bi-weekly pulpit. It was a congregation of some thirty families and it could not afford to hire a full-time rabbi—much less to sponsor a rabbi for the few hundred Jewish students at the university.

Upon his ordination in 1923, Frankel approached Isaac Kuhn, Champaign’s leading citizen who shared his friend Baldwin’s concern for the Jewish student. I am willing to take a chance, said Frankel to Kuhn. I’ll take your temple

as my pulpit, but my major concern will be the student constituency. I will direct a foundation on the campus. I won’t ask you for a salary or the guarantee of a salary. But help me raise the money.

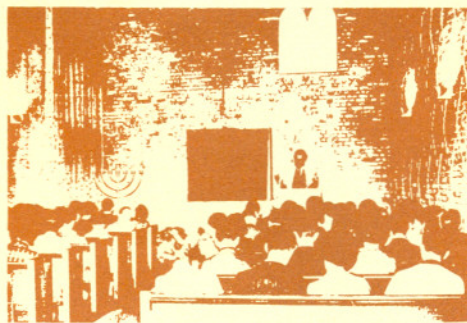
The two decided to go to Chicago. Frankel reached Rabbi Louis Mann of Sinai Temple who saw the vision Frankel had. Mann went with Frankel, and occasionally with Baldwin, to Chicago Jews. The great philanthropist, Julius Rosenwald, contributed too—perhaps as much as \$1,000. The first year’s budget—about \$12,000—was raised. But it was understood that such ad hoc fundraising was not feasible on a yearly basis.

One great decision was made, Sachar says: The organization that was launched got a name—Hillel. “Frankel thought it up,” Sachar notes, with a smile, “and it was a felicitous choice. Hillel is a symbol of the quest for higher learning. It was a beautiful name too. It appealed to the Christian fellowship that pioneered the foundation, since Hillel was virtually a contemporary of Jesus. In those days the Jewish community still felt the need for the Christian *imprimatur*.”

Sachar’s face glows when he talks about the first Hillel headquarters: one room rented upstairs from Kandy’s Barber Shop. “We were somewhat extravagant—we might have spent a couple hundred dollars.” But Hillel could not be too extensively advertised because there was immediate protest from some of the Jewish fraternities that Hillel was conspicuously displaying a Jewish identity which others would interpret as clannishness.

“That first year was tough. We didn’t know whether there would be a second year,” Sachar, the foundation’s first faculty advisor, remembers.

Frankel first appealed to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to take over the responsibility for the program.



Sachar considers the turndown one of the most important decisions in American Jewish life. From Reform's point of view, Sachar argues, it was catastrophic; they would have had an opportunity to reach a growing college Jewish population. But Frankel was heartbroken because his first loyalty was to the Reform movement. Sachar says, "I considered it a mistake to appeal to them."

Frankel then went to B'nai B'rith. The President, Alfred M. Cohen, the father-in-law of Rabbi Mann of Chicago, got Frankel an invitation to address B'nai B'rith's national convention in the summer of 1925. Frankel was scheduled to appear with Rabbi Stephen Wise, one of the great orators and probably the outstanding Jew in America.

"Frankel stole the show," Sachar sums it up. "Nobody who listened will ever forget."

B'nai B'rith adopted the Hillel Foundation. It was a small budget, supervised by a Hillel Commission. Hillel was to be responsible to a fraternal organization.

"Frankel came back from that meeting as if walking on air," Sachar recalls. He organized the second Hillel unit at the University of Wisconsin, then a year later one at Ohio State. One new foundation a year was the speed at that stage. When Frankel died, with tragic suddenness, in 1927, the lineaments were defined: Hillel was all-inclusive. Special interest groups—Zionists or Orthodox groups—were invited to associate themselves with the Hillel which served as the umbrella for all Jewish organizations on the campus. Hillel became the Jewish presence on the campus.

The birth of the Jewish foundation coincided with legislation restricting immigration from Eastern Europe. The door to the *Goldene Medina* was closed to hundreds of thousands of Jews. Those

1923	1973
One Foundation	87 Foundations
	161 Counselorships
	3 Chairs of Judaic Studies
	27 Overseas Foundations
	36 Extension Service Units
One director	102 Foundation directors
	103 Part-time counselors
	3 Professors of Judaic Studies
	6 National Staff directors
500 Students	Number of Jewish Students enrolled at institutions in the United States and Canada where Hillel programs exist: 225,000
Rented quarters	56 Buildings

who were turned away went to Palestine or stayed in Europe, many of them to be consumed by the Holocaust. The American Jewish community was destined to become a native-born community. And Hillel was to play a key role in building that next Jewish civilization. ■

THE HILLEL DIRECTOR

Continued from page 1

lization at the edge of this American garden, creating a Jewish environment for those whose lives were already intertwined with Jewish observance, holding out to the less committed a gracious invitation to come in and explore Jewish culture and religion in a more informal and democratic setting than the one in which the student might have grown up.

Living in that outpost has often meant a lonely existence, particularly in the long years when Jewish students believed with their parents that the most important thing to be was a White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant-American-Like-Everybody-Else. The director led worship

services, taught his devoted students, counseled those who came to him and helped young Jews meet each other on campuses where that was often very difficult to do.

In recent years the garden of the American university has come under closer scrutiny, and the evidence of worms among the plants and the absence of blooms reflecting the multi-ethnic strains of American culture have shaken the university from the unquestioned eminence which once it held. We now know that Americans-Like-Everybody-Else not only plant gardens; they also wage wars in Vietnam, exploit minority groups and despoil the environment for private gain. More and more young American Jews are realizing that being an American-Like-Everybody-Else is not enough. To fulfill oneself, a person must find out what he or she is made of, and explore the value of one's particular heritage, be it black, Jewish, female or whatever. Increasingly the Hillel outpost has been able to expand the garden to include Jewish culture and learning as well, for today the Hillel director is often the leader or adviser to a Jewish renaissance on campus. These days he not only leads services but assists students to develop their own creative expressions of worship; he not only teaches the devoted, but helps to establish Judaica courses, majors and departments within the university structure, as well as informal Free Jewish Universities in which hundreds of Jewish students may explore—often for the first time since *bar mitzva*—the excitement of living and studying their Jewish heritage. He is also helping to create new forms of Jewish community which are fast becoming models for the entire Jewish population.

Expanding American horizons, however, is really nothing new for us. Many directors have for years been actively in-

The following have served as National Directors of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations:

Rabbi Benjamin Frankel... 1925-28
 Dr. Abram L. Sachar 1933-47
 Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld.. 1947-56
 Dr. Judah Shapiro 1956-59
 Rabbi Benjamin M. Kahn.. 1959-71
 Rabbi Alfred Jospe..... 1971-
 Dr. Louis L. Mann served as Interim National Director, on a voluntary basis, from 1928-1933.

volved in the social struggles of our time — supporting workers' right to organize, marching for civil rights, leading a Jewish presence in the long protest against the war in Vietnam, organizing support for the Soviet Jewish resistance, working for the Jewish state in the troubled decades before 1948 and enthusiastically since then, most notably during the fearful days of May and June of 1967. But Hillel directors have never been of one mind on any of these issues—liberals, conservatives and radicals have debated at directors' conferences for nearly fifty years. Even today, while enthusiasm for the existence of Israel is uniformly high, heated discussion continues as to the proper course Israel should take in religious, political and social arenas, even as such discussion ensues over the proper role of Diaspora Jewry in a world in which there is a Jewish state. The autonomy which Hillel directors have so long cherished exists not only in the individual foundation, but as well in the great variety of viewpoints that flourish among our colleagues.

Autonomy is an important fact for us Hillel directors. The ability to work with students (who keep us young) and faculty (who keep us thoughtful) on a basis of mutual respect, without dictation or arbitrary interference, has been one of the major factors attracting rabbis and others to Hillel directorships despite their disappointing salaries. Not bound by the walls of a particular synagogue or center, the Hillel director has an opportunity to create new forms of Jewish life within that invigorating, ever-changing community that is the campus and its environs, guided only by the needs and desires of his community and his own training and judgment. As a result, the director rubs shoulders with colleagues who represent a broad spectrum of Jewish practice, belief and lifestyle, yet who are united in their commitment to a creative Jewish community and in their ability to work for that community

each in his own way. The B'nai B'rith Hillel Commission, to its everlasting credit, for fifty years supported and furthered the desire of the National Hillel staff and field directors that this autonomy should be protected. As local federations assume more and more of the financial support of individual foundations, they too are coming to endorse this principle as they become acquainted with the strange creature that is the Hillel foundation and the Hillel director.

Where shall we be at our next jubilee? If the understanding persists that the United States can thrive only as its constituent cultural and religious groups thrive, then the Jewish renaissance can only flourish and increase. If the economy permits us to employ in Jewish work the increasing numbers of young people who wish to make their careers in Jewish life, Hillel foundations will continue to develop as centers of creative Jewish expression. Far from seeing ourselves as lonely workers on the outskirts of both the Jewish and university communities, more and more directors are helping Jewishness become a center of concern within the university itself, even as the Jewish communities we are trying to build of students and faculty are coming to play increasingly significant roles within the Jewish population as a whole. Many directors are also striving for an American Judaism that can transcend the historical limitations of the individual movements, a Judaism in which the openness to the totality of Jewish experience that exists upon our campuses might become a reality for the American Jewish community as a whole.

Unrealistic? Improbable? No more so, perhaps, than the decision of Rabbi Benjamin Frankel fifty years ago to create an outpost of Jewish concern at the gardens of Academe. Fifty years later, the garden is increasingly looking to the outpost to help guide a university and a society which are no longer very sure where they should be going. In helping them to find out, we can be sure that our most important decades lie ahead. ■

ONE STUDENT'S JOURNEY

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ning in the Hillel director's home leave so lasting an impression on me? Rabbi Richard Israel held a *kiddush* cup, while Mrs. Israel sat across a festive table. It had nothing to do with philosophy; it suggested nothing profound, as far as

The following have served as Chairmen of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Commission:

Adolph Kraus 1925-30
 Alfred M. Cohen 1930-38
 Henry Monsky 1938-47
 Dr. Abram L. Sachar 1948-55
 Dr. William Haber 1955-63
 Dr. Louis Gottschalk 1963-69
 Dr. Marver H. Bernstein .. 1969-

my mind could see. It was no less than alien to me: I had had my Reform *bar mitzva* and two prior years of Hebrew school, but I had rarely been to any synagogue since, and had never made *kiddush*, washed my hands to the words of a prayer or recited *ha'motzi*! I accepted the Hillel director's invitation, extended at least once to every Jewish freshman, simply out of respect for invitations and institutions in general.

I doubt that many of Yale's one thousand Jews returned very often to visit Rabbi Israel, or the Hillel Foundation. I suppose most never came for a first look. There were a few students who ate regularly in the kosher kitchen, a few more who took part in various activities sponsored by Jews. Others nurtured less openly observable forms of Jewish concern. But no one could say Judaism, intellectually, culturally or socially, was a live issue in the normally very active campus life.

Why were so many of us students indifferent to Hillel and to Judaism itself? With all our questioning and inner struggle, why did so few of us probe scriptural and rabbinic texts? At a time when Marx, Marcuse, various gurus and even Jesus were such charismatic leaders for us, why was the presence of Akiba, Hillel and Moses so little felt?

Although I did not realize it, I had grown up in a sea of *goyim*—a sea of Gentile, Western ideas, basic assumptions that defined my mind. I never realized until after college that my parents were Jewish not only in terms of affiliation, but also in basic values and approach to life. As Reform Jews, my family did not employ much Jewish ritual; we had cast off the Jewish casing of our life. We were taught at home the values of honoring one's parents and the primacy of study, but we never gave them Jewish names.

Because I was taught at home to love knowledge, I gave my mind fully to public school work. I had no idea that my very devotion to study would accelerate

the rift between my heart and mind. My heart remained in my family: unself-conscious, unthinking, but sensing the right way to live. My mind found itself at school: developed ideas, rational judgment.

My schoolmates and I studied English literature, math, social studies and science. These subjects, and the way they were taught, molded the way in which my mind looked at the world. We did not study Jewish subjects or the Jewish view of European history, or Jewish social values. But the issue lay in the way we were taught whatever we were taught, even in Sunday school. It was the way I was taught to learn that most deeply pulled my mind away from my heart.

We were taught to stress technique, the scientific method: *how* to make an experiment, *how* to get at the generalizations behind lists of data. Accept nothing on authority! Use your own mind!

At Yale was the ultimate confrontation between the two halves of me. I was fully cut off from family life and childhood associations. New classmates, representing social and geographic diversity, confronted me with a ceaseless challenge to all previous assumptions. New teachers pushed my mind to limits I had not known existed. I was brought to question more deeply than ever everything my mind turned to consider, and then I was brought to question my mind itself.

For what? What was my goal throughout all this questioning? Early in college, I could not have answered that question any more than a runner could answer in the heat of his race: Why are you running? "I am running to get to the finish line," he would gasp. I was searching simply to get to the end of searching—I would have said, "To get to Truth!" And then?

Questions of why, of ultimate goals of life, are questions of the heart. But high school and college put me into the world of the mind. When my heart came to ask ultimate questions, I could answer only in my mind's terms.

So, when philosophy became for me the purest expression of what the total educational system represented, I had to ask my ultimate questions of philosophy. When other students asked their ultimate questions of psychology, physics, communal living or psychedelic experience, they too may have been asking how the total educational system could speak to their hearts. I am not surprised that many fellow-Jews were among the students most fervently seeking ultimate answers from less-than-ultimate systems

of knowledge or lifestyles.

When I sat in philosophy class freshman year, I beheld what I considered my mind's love. I sat before the Truth of my schooling which might, through my mind, feed my heart. I had no idea that my heart lay in Jewish things. At the time, nothing Jewish reached my mind. Like many others in my position, I did not notice Hillel on campus: I read Hillel posters advertising services or meetings or talks, but why should I have thought they would have anything to say to me?

That *Shabbat* dinner in Rabbi Israel's home did speak to me in a way that was unexpected. That evening, my heart saw a whole family acting out in the course of their lives values I had forgotten. The father held a *kiddush* cup in his hand: *Baruch Ata* . . . His face was a quiet smile as he spoke, and my heart had an inner smile, for the man, the cup and the wine were for the moment acting out a bridge between the two halves of me. Half of his smile was to his family, the other half to some unseen, yet felt, source of value, order, truth and peace—the kind of peace I faintly tasted as I too drank the wine. Handwashing, *ha'motzi*: I felt myself an actor, and again: *Baruch Ata* . . . The giggles, the mischief of the children, interspersed between ceremony and table conversation, were part of the script too, as was the mother's cooking and her warm yet firm watch over her children. I was an actor, playing a part. The drama spoke to me.

Contact was made. I saw Rabbi Israel a few more times freshman year, attended a few *Shabbat* services, but my return to Judaism had not truly begun. It was only later that I realized the impact of my first encounter with the Israelis. My slow and painful turning depended upon the way Judaism, through personal encounters, readings and Hillel activities, could enter my mind and bring it back to my heart.

Judaism has some subtle agents. The liberal university makes real the ethic of the educational system: Examine everything! To do this, the university must be universalistic and impartial, opening the student's eyes to all possible subjects of thought, including systems which deny the universalistic ethic. So, for the study of philosophy, the very science of universalistic examination, Yale was able to offer me a Catholic metaphysician as a teacher: a man combining critical brilliance with a deep religious devotion. While teaching his students no religion *per se*, he led us to confront the limits of reason and, so, to touch the expanse that lies beyond reason's ken. Through the

very terms of philosophy, his class ironically pulled my questions of ultimate things outside of philosophy and opened my mind to seek a new love—one which remained as yet undefined and unparticularized. Had my teacher been a brilliant Jewish metaphysician, my questioning might have turned sooner to Judaism. But I never encountered such a Jew in the philosophy department.

By this time, I saw Rabbi Israel a little more often; not only my heart, but also my mind was a little more open to what he had to say. He seemed to sense that, since my conditioning had for so long been in non-Jewish ideas and non-Jewish tastes, I would have been repelled by any hard sell on his part. The Israelis' family life presented Judaism through demonstration, rather than polemic. Hillel activities were similarly non-proselytizing: available if I wanted them, but not there to convince, or even address, those who were not open to them. Indeed, I was not yet open. I was not convinced in my mind of the need for a particular religion, for particular customs, or for ethnicity.

Once again, I was reached through a subtle agent of Judaism, speaking to me in my accustomed language. In addition to philosophy, I studied anthropology—another universalistic science. My teachers led me to ask: What are the different ways that man can choose to *live*? Through a field trip to a South Pacific island, I encountered community life. For a few months, I acted out the lifestyle of a people who place greatest value on human relations, on community well-being, and on the traditions that make such well-being possible. I left this island drama with a sense of peace strangely reminiscent of the peace I tasted during Rabbi Israel's *Shabbat* dinner. I was ready to open my mind fully to the study of Jewish particularism.

I recall one autumn afternoon I spent on a catamaran in New Haven Bay. I had been seeing Rabbi Israel more often that last year of college—one time, for example, he suggested a book by Franz Rosenzweig for my reading; another time, he showed me how to lay *t'fillin*. This time, he took me for a sail. He convinced me that I should attend the Jewish Theological Seminary: There I would receive the instruction I needed to recondition myself to a very non-Western pattern of thinking and living, without having to reject my Western discipline.

The Jewish presence at Yale helped bring me home to Judaism. I hope Hillel will come to understand more of those Western Jews, what they are, why they do what they do and how much they need to return. ■

to leave your mark

by alfred jospe

In a well-known story in the twelfth chapter of *Shemot*, the Jews are instructed to slaughter a lamb, and put some of its blood on their doorposts and lintels, for "the blood on the houses in which you dwell shall be a sign for you — when I see the blood I will pass over you so that no plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

This strange passage has long raised a question: Does God need such a sign? Does He not know which houses belong to the Egyptians and which to the Jews? For Rashi, the mark is a sign of obedience. God knows where the Jews live, but He wants to test their obedience.

I suggest a different reading: God needs man for the task of redemption. God cannot redeem man unless man participates in the work of redemption by leaving his mark somewhere, in some form, by some action.

The B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations is fifty years old. What kind of mark have we left?

I believe we have left our mark in several important areas of Jewish life. We have left our mark by focussing attention on the needs of the Jewish student; by developing a new specialization, the profession of the Hillel director; by building on the campus a "community of the different", united by a common purpose that transcends the divisiveness of the adult community. And we have left our mark by building bridges between the Jewish community and the Jewish members of the academic community.

The single most important fact about our Jewish student population is its rapid growth in the past fifty years. From 1923 on, when there were less than 25,000 Jews at American institutions of higher learning, their number rose to 105,000 in 1935, to nearly 250,000 in 1955, and now approximates 400,000. Yet it is only in the past decade that the Jewish community has become genuinely concerned about the Jewish loyalties of its students. Until then, the Jewish community, with the exception of B'nai B'rith, made few efforts to initiate programs geared to the

needs of Jewish students. Occasionally, some organization or individual expressed concern. Two rabbinical bodies established committees on religious work among college students. Several decades ago, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations sponsored a part-time chaplaincy at Yale; the National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America began to support two student centers in Philadelphia in 1920; and the Zionist Organization of America subsidized a student organization between 1918 and 1920.

Efforts on the part of Jewish students to develop organized Jewish campus activities also had only limited success. They lacked the elements indispensable to programmatic and organizational continuity — professional direction, program services, administrative stability and the assurance of regular community support. These elements were provided for the first time when the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation entered the campus. Conceived and organized by Rabbi Benjamin Frankel, the first foundation opened its doors at the University of Illinois in 1923. A year later, Rabbi Frankel succeeded in winning the sponsorship of B'nai B'rith, with whose support the Hillel program has spread to 314 colleges and universities in five decades. In 1973, Hillel maintains 87 full-time foundations, 161 part-time counselorships, three chairs of Judaic studies, 36 extension service units in the United States and Canada as well as 27 foundations at institutions of higher learning in Australia, Europe, Israel and Latin America.

For much of this half-century, B'nai B'rith was virtually alone in nourishing Hillel: It kept Hillel going and growing at a time when the Jewish community was preoccupied with the problems of anti-semitism and, later, when it had to focus on the gigantic task of rescuing the survivors of the Holocaust and supporting Israel. The social forces that threatened to weaken the Jewish loyalties of our students received little attention.

It was in those years that Hillel began to leave its mark. We left our mark by

being a voice in the wilderness. We left our mark by steadily enlarging our services; by organizing the Hillel Foreign Student Service that brought more than 110 students from war-ravaged Europe to American colleges; by developing a national Summer Institute and a network or regional institutes; by publishing program materials geared to the needs of academic life; by involving our students in action on behalf of the causes central to Jewish life in our time — Israel, Soviet Jewry, academic Jewish studies, campus campaigns on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal and other causes of Jewish concern. We left our mark by providing a setting in which the students themselves could give expression to their Jewish concerns and interests. And we continue to leave our mark by serving as the main agency that seeks to strengthen the link between the Jewish student and the heritage of our people.

Today B'nai B'rith is no longer alone in its concern for Jewish life on the campus. Federations and welfare funds allocate substantial funds to student work — gratifying evidence of the growing recognition that the Jewish student population, estimated to exceed 80 per cent of all Jewish men and women of college age, must become the concern of the entire Jewish community.

We have left our mark in the development of an entirely new Jewish profession on the American scene. Hillel's leadership insisted from the beginning on the principle of permanent professional direction. They knew that collegiate societies had to depend on rapidly changing volunteer student leadership; that chapter leaders rarely left trained successors when they graduated; that the constantly changing leadership could not provide adequate field service, program guidance and administrative continuity.

The creation of a sense of Jewish unity and community on the campus constitutes a third area in which Hillel has left its mark. An intractable problem of contemporary Jewish life is not the *indiffer-*

ence of many Jews to the sights and sounds of Judaism but their insistence on *difference*—their claim that they are different from other Jews, and that their Judaism represents the only authentic way of being Jewish.

Hillel work starts from the fundamental fact that Jewish life is pluralistic, and that no single definition can exhaust the varieties of Jewish existence. Jews hold contradictory views of revelation and views of contradictory revelations with regard to their Jewishness—depending on whether their doctrine originated at Sinai, in today's Jerusalem, in Sigmund Freud's Vienna, the Warsaw ghetto, the theories of Feuerbach and Durkheim, the test tubes of a laboratory or the writings of a survivor of Auschwitz. All of them are authentic components of *k'lal Yisrael*.

Therefore we have always conceived it to be our task to serve the needs of all Jewish students whom we can reach. While we recognize and respect genuine differences of conviction, we try, at the same time, to create a sense of community, shared experience and purpose, that will eschew the divisiveness and institutional competitiveness that are the malaise of our community. While it cannot be our task to reduce the ideological pluralism that exists in the Jewish community to some spurious kind of *unity*, we seek to reduce this pluralism to *intelligibility* by encouraging students to examine the often placid assumptions and stereotyped notions of Judaism with which they come to the campus, and to deepen their understanding of the meaning of their pattern of belief and practice and how they are related to the totality of Jewish life and experience.

This task continues to be as vital today as it was when Hillel arrived on the American scene. It is a task which was defined by a Hillel director at a recent conference: "If unity in diversity can succeed anywhere in the Jewish community, it has its best and perhaps only chance in the laboratory of the Hillel Foundation."

We have attempted to build bridges between the Jewish community and thousands of Jewish faculty members.

There have always been Jewish faculty members—and their number continues to increase—with a keen interest in Jewish life who have involved themselves in Jewish activities on and off campus. Many others, however, have remained remote from Jewish life. They feel homeless in the Jewish community and hesitate or refuse to participate in its activities. Some may be escapists; many

are not. They want to be part of the community but are repelled by the intellectual shallowness that dominates much of organized Jewish life. They have a keen sense of Jewish solidarity but do not feel at home in the synagogue because, as one of them once put it, they "find credibility in no theology." They seek opportunities to discuss issues of Jewish and ethical concern to explore, in the company of like-minded persons some of man's ultimate questions, and to develop a deeper understanding of Jewish thought on the intellectual level that reflects their needs and standards.

Hillel has responded to these needs by sponsoring Hillel faculty programs which now exist on more than seventy campuses. For some of the participants, these programs constitute their only formal contact with Jewish affairs.

The people who are 18 or 20 today are the ones who will be in control in the year 2,000. The nature of their role is defined by the historical fact that they are what can be called the "post"-generation—post-immigrant, post-Hitler, post-Bomb, post-Holocaust, post-the establishment of the State of Israel. They came after all the things which matter to Jews in our generation.

These young people live in a setting—the campus—which one educator has described as a "disaster area for Jewish life". I am convinced he is wrong. His statement does an injustice to thousands of young men and women who are committed, often passionately, to Jewish life. It does an injustice to thousands of young people, among them our best and most sensitive students, who are searching for better ways to express and act upon their moral and spiritual concerns. Our students cannot be written off as a lost or alienated generation.

In this respect, there is a fundamental difference between today's students and those we worked with in Hillel's early years when many young Jews were in flight. That was the time when we experienced what Dr. Abram Sachar has called a "terrifying hemorrhage of Jewish loyalty" among our young intellectuals. They reacted with deep resentment to the fact of their Jewishness. Being Jewish meant being strange. It meant being excluded. It meant a diminution of their American identity.

The campus situation has changed dramatically. There are today still far too many young Jews who are indifferent to Judaism. But if previous student generations tended to reject their *Jewish* identity on social or intellectual grounds, many young people today have begun to question their *American* identity on



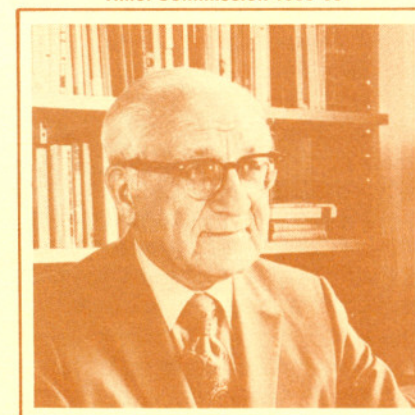
Dr. Marver H. Bernstein
Chairman, B'nai B'rith
Hillel Commission 1969-



Dr. Louis Gottschalk
Chairman, B'nai B'rith
Hillel Commission 1963-69



Dr. William Haber
Chairman, B'nai B'rith
Hillel Commission 1955-63



Dr. Abram L. Sachar
National Director 1933-47
Chairman, B'nai B'rith
Hillel Commission 1948-55

moral and often profoundly religious grounds.

Many of our young people are contemptuous of the dominant values of our culture—the claims that you can find beauty in a jar, peace of mind in a pill. They are bitter about the shame and violence of our cities. They are contemptuous of the gap between what we say and what we do in our political decisions, in our churches and synagogues, even in our personal lives.

They are furious about the hypocrisy of a system that exhorts people to eschew violence while brutally employing it in support of untenable national or international objectives. The American dream has been shattered for many of them, and among those who no longer share this dream are some of our best and most sensitive young Jews.

In the late sixties, these young men and women reacted by advocating a confrontation with the system: They demonstrated, engaged in violence in order to reshape society. Now, just a few years later, calm has returned to the campus. There is a growing realization that attempts to radicalize the campus and the world were not getting anywhere and that neither demonstrations nor violence are likely to produce racial justice, economic equality and international order. As a result, many young people have been turning inward. Like Rennie Davis, one of the Chicago Seven, who has turned from a preacher of revolution into the peaceful disciple of a young Indian guru, they have shifted from a concern with redemption of the social order by restructuring or overthrowing it, to a concern with the redemption of their own soul by seeking answers to man's age-old questions.

Young Jews have been turning inward too. As a result, we experience an upsurge of Jewish self-awareness on the campus—a phenomenon of a strength which we have not known for many years and which contradicts prophecies of doom during the past decade.

The number of young people who are concerned about Jewishness is still small. But it is growing. Whether they turn to Jewish life because they want to withdraw from the frustrations of American society, or are motivated by self-awareness nurtured by the six-day war or their own experiences in Israel; or driven by a hunger for spiritual anchorage—they have started to change Jewish life on the campus. They publish newspapers, a few of them first-rate. They help us push for accredited programs of Jewish Studies. They have been instru-

mental in setting up Free Jewish Universities on scores of campuses. They organize Hebrew Houses, and petition for increased support of Jewish education by our fundraising agencies. They flock to Hebrew classes, discussion groups, Yiddish language courses. They create new communities where they attempt to develop a meaningful Jewish lifestyle. They initiate political action on behalf of Israel and Soviet Jewry.

Alienation, apathy, attrition are certainly still with us. But this is not the whole story. When you travel through the country, you can sense the vibrant restlessness that motivates many of these young people—a search for roots, for understanding, for ways of being meaningfully Jewish, for a sense of community, for a deeper cultural and spiritual sustenance than the conventional institutions of our community have been able to provide.

This quest for meaning and community confronts us with a paradox: Institutionalized religion and conventional worship are frequently rejected; yet there is a search for new modes of religious expression. In past decades, the issue facing the religious educator was the tension between belief and non-belief, faith and reason. We had to answer questions like the one posed by one of my students: "Rabbi, you are such an intelligent fellow. Tell me, how can anyone be religious and intelligent at the same time?"

This kind of question has not disappeared but it is being supplanted by a new polarization. Formerly, if you felt that religious notions were relics of mythologies, without a place in modern man's universe of rationality, you simply dropped out. Today, many young people don't drop out. They don't reject religion *per se*. They reject what is going on in the name of religion in the church or synagogue they know. Today's polarization is not between *faith* and *reason* but between *faith* and *faith*—between the conventional faith of our religious establishments, and an often highly individualized quest for salvation.

We have two distinct types of religious rebellion. One is a rebellion *toward* tradition: an attempt to move away from what young people feel is the empty religious conventionalism by which their parents attempt to satisfy their affiliative needs. They want to go deeper and rediscover Jewish tradition—but on their own terms. Thus, they study Buber in Berkeley, mingle with Hasidim in Williamsburg, cover their eyes when they say the *Sh'ma*.

At the same time, we also have a

movement *away* from tradition, and it is growing. There are the quasi-religious lifestyles of communes and *havurot*. There is a hunger for transcendence that seemingly cannot be met by our mainstream theologies and institutions. There is a search for a vision of life that can satisfy our youth's hunger for oneness with nature, for new ways to express love, an emphasis on celebration, a need for community. Quite often, we can even see a deliberate turning away from the rational world to a quest for the mystical, accompanied by an insistence that reason and logic are dirty words and that the road to salvation lies in the cultivation of feelings or that it can be attained by astrology, magic, the peyote cult, or by surrender to the veneration of Jesus.

Strange and disturbing as some of these developments are, they must be taken seriously. They show that large segments of our youth are in search of a Jewish experience which our existing religious institutions are not prepared to accommodate.

I believe the number of students disinclined to accept prescriptions of the past will continue to grow. They will increasingly challenge us and demand that we demonstrate the validity of what we stand for. Perhaps our most difficult task will be to work with these young people on an approach that will satisfy their spiritual aspirations as well as safeguard the unity and continuity of the Jewish people.

Have we left our mark? I shudder to think of what would have happened in American Jewish life had Hillel not been on the scene for half a century. Some of Hillel's early objectives may stand in need of revision. But Hillel's founders set in motion a life force of enormous significance. Tens of thousands of men and women—in the rabbinate, in Jewish communal service, in Jewish organizations, in communities throughout the land—trace their Jewish commitment, their involvement in Jewish affairs and often their choice of career to Hillel's influence. One question is inescapable: What could Jewish life in America be like in another generation if the entire American Jewish community were to share in the work initiated and supported mainly by B'nai B'rith in the past—to provide the human and material resources that will bring the potential for Jewish life on campus to full flowering? ■

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