

Where Were You in 1948?

Can You Contribute to the Upcoming Special Issue on the 50th Anniversary of Israel? See Page 3 for Details.

Look to the rock from which you were born
הביטו אל-צור הציבתם



chicago jewish historical society

Vol. 22, No. 1, Winter, 1998

CHICAGO JEWISH History

Park Forest:

A Long-time Leader of the South Suburban Community Traces the Way It Modeled a New Kind of Government After World War II and Recalls the Central Roles that He and Many Other Jews Played

By Judge Henry X. Dietch

I have given some thought to the evolution of the development of the Jewish community in the south suburbs and particularly of Park Forest, a community founded just after World War II in 1949.

What dramatic changes in the years since then — far reaching for this area as well as the Chicago metropolitan area — have we seen and have we experienced?

I was fortunate to be in the center of things in Park Forest as a village trustee, village President, village attorney, and now as a circuit court judge. I have had the privilege of being a part of the story of the community's history, and I think it is good, now, to recall where we have been.

* * *

Park Forest was organized as a planned community beginning in 1947. It was incorporated in 1949. The planners and developers were of the Jewish faith, who gathered around the developer Nathan Manilow, a builder of Jeffery Manor in Chicago. He worked with Philip Klutznick, Sam Beber, and Jerrold Loebel under various federal programs to arrange the financing.

In reality, it was the federal program that made the development possible for veterans. Even with favorable financing, things did not go well until a second federal program bailed them out.

The Jewish population amounted to about 10 to 15

continued on page 4

Roth and Kraus Speak on New Book to Society

"This is not a book about anarchists, nor gangsters," said Society president Walter Roth, speaking of his book, *An Accidental Anarchist*, co-authored by Joe Kraus editor of *Chicago Jewish History*, at the November 15 meeting of the Society.

Instead, Kraus continued, "What this book is about is uncertainty."

The questions the book seeks to answer are who was Lazurus Averbuch and why did he go

continued on page 3

Inside:

- Rare Turn-of-the-Century "Letter from Chicago"
- Oral History excerpt from Ray Epstein
- From the Archives: Recalling Camp Sharon
- Seeking Histories and Photos of Lawndale shuls

President's Column

The history of many Chicago neighborhoods is a fleeting thing, quickly forgotten by their present residents and only remembered in the nostalgic reminiscences of those who have since moved to other (often suburban) neighborhoods.



Walter Roth

Nowhere is this better exemplified than by the exhibit presently on display at the Chicago Historical Society entitled "Rooting, Uprooting: The West Side."

The present exhibit is the fourth in a series of exhibitions in the Chicago Historical Society's "Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture" Project.

In its commentary on the exhibit, the Chicago Historical Society notes: "The history of the West Side is one of constant rooting and uprooting — residents putting down their roots, building communities, sometimes being displaced by economic and political force, and often struggling to put down roots again."

The exhibit has many pictures of the various peoples and organizations

that have resided on the West Side in the past century — the Italians, Greeks, African-Americans, Mexicans and others, such as Jews.

I could find only one small wall panel of pictures of the teeming masses of Jewish immigrants who called the Maxwell Street area and neighborhoods to the west of it their home.

Decades of Jewish life and culture on Chicago's West Side received only a fleeting glance in the Chicago Historical Society exhibit. The stress instead is on the history of its present residents and builders — the African-Americans and Hispanic peoples.

I don't necessarily imply criticism of the exhibit, given the fact that hardly any Jews live today in West Side neighborhoods. It is easy to understand the desire of the Chicago Historical Society to be realistic and emphasize those building for the future, rather than those who have left the neighborhood.

Such is the constant tension that arises when dealing with local history.

All of this makes it imperative that organizations, such as the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, continue their endeavors to document and recall the history, culture and

contributions made by the Jewish people in the building of the metropolitan Chicago area.

During the past year our Society produced a video, *Romance of a People — The First Hundred Years of Jewish Life in Chicago, 1833-1933*.

You can order this video by calling ERGO Media, Inc. at 1-800-ERGO.

We also published a book on Rabbi Yehuda D. Goldman, who was a Rabbi to the orthodox community for over 75 years. This book was written by his son, Rabbi Alex J. Goldman, and is a valuable contribution to our local history. This book was sent to all of our members free of charge.

In addition, one of our board members, Dr. Irving Cutler, published *The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb*, a popular and excellent history of the Jews of Chicago last year.

This book is available at book stores throughout the Chicago area.

We hope you will continue to support our projects, and we hope you will continue to support our society.

We need you to assist us in continuing other activities — our other publications, tours, meetings, and lectures. We ask you to renew your membership — the one that brings you this publication — and to consider giving memberships as gifts.

To those of you who are not presently members, please join us.

On behalf of myself and our entire Board of Directors, we wish you a Happy and Healthy New Year. □

Society Welcomes New Members

As an all-volunteer organization, our members keep us going. Without them, we would be just a letterhead.

We are fortunate to have many long-standing and active members, but are always pleased to welcome new members to the fold.

After a calendar year of continued recruiting success, we are pleased to announce those members who have joined us in the most recent three-

month period.

Dave Bartlett
Robin Berkson
Melynda Lopin
Erlich
Herbert Gold
Rachelle Gold
Lawrence
Goldberg
Sheldon Hayer
David Lebovitz
Helen Mansfield

Mr. & Mrs.
Robert
Markhoff
Sarah Mendelson
Marvin Raffel
Nettie Rubenstein
Mr. & Mrs.
Walter
Stempel
Lila Weinzweig
Fred Wellisch

We welcome them and invite them

to participate in our many ongoing projects as well as to imagine new directions they would like to encourage us to explore.

In addition, we would like to encourage our new and continuing members to assist us in raising the Society's profile. Talk about what you hear and read through the Society, and you'll be doing the work of the Society, too.

We hope you will continue to encourage friends, neighbors, and family to join our Society, and we hope you will publicize our publications and events. □

Roth and Kraus

continued from page one

to the home of the chief of police of the City of Chicago on March 2, 1908.

Averbuch was a 19-year old Jewish immigrant from Kishinev who seems to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

He showed up at the home of the Chief of Police, George Shippy, and the Chief, believing Averbuch was an anarchist out to kill him, shot and killed the young immigrant.

The case received much media attention from *The Tribune*, the *Inter-Ocean*, the *Daily News*, and other mainstream newspapers of the day.

Individuals as varied as US Commerce Secretary Oscar Straus, Chicago

Jewish community leader Julius Rosenwald, social worker Jane Addams, Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, and anarchist Emma Goldman became involved in the case, some rushing to clear the name of the Averbuch, others seeking to incriminate him and, by extension, all immigrants.

However, not until almost 90 years later when Roth discovered the headline "Anarchist Attempts to Kill Shippy" of the March 2, 1908 afternoon edition of the *Tribune* while researching another event in Chicago Jewish history, did the case receive a full historical examination.

Before writing the book, Roth and Kraus shared an interest in Jewish gangsters. "Let's put the gangster research on hold for a while," Roth said to Kraus. "I can't shake this." And

Roth handed Kraus a box of material on Averbuch.

Eight years later, the authors are celebrating the publication of their work, a book which, for Roth, seeks justice for the young immigrant, and a book which, for Kraus, reveals the relationships among the constituencies of the City of Chicago.

The authors spoke about their book to a crowd of 100 people at Temple Shalom.

An Accidental Anarchist is available at bookstores throughout the Chicago area, particularly Lincoln Park Bookshop, Great Expectations in Evanston, Crown Books' South Loop location, and Barnes and Noble in Skokie.

—Paula Chaiken

Seeking Memories of Israel Founding

As part of a special issue of *Chicago Jewish History*, the editors are soliciting brief, written memoirs of 1948.

Our hope in the upcoming issue is to feature a number of reminiscences of members recalling their feelings when

Israel attained statehood.

If you have particular memories of where you were when you heard the news or of how the news affected you, please consider writing it.

If your memories are less clear, or the incident did not take on significance for you until later, write that as well.

The founding of Israel, as it shook Chicago, is too large a story for any

one, or even any small group, to tell. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to put your own memories on paper as well as to encourage friends to write theirs as well.

If you are interested, write an account of 300-600 words and send it (preferably on computer disk, but a paper copy will do) to Joe Kraus, 1416 W. Catalpa, #2, Chicago, 60640, by March 25. □

Letters:

South Side Riots the Fault of Many Ethnic Groups

To the editor:

I have just received the Fall, 1997 issue of *Chicago Jewish History*. As usual, it is a must read from cover to cover.

However, I wish to offer a correction and an addendum to Walter Roth's interesting article, "Blood Libel." In the article's final paragraph, Walter states that the "...July 1919 notorious race riots were fueled by predominantly Irish-American mobs that killed hundreds of African-Americans...."

The anti-black rioting that started on July 27, 1919 along Lake Michigan's 12th Street Beach resulted in the deaths of 23 African-Americans and 15 whites. Over the two week period of the rioting, more than 500 were injured, 342 blacks and 178 whites. Governor Lowden sent national guardsmen to Chicago, but he never imposed martial law.

The South Side resembled a besieged city. This riot, like many others of the World War I era and its aftermath, was the result of the economic opportunity brought on by war prosperity that triggered a massive migration of rural black southerners to northern cities.

Between 1914 and 1920, Chicago's black population increased by 65,000 or 150 percent. Black

workers eagerly left low-paying jobs as field hands and domestic servants for the chance at relatively high-paying work in Chicago's meat packing plants and steel mills.

The migration, population growth, black entry into and competition with whites for jobs, housing conflict (especially in the then "not so liberal" Hyde Park neighborhood), and discrimination in public places all provided the foundation for racial conflagration.

The white rioters were representative of the Chicago of 1919. The report of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations in 1922 observed that the rioters were Irish, Italian, German, Greek, "Yankees," and even Jewish-Americans.

—Ed Mazur

Park Forest

continued from page one

percent at first. People from Argonne National Laboratory, faculty and staff from the University of Chicago, and professionals with offices in the Chicago Loop found housing at reasonable prices, when the rest of Chicago offered rental properties that carried "under the table" extra costs.

The Jewish community developed rapidly, as did Park Forest generally. Prior to the establishment of Park Forest, there was a small but well established Jewish community in Chicago Heights, about three miles to the east. It was a declining area, and eventually most of the Jewish households moved to Flossmoor, Homewood, Glenwood, Olympia Fields, or Park Forest.

The first Jewish organizations in Park Forest were the National Council of Jewish Women, B'nai B'rith, the Board of Jewish Education, and Congregation Beth Sholom, a Reform temple. Subsequently, a Conservative synagogue, was formed, and eventually the Chicago Heights Beth Israel synagogue merged into the South Suburban synagogue, which later became Am Echad.

I was a founding member of both synagogues, and in 1972 the South Suburban Synagogue conducted a State of Israel dinner in my honor. I am told it was very successful. The Jewish United Fund was also very active combining the various Jewish communities in fund

raising affairs and dinners. I had heretofore been active in the JUF for over 20 years and had served in the Chicago metropolitan area as co-chairman of the Lawyers Division.

The Village government in Park Forest began after the 1949 incorporation. I had the honor to be elected to the Village Board at the first election. On that first board, there were three Jews out of the six trustees.

The following year, when the Village President resigned to accept employment in Detroit, the board elected me as Village President. At the next election, I was elected by the voters of Park Forest to a full four-year term. I served in that capacity until my term expired in 1955.

Several years later, I was appointed the Village Attorney and served for 17 years until I was appointed a judge of the circuit court.

* * *

You must remember that the first Village Board started from scratch. It passed ordinances to organize the various Village departments, enacted health and safety measures, and established the governmental machinery. Many of the Board meetings of that time — and there were sometimes two or three of them a week — would run until 2 or 3 a.m. before they adjourned.

We all had to earn our living as well, mine being as partner of a Chicago law firm.

I have to believe it was an incredible experience,



Michigan Gov. G. Mennen Williams, Park Forest Mayor Henry X. Dietch, Waukegan Mayor Robert Coulson, and Illinois Gov. Adlai Stevenson on receiving awards for distinguished public service in 1952

especially preventing the Village from becoming the captive of the developers. Much controversy ensued between the Village and the developers.

The school boards also had many of the same problems, and both boards took independent positions in their battles with the developers. Quite a few of the school board members were Jewish, and I recall with great pleasure the service of Harold Brown, Bernard Hamermesh, Robert Dinerstein, and others who served so ably.

Robert Dinerstein also served as Village President after being elected by the voters when my term expired. Bob made many original and significant contributions to the village government with his devotion and attention to solving the ongoing problems of a municipality.

Another Village President thereafter served as President of the Illinois Municipal League. With a population grown to 30,000, the Village became a focal point of excellent government with its non-partisan village manager type of municipal organization and as an example of good government for the South Suburbs.

The entire South Suburban area has benefited from the Park Forest experience. The village had a "Camelot" experience with its wide diversity of people and their interests. It was the first municipality in Illinois to adopt a Human Relations Commission ordinance in 1950, and it has been as outstanding leader in regional planning, in zoning, and in efficient police and fire protection services.

The Jewish community contributed a disproportionate number of citizens in all civic and social activities. There were two more village presidents, several commission members and trustees, many school board members, and a number of presidents and other officers of various organizations in the general community. In addition, activity in Jewish organizations was lively and, many times, intensive.

* * *

Over the years, much has been written by various writers about Park Forest. The Park Forest Historical Society, now 14 years old — of which I was the founder and first president — is consulted daily by writers, scholars, planners, and municipal officials. There is material in the files about the Jewish community. We boast a fine archivist in the Park Forest Public Library's Jane Nicol who has a very fine historical sense of the Village.

The last 20 years have seen a number of changes in the Park Forest community.

Many Jewish Park Foresters now live in Olympia Fields, Flossmoor, Homewood, Glenwood, and Hazelcrest. Changes in family, life style, and taste have helped to spark this out-migration to other South Suburban communities and to north, northwestern, and western suburban areas. Park Forest has "graduates" everywhere.

The "old-timers" have raised their families, and new young couples are now moving in. We are always delighted to hear from newcomers how peaceful and beautiful our community is and how they appreciate the high quality of our services.

With the building up of other South Suburban communities and shopping malls, the Park Forest Shopping Center

has declined. The Village is well maintained, but shopping habits have changed and it no longer suits the shopping public as it once did.

Our Jewish community services have been broadened and increased. Am Echad is the successor to South Suburban Synagogue, and Beth Sholom continues to prosper. There is a merger in progress with Congregation B'nai Yehuda of Homewood. There are also two other Jewish houses of worship, one in Flossmoor, Temple Anshe Sholom, and one in Homewood, Congregation B'nai Yehuda.

Congregation Beth Sholom now has a female Rabbi, Ellen Dreyfus, who is a joy for the community in both Jewish and community wide cooperation.

The Jewish War veterans of the USA now has the Neivelt Post for all of the South Suburban area. In addition, the Jewish Community Centers of the Jewish Federation and Jewish United Fund, after much work and fundraising, located the Anita Stone J.C.C. in Flossmoor. It is a very active center and serves ably as a focal point for the Jewish people in the South Suburbs.

There are now growing Jewish populations in a number of South Suburban communities such as Hazelcrest, Matteson, Richton Park, University Park (which is home to Governor's State University), and Munster and Hammond, Indiana.

The South Suburban Jewish community, sparked by Park Forest, has become a mature and stable entity. It deserves the attention of all Jewish organizations in metropolitan Chicago.

I have enjoyed serving the community, and I am pleased to be able to share its history with you. □

*The South Suburban Jewish community,
sparked by Park Forest, has
become a mature and stable entity.*

Chicago Orthodox Pioneer's "Letter from Chicago" Tells of Efforts to Revive Hebrew

The following letter was written to The Nation, a Hebrew language journal, by Yehuda ben Arie Lieb Blieden, a Chicago resident from 1891-1917, some time around the turn of the century. Blieden taught himself classical Hebrew as a young man in Europe, and he played a key role in restoring Hebrew as a living language, serving as Chicago's main representative in the compiling of the Hebrew Encyclopedia, Otzor Israel.

The letter was preserved by his grandson, Society member Jacob Bleadon, as part of a collection of journals, articles, and letters. Bleadon's daughter, Miriam, located a translator for the letters only recently, and Bleadon has made copies of them available to the Society.

While a supporter of Zionism at both the Chicago and world levels, Blieden was more concerned with energizing a religious rather than a political revival. In the letter, he criticizes both Zionists and critics of Zionists, arguing that world Judaism needed to focus more on promoting the study of Hebrew and religious principles and to squabble less over the particulars of politics or economics.

At the same time, Blieden offers an unusually clear account of Jewish institutions in the Chicago of the early part of the century. The Hebrew Literary Society, of which he was a leader, helped to establish the Knights of Zion, one of America's first significant Zionist groups; and Etz Chaim, of which he speaks, was the precursor of the Hebrew Theological College.

In issue 39 of *The Nation* (*Ha-Leom*), a group of writers from New York and Detroit prophesy in all but perfect unison, bemoaning the lack of enthusiasm exhibited by even learned Jews for our language. The writer "Shimon Ben Levi" was particularly vitriolic in his complaints against the Zionists of his city, asking why it was that they remained so inconspicuous and did not heed the call to action issued by the committee "Disseminators of Hebrew" in its publications, for the past three months.

I have come not as a friend or brother in spirit, but as an unwelcome guest; not to tell you my opinion, but to inform you of the impression your call to action made on your loyal readers, and to point out your error. We, the readers who are distant from the occurrence, were utterly convinced upon reading this call to action, that the members of the committee had done their part, and that each one of them had contributed to this cause according to

his ability.

We were, then, surprised to read how truly impoverished the essay itself was. We were even more surprised to read the article by the esteemed writer three months later, that not only did you not fulfill your obligation toward the lofty goal to which you claim to be so dedicated, but that you sat actionless, doing nothing to further your goal, trusting that the Zionists will take action. And when these did not rush to establish their worthiness over the period of three months, you condemned them vociferously.

I do not dispute his words, for the writer knows the ways of the New York Zionists better than I, and I'm sure he was correct in some of the things he said. But he did exaggerate somewhat in attacking them as though they alone were responsible for the matter and portraying them as though they are the only ones who do not practice what they preach, when the members of the very committee he represents do not even preach!

How difficult it is to be a nationalist in these times! In earlier days, any man who had the clout to stand before the king and his ministers and to ask them to ease the burden of exile from the shoulders of his brethren was looked upon with awe and elevated by the people, while the sycophants praised him as one of the finest members of our people since time immemorial, and no one complained if he was not successful in his mission and came away empty handed.

Today, even someone who has not been blessed with material wealth but only with a wise heart and a generous spirit, and who seeks to help his nation stand on its own two feet, immediately all the keys to the House of David [the house of the Messiah] are hung upon him. And if his mission is unsuccessful and he doesn't conquer the Land of Israel from the hands of the rival due to a lack of aid, he meets with complaints from all sides.

Some shout: Is this to be our leader? Has he succeeded in bringing us to Israel? And those miserable Jews amongst us laugh: Are they going to revive this forgotten land which has lay in dust for thousands of years? Are not the rivers of America better than all the waters of the Land of Israel? While the biggest shouters are those who did not contribute so much as a penny for the entire movement.

I know there are those who say: What good have the Zionists brought us, they haven't contributed anything but illusions, while the money (which they never gave) is lost. "Shame on the Zionists!" If some

difficulty arises in the community, if the education of the children is disrupted or anything along those lines, who is to blame if not the Zionists? I do not intend to burden you with endless examples, for you will stumble and fall under the heavy load. How trying and difficult are the Children of Israel, that even the humblest man who ever lived [Moses] shouted to God that he could no longer bear their burden.

I now turn to the members of this esteemed committee [for promoting Hebrew] and ask them, is this the time to sit in your secluded homes, counting only on the Zionists? Have you so deluded yourselves that you believe that you need only issue a loud call and the masses will come to you with their money saying "here we are," — while you yourselves do nothing?

Even if all the Zionists were Hebrew speakers who support the cause of the language, even so you would have to show that you are making some effort in that direction. And since only a small fraction of them understand the language, and fewer still speak it, it is incumbent upon you reach out to your neighbors and not wait for them to come to you.

These days are not like days of yore — despite what Ecclesiastes said — in which people gave to the maintenance of the Tabernacle. But today times are different, and people do not give of their own volition even to those charitable causes that serve the public at large such as synagogues and Talmudic day schools and the like. How much the more so for an institution which does not serve the needs of the masses, but only of a select elite — such a cause will never attain its desired goals if it does not have practical people who will argue its case diligently, people who will knock on the doors of philanthropists and sway public opinion.

And now, what is it you want to found? "A Meeting House of Hebrew Study" — the words have a lovely ring to them, but do the Jewish masses have even the faintest idea why such an institution is necessary? You also seem to be lacking dedicated workers and men of action, so what have you to complain about? A house is not built through faith alone, nor an enterprise realized by inaction. Ask the patient and he will show you where the pain is.

So too with the Hebrew Literary Society in Chicago, which had an ailment like yours and even

today is not wholly healed. Its members too erred — though never as grievously as you — in waiting for others to act. I would like, then, to recall the days of the establishment of this house, to the greater glory of our people and our city, and had anyone predicted a year ago that we would be holding our *Rosh Ha-Shana* services at the committee center, he would have been considered unstable. Let our friends see clearly that along with good will one needs effort, patience, enthusiasm, and hard work.

When the executive committee was first established last winter (the author was the secretary and chief pessimist of the committee), we were well aware of the grave difficulties we faced in trying to acquire the means necessary for establishing a dwelling place for the society, not the weight of the enterprise itself.

True, our esteemed friend Mr. Joel Feltenstammen had promised to sell us a

house in an appropriate location and to take a thousand dollars off the asking price — if the committee could pay the remainder in cash before the month of May. I reported all this in volume four of *Ha-Leom*. But whence were we to find such a sum?

The society had only one hundred dollars, and we couldn't ask any of our dedicated members since none of them were in possession of such sums. The way of the world is the same everywhere, and I only wish that the committee had not encountered difficulties even from some of those who claim to be Zionists, but this is old news and well known by now.

In the final account, we had no choice but to turn to the public at large. But before we did so, we convened a general meeting of all our members and each of them made a contribution according to his means: the most affluent contributing 36 dollars, and the least affluent no less than five dollars. We managed to raise 400 dollars that night. Then — and only then — did we address the general public, issuing a request for aid in *Ha-Leom* and in *The Chicago Courier* aimed both at the members of the society and at the general public.

Admittedly, the former had already made their contributions, but the public did not contribute much willingly, and it was only through the indefatigable efforts of Mr. Cedar, Mr. Twersky, and Mr.

Amazingly, the girls are far more capable students than the boys: they have become versed in history and sing national songs in a tasteful manner

Rubin who through diligent fundraising and ceaseless cajoling of philanthropists managed to attain the goal. Mr. Harris Black and Mr. Salan should likewise be acknowledged — without them we would not have completed the task.

But that was only the preliminary task. Now the work began anew. We needed to renovate the house to suit our needs, and that requires no small sum of money. But the coffers were empty and the big-hearted workers wanted to make sure that we fulfill the commandment "pay him on that very day," and we came to the realization that there was no hope for us save our own abilities and enterprise.

For know, that most of our members make their living from manual labor. A number of members also lent us some money, namely: The Kaplan brothers, Mr. Wolk, the Katzav brothers, and the Kaufmann brothers.

When the work was completed the house stood in all its glory, a true work of beauty, and all who behold it wonder how it is that such a small society (120 members) managed to erect such an edifice. We hope to repay our debts within a few years, and then the property will be ours forever.

This is the floorplan of the house. It is a three-story building. The first floor is the main conference room of the "Knights of Zion." In the back is the library. The second floor houses the study center, a large room with long tables on which are placed newspapers in Hebrew and English, additional books and study corners. There is also a room for committee conferences and one additional room whose purpose has yet to be determined. This is where prayers are held on the Sabbath and during the holidays.

The top floor contains a very large chamber with a smaller room adjacent to it, set off by a divider which will, in due time, be converted to an office for the Zionist school which I will discuss below.

It is the nature of women that should they come across some fine and worthy matter which needs to be done, they do not pontificate excessively, like us men, but quickly reach a decision which their hands are quick to realize — even if the means are lacking. The "Rose of Zion" sisterhood, which is made up of young women and which was founded a mere four months ago, has already purchased a Torah scroll and donated it to our group. On Sunday and Wednesday we held *Selihot* (atonement) services with the new scrolls in the main lobby, and it was a grand event.

Thanks go to the committee and particularly to its

leadership, namely Mrs. Lewik and Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Turner and Mrs. Shachtner. This committee can serve as a role model to other, larger organizations, for the members do not waste the meetings on idle chatter, but take action as well. Among its members are two Hebrew speaking sisters who recently immigrated from Russia.

It is fitting that we not slight the merits of worthy conversation, even though worthy deeds are more useful and more important. Some four years ago, the Zionists established a school in which they teach the boys and the girls of the community the history of our people. The school meets on Saturdays and Sundays. Students hear lessons in English from an excellent teacher, and, amazingly, the girls are far more capable students than the boys: they have become versed in history and sing national songs in a tasteful manner.

All this is extremely important. I fear lest the Zionists take me for one of those who look for the negative side of everything, but I have already told them that I believe their school has one major drawback: why do they not teach the principles of our faith as well? Especially to the girls who do not attend religious school like the boys, and many of whom are not exposed to any Jewish content in their parents' homes. These girls are going to be the future mothers of our people and be educators of the next generation — must we not provide for them so that they raise their children in the Jewish spirit?

Let the principals remember that the first historic Jewesses were righteous women whose faith in the Lord transformed them into women of valor. It was these women who made history and not the other way around. A strong national education without faith is like a body without a spirit, and what hope is there that they raise their children to be Jews if they have no religious faith? A sketchy knowledge of history and two or three songs cannot cause them to take spirited action and to make them into what they ought to be. In a few short years they will forget all they have learned, as for every line of Jewish history, they are exposed to hundreds of corrupt novels: heroes and heroines of a new sort vie for their attention and sweep over what little knowledge they have, while the few songs they have learned are muted by the songs of those who play the fiddle and the rest of the imitatos from amongst our people.

Still, it seems that there is a growing appreciation that this state of affairs is undesirable and many of the younger generation are working to undo the damage done by their fathers. Bismarck and many

like him were hostile to anyone who wrote impure German, and in France there is a scholarly association whose goal is to better the condition of the French language, and the same is true in England. Here the situation is reversed — even the finest amongst us, such as Socolov and Sovlaskia employ a cumbersome style in their writings. Whosoever desires to chew on gravel, let him read the [Hebrew] newspapers put out by the Europeans, and then the books put out by *Ahiasaf* and *Tushia* publishers, and finally the urchins who load our language with cheap fillers, making it virtually indigestible.

A few years ago, the editor of *Ha-Tzvi* decided to "capitalize" all the nouns, after the manner of German. But his decision was poorly conceived, for as the publishers esteem the readers so will they be esteemed in turn, and in the final account they will not have the funds necessary to pay their writers. Thus we witness the sad sight of events: the finest writers abandoning their Hebrew beloved, and frolicking with her high paying rival wife. This cannot be considered progress, only regress. They do not expand the language, they destroy it.

Sirs! You wish to betroth the Hebrew maiden to the handsome and vivacious sons of Japhet, but it will not succeed. If you be true sons to your mother, you must turn the bastard philistine back to his home, and you too return to the wasteland and help enthrone Hebrew upon her throne. Wipe the tears from the face of the most beautiful and young one, and heal the wounds which you inflicted upon her. Return her sons whom you have driven away from her with your nefarious deeds, and the people will bless you.

This do I know, that in writing thus I bring upon myself the ire of many of the Hebrew expansionists who, like bees, will attack me from all directions — be it with their stings or their counterarguments. But I fear neither stings nor arguments, for more stand by my side than by theirs, as the wise writers and readers of our day can attest.

The time has come to end this folly. If they wish to provide the younger generation with a national education, let them do so in full. Let them see to their religious education as was understood by our forefathers of old, and as the *Mizrahi* associations do today.

Who claims that Torah will be forgotten by the Jews of America and that all the Jewish youth here are corrupted and reckless? Let him step forward and be disproved, for here -- just as in Russia -- there are lads capable of studying Talmud, so long as their fathers don't permit them to roam the streets with thugs.

I myself thought the same thing until I visited the *Etz Chaim* yeshiva. How much did I rejoice when I saw these young men studying Talmud so well. The yeshiva has approximately one hundred students in four divisions, and the teachers are Mr. Lisanski, Mr. Bramsan and Mr. Boky, who teach Talmud, and Mr. Newman who teaches Bible and grammar, and is an expert in his field.

The finest students — a teacher confided in me — learn three pages of Talmud a week, along with in-depth study of the commentators *Rashi* and *Tosefot* and *Maharsha*. Many

come from poor families, and it frequently happens that the father of one of the students stops sending his son to the yeshiva due to lack of clothing, particularly in the winter months, or due to the financial needs of the family which require that the child work for a living.

If only the principals of the yeshiva could supply these children with clothing and shoes and give the parents even a minimal stipend of three dollars a week — then the children would do well in their studies and grow up to become G-d-fearing rabbis who will teach Torah to the next generation. But they cannot do this, since the yeshiva does not have a charitable trust fund, and thus has to run an institution whose upkeep costs over 400 dollars a month from nickels and personal contributions made to the yeshiva.

The yeshiva deserves the attention and the support of our city's community, particularly since they have dedicated their new site which they built thanks to the inheritance of Mr. Nathan. They hope now the obstacle which stood in their way for want of room will be done away with.

Yes indeed, young Chicago has exceeded its sisters in the west, and is similar to New York, its elder sister, in its synagogues and its temples, in its charitable organizations, its department stores and in its theaters — nothing is lacking for it to be a modern city. □

*Yes indeed, young Chicago has exceeded
its sisters in the west, and is similar
to New York, its elder sister, in its
synagogues and its temples*

Book Review:

Accidental Anarchist Tells Old Tale that Sounds Like News out of Today's Headlines

By Dr. Irwin Suloway

Whether in Los Angeles, New York City, or Chicago, accusations of police brutality are seldom absent from the day's news. Invariably, it seems, the "victims" are members of a minority, recent arrivals, or the financially underprivileged. And, of course, the truth is hard to find. Was the officer merely doing his duty, or was a legal bully at work?

Well, as the aphorist says, the more things change, the more they stay the same. The reader of *An Accidental Anarchist* by Walter Roth and Joe Kraus comes away from the book feeling that police brutality against similar targets was equally alive and well almost a century ago.

The book is built upon the strange case of Lazarus Averbuch, a young Russian Jewish immigrant who called at the home of Chicago's chief of police one morning in 1908 on an unknown mission, only to be dead of six bullet wounds ten minutes later. He was to be branded a foiled anarchist assassin despite a complete absence of previous anarchist leanings or activity. The truth concerning Averbuch's visit and its immediate aftermath is unknown, and the authors, in spite of virtually disposing of the theory of Averbuch as would-be assassin, cannot clear up the mystery.

Instead of pursuing unanswerable questions, Roth and Kraus concentrate on the local and broader background to the incident, its ripple effects, and its aftermath in Chicago and elsewhere. Therein lies the real merit of the book. Through extensive, perceptive research, notably in the

periodicals of the period (both English and Yiddish) the authors have assembled valuable information on how the Haymarket riots in Chicago and anarchist activity worldwide had produced a kind of hysteria (not unfamiliar to readers who remember the anti-communist hysteria of our own time) which made it easy to tar Averbuch with the anarchist label.

The actual state of anarchism, particularly in Chicago, is also discussed. Similarly, they demonstrate the growth of a nativist anti-immigration movement which drew strength from "cases" such as that of Averbuch and would lead to legislation severely limiting immigration (particularly Jewish immigration) in less than twenty years. Also demonstrated as a factor in the Averbuch case is municipal politics, which colors events seemingly totally unrelated to it.

Even more interesting to readers of *Chicago Jewish History* is the authors' treatment of the reaction of the local Jewish community to the affair. The changing responses both of the well-established German Jews and the Eastern European Jews are traced largely through their publications.

The authors also delve into some less directly related events of the era, such as the love affair between anarchist Emma Goldman and Ben Reitman and inter-

ethnic violence in Chicago, the latter predating and following Averbuch by many years. While of great interest, these are essentially unrelated to the book's main thrust.

All of these explorations as well as the story of the basic confrontation between the law and order forces (police, politicians, and daily newspapers) and the newly burgeoning civil rights forces led by Jane Addams constitute a solid contribution to the history of Chicago Jewry and Chicago generally.

And it's more than history. In a real sense it's current events, for immigration, police brutality, political interference in justice, and the tensions between advocates of law and order and defenders of civil rights are still on our front pages and on our minds. □

*An Accidental Anarchist:
how the killing of a humble
Jewish immigrant by Chicago's
chief of Police exposed the
conflict between law and order in
early 20th century America*

By Walter Roth & Joe Kraus

San Francisco: Rudi Publishing
224 pp., \$26.95; \$16.95 paper

Folk Singer Steve Goodman Honored

Steve Goodman, an Albany Park-raised folk singer whose best-known song was "The City of New Orleans," was celebrated on Nov. 13 at a benefit concert for the Old Town School of Folk Music.

Goodman died in 1984 at the age of

36, but the talent assembled at his tribute showed the effect he had had on the musical world in his brief career.

Among the performers on hand were Jackson Browne, John Prine, Emmylou Harris, and Lyle Lovett.

A genuine troubador of Chicago, Goodman celebrated the city with songs about aggressive tow trucks ("The Lincoln Park Pirates"), a dying

Cubs fan's last request, and the death of Mayor Richard J. Daley.

While "City of New Orleans," a song about an Illinois train, was best known through its recording by Arlo Guthrie, its refrain "Good morning, America, how are you? Don't you know me, I'm your native son," remains widely known.

Goodman's recordings are available in most music stores. □

Archives Offers Glimpse of Life at Camp Sharon, a Place for Study and Fun

By Joy Kingsolver

Imagine a summer spent at an idyllic retreat in the woods, surrounded by some of the best teachers of Hebrew language and literature, studying, talking, and enjoying the company of friends. That's how many young people, ages 16-22, spent their summers, when Camp Sharon offered a unique opportunity for summer learning.

FROM THE
CHICAGO
JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Founded in 1946 by Dr. Samuel Blumenfield, director of the College of Jewish Studies, the camp was situated on the shores of Clear Lake, near Buchanan, Michigan. Campers studied Bible, Talmud, Hebrew Literature, Hebrew Grammar and Composition, Jewish History, and other subjects taught by faculty of the College, as well as visiting Israeli scholars. Campers spent three hours in classes every morning, in addition to one or two hours of study and preparation. Instruction was almost entirely in Hebrew.

Dan Sharon, a camper in 1959-1960, remembers that this "Ivrit b'Ivrit" approach to learning meant that campers were immersed in the language: conversing, discussing, and writing in Hebrew.

But the camp wasn't just for study. Afternoons were spent in swimming, boating, and sports. Evenings were sometimes devoted to singing and Israeli dancing. Every year the campers wrote and performed a play in Hebrew. Campers also wrote stories, poems, and articles which were published in the camp newspaper.

Jewish culture permeated everything the campers did. There was a daily minyan for those who wished to attend, and Shabbat services were held Friday night and Saturday morning.

Mrs. Deborah Zackai, whose husband Nahum was educational director there for several years, remembers how beautiful Shabbat was at the camp. The young people would dress in white and blue, and walk singing down to the Bet

Knesset on the shore of the lake, where services were held. At the end of Shabbat, everyone gathered for Havdalah.

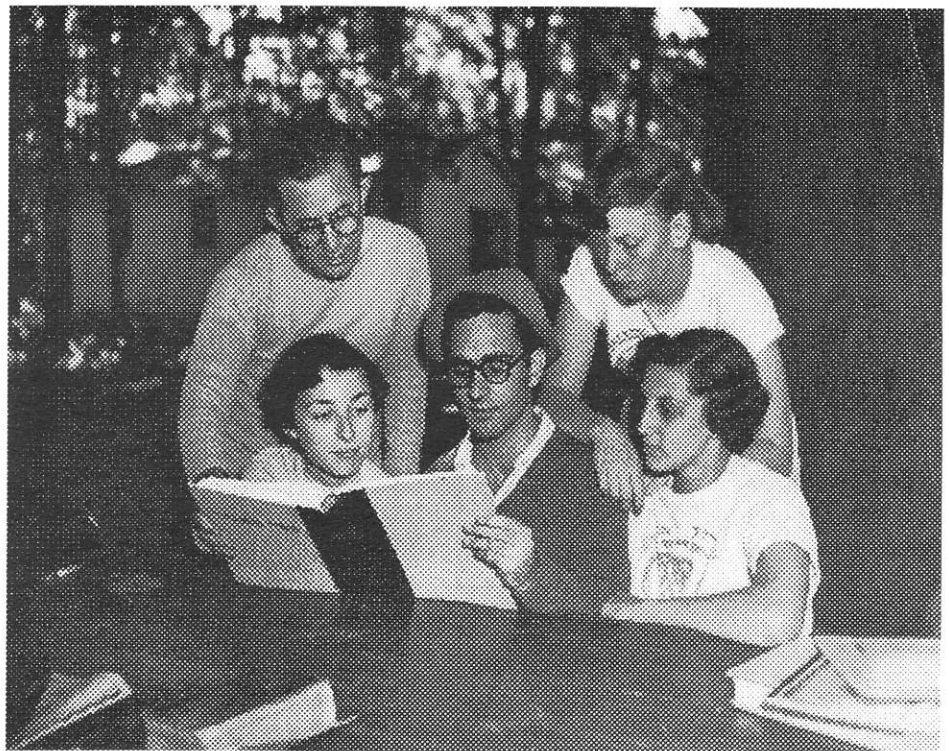
There have been other Jewish camps which focused on Hebrew, but Camp Sharon was unique in several respects. Dan Sharon remembers that, though campers represented every movement from Reform to Conservative to Orthodox, all were united by their love of Hebrew. Some were from Zionist youth clubs, preparing to make aliyah.

Roberta Schwartz, a camper there for several years, notes the uniqueness of the learned teachers at the camp and points out that the number of hours spent studying was unusual. Young people at Sharon were older than typical campers and were preparing to make career decisions, which may account for the tremendous influence it had on many lives.

Though the camp was closed in 1964, its legacy included a commitment to Jewish camping and Jewish learning, a determination that "the chain of tradition will continue," as Roberta expresses it.

The archives has several wonderful photographs of Camp Sharon, some of which will be included in the new archival exhibit, "Our Story: A History of Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies." The archives also has some documents relating to the camp, including College of Jewish Studies Student Annuals, which occasionally featured articles on the camp.

The archives would like to collect more memories and documentation on this fascinating chapter in Chicago Jewish history, and invites former campers to contact the archivist if you can help. □



Sharon campers studying outdoors

Information Request:
**Seeking Materials
 from Lawndale
 Area Shuls**

As part of a massive project to catalogue the synagogues of Chicago, Society Past President Norman Schwartz is seeking information about the following synagogues and congregations.

All of these *shuls* were in the greater Lawndale area, which gives only one index of the depth of Jewish culture that neighborhood once knew.

Schwartz is seeking histories of all of the following, and photographs of many of them. He has already col-



Minsky Competition Chair Charles B. Bernstein shakes hands with 1997 Minsky winner Rabbi Alex Goldman at the Oct. 22 Society meeting

lected histories and illustrations of many other congregations in the area.

If you can help, call the Society office at (312)663-5634. □

- Adas B'nei Israel (3513 W. Douglas Blvd.)
- Adas Hapoel Hamizrechi (1107 S. Independence) Photo
- Agudath B'nai Eretz Israel (1418 S. St. Louis)
- Ahavas Achim Chicago City (3437 Ogden Ave.) Photo
- Am Kodesh (1256 S. Kedvale) Photo
- Anshe Chomsk (1526 S. Millard) Photo
- Anshe Chudakov (1519 S. Hamlin) Photo
- Anshe Cobrin (1621 S. Ridgeway)
- Anshe Karastishub (3146 W. 15th Pl.)
- Anshe Lohishim Je-Lebashaw (1216 S. Sawyer) Photo
- Anshe Lubawitz (Albany near 12th) Photo
- Anshe Lubovitch (1500 S. Clifton)
- Anshe Makow (1528 S. Sawyer) Photo
- Anshe Mozir (1612 S. Hamlin)
- Anshe Pavalitch (1539 S. Christiana)
- Anshe Shavel VeYanove (1615 S. Homan)
- Anshe Sholom (754 S. Independence)
- Anshe Zedek Nusach Sfarid (1123 S. Albany)
- Anshe Sholom Center (1521 S. Homan)

- Ateres Israel (1230 Millard)
- Beth Abraham Anshe Polem, Warsaw Congregation B'nai Abraham, Anshe Polin (1533 S. Clifton (Drake))
- Beth Hakneseth (1229 Turner (Christiana)) Photo
- Beth Hamedrosh Hagadol U'b'nai Jacob Anshe Luknick (3455 Douglas)
- Beth Israel Anshe Yanova (3905 W. 14th)
- Beth Jacob (3500 W. 15th) Photo
- Beth Jacob (1333 S. Komensky) Photo
- Beth Jacob Anshe Kroz (3540 W. 15th)
- Beth Moshav Z'Keinim (Albany & Ogden) Photo
- Bicker Cholim Anshe Russia Poland (1508 Millard)
- B'nai Israel (1134 S. Francisco)
- B'nai Israel (2812 Roosevelt Rd.) Photo
- B'nai Itzchok (3842 W. Grenshaw) Photo
- B'nai Jacob Anshe Makarov (1241 Independence)
- B'nai Jehudah (1617 S. Millard)
- B'nai Moishe Leib Anshe Antopol (1303 S. Christiana)
- B'nai Yehudah (2617 Millard) Photo

- B'nei Reuven (4130 Grenshaw)
- Chaside Kobrin and Karlin (1626 S. Trumbull)
- Grenshaw Street Talmud Torah (Grenshaw and Spaulding) Photo
- Hevrat Sephardim Shel Suriya Shikago (Homan & Douglas) Photo
- Knesses B'nei Itzchok (3442 W. 18th) Photo
- Knesses Israel Shaeri Torah (3242 Grenshaw) Photo
- Kolel Shomra of Jerusalem (1418 S. St. Louis)
- Mikro Kodesh Anshe Lida and Pinsk (1253 S. Lawndale)
- Nachalath Jacob (1500 S. Christiana) Photo
- Odessa Congregation (1625 S. Lawndale)
- Oel Itzchok (1136 S. Whipple) Photo
- Oel Jacob Kovne (1448 S. Homan)
- Shaara Tfilo Nusach Ari (1526 Millard) Photo
- Sharei Tfilo B'nai Reuven (1256 S. Kedvale) Photo
- Shearit Haplaita (1445 S. Hamlin)
- Tickvat Yehuda (1533 S. St. Louis)
- Tiphereth Moishe (1302 S. Spaulding)
- Tomche Shabos (3432 Douglas) Photo
- Tomchei Torah Beth Abraham (1339

Oral History Excerpt:

Ray Epstein Talks of Making Chicago's Jewish Social Service Organizations Work

Ray Epstein has been involved in Jewish philanthropy for most of his life. He recalled some of his personal highlights and recounted the circumstances of Chicago's and America's social service and political organizations in an oral history he gave to Society past President Norman Schwartz on October 30, 1991.

Norman Schwartz: Can you tell us something about your involvement in the Chicago Jewish community? ...

Raymond Epstein: Well, if you want the whole history, when I got married I had decided that I was not going to get involved in the Jewish community because my father, *alav ha-shalom*, was very involved. He was on the board of Federation, and he was president of Mt. Sinai Hospital, and he spent all of his time going to meetings. And I decided that was not for me. I wasn't going to do that. Nevertheless, I got roped into getting involved in the Young Men's Jewish Council, which was an organization of younger men running some boys clubs. For one reason or another, I did get involved, and I started going out to a boys' club on the West Side, the American Boys Commonwealth...

I went to the ABC one night a week. In order to have something to do, I started a chess club, and I used to meet with the boys and we'd play chess and study chess, go out for a bite to eat afterwards. This went on for several years. I ended up going to most of their weddings.

At any rate, I became active in the organization. In 1948, I became president of the Young Men's Jewish Council, which was an interesting experience and led to my going on the board of the Jewish Federation where I served for many years. We also had a parallel board, the Jewish Welfare Board. Later we merged the two boards and created the Jewish United Fund, the so-called JUF. I was the first chairman of the JUF. I was secretary of the Jewish Federation at the time also. I also was involved in the Chicago Community Fund as chairman of the budget committee ... now called the Crusade of Mercy. I was also the secretary of the Council of Welfare Agencies, which was an adjunct of the Community Fund that reviewed all the welfare agencies. That was my basic Chicago involvement. But that led to my going to the board of the Council of Jewish Federations, then known as the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, and eventually I became president.

Schwartz: That's national.

Epstein: That's national. At the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, I chaired a review committee which changed many things. The first thing we changed was the name. We changed it to CJF rather than CJFWF. It's the organization to which some 200 federations from all over the country, cities all over the country, belong. It's sort of the trade association, and it acts in the name of federations. It counsels them. It brings them together to share successes and failures, if you will. It has a general assembly once a year, coming up very shortly now, in a different city each year...

Anyway, as president of that, it led to my going to the Jewish Agency Board. The Jewish Agency is the agent in Israel to which the bulk of the UJA money goes to carry out its work of up-building the state of Israel and improving the quality of life for people in Israel and so on. I served on that board for many years, became chairman of its Budget and Finance Committee, which is the principal committee for deciding what's to be done with all of that money. That was an interesting experience. After 12 years or so, I got off of that board because I chaired a committee that led to limiting the tenure of people on the board, which I thought, and still think, was a good idea.

Having a little time available, then, I became active in the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee known as the Joint or the JDC, and for the last few years I've been an officer of that. I'm running all over the world, which is interesting although somewhat wearing. I was in Ethiopia not too long ago, just before we had the airlift out of there. I was in Rumania when Rabbi Rosen had a commemoration of the Holocaust. I was in Armenia on the first Israeli plane that ever landed in Russia, when we went there and brought back victims of the earthquake to do something for them as a humanitarian gesture on the part of Israel.

I've served and do serve on the Board of the United Israel Appeal, the Joint Distribution Committee, the Council of Jewish Federations, the United Jewish Appeal, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, the JTA — that is, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency — and a number of others. Too many, really. I think it's an incestuous thing that so many people serve on so many different boards.

I'm reminded that I was serving on the Board of the Spertus Museum. I suppose I should get my *curriculum vita* to make sure I haven't forgotten anything. I've had some honors: the Rosenwald Award here in Chicago, and something from the University of Illinois, and something from Brandeis, all of which are very nice, but of no great significance.

Now that's the record. What do you want to know beside the record?

Schwartz: I want to have you tell me something about the

development of the Jewish community when you first came here. You already mentioned that in '68 they made this big combination to combine the two fund-raising events. ...

Epstein: It goes back farther than that. At one time, the Jewish Federation received its money by annual subscription. Then, every year they had a deficit campaign, and they were worried about giving that up because it was a way of hitting people twice. But it finally was given up because it made no sense.

When the big demand for money overseas came and the welfare fund came along, that was a separate campaign completely. You probably know that the UJA was formed in order to raise money for the Joint and the UIA, and for some years we had the two. That was also not really rational, although people felt two campaigns always raised more money than one. Nevertheless, it finally was combined in the JUF and has been successful in that the amount of money raised has increased phenomenally. Chicago now raises well over \$50 million annually, which, by the way, is [an awfully] good record. Los Angeles, with more than twice as many Jews, raises less money. I have to get that plug in for Chicago.

But, then, I go back into the '30s when the whole UJA thing first started, and my father was very active in it. I remember calling on Henry Crown, a great philanthropist here in Chicago, to persuade him that Chicago needed somebody who would give \$100,000. And we had a long talk with him, and he said, "Yes, you're right. We should have one in Chicago." He gave \$100,000, which was a landmark kind of contribution. Now that family gives several million dollars every year, and others also give huge sums of money. So, in terms of raising money, it's been a continual progression upward. Unfortunately — unfortunately — it's never enough.

And right now, I was on the phone with Israel yesterday. Right now the need for money is horrendous. In Israel, the Jewish agency which is attempting to cope with a tremendous influx of émigrés is \$100 million in the hole, unable to pay its bills. People are beginning to refuse to serve it. There are desperate efforts being made to raise cash by asking everybody to borrow and to just about hock the family jewelry. And that's all well and good, but it's very shortsighted because, you know, 60 days from now or 120 days from now, there'll be a new crisis, and what do we do then?

There's really been no long-term planning for how to meet this problem. I'm very distressed about it, and so are others, and that's been the subject of a great deal of discussion. Another thing that is happening in the

community is a growing unrest with the diversity of organizations. People are beginning to ask whether it's necessary to have a UIA and a JDC and a CJF and a UJA, all of which draw on the same source, the grassroots communities, and really there's not only a waste of money involved but there's a duplication of effort involved. There's a duplication of the strain on people's time. It requires much more effort at coordination, and people begin to think that if we were living life over again, we'd have one central organization — more or less like the CJF — which brings all the federations together and decides what they should do with their money, how they raise their money, where it should go, and it would probably be a much more efficient system. But it takes a lot of effort to bring about a change when there's that much turf involved, that many

people involved, and so on.

Schwartz: But we did it in '68.

Epstein: In Chicago.

Schwartz: In Chicago.

Epstein: I'm talking nationally now.

Schwartz: And our collection costs or administration costs in Chicago are relatively low.

Epstein: True. But I wouldn't stress the saving in money as the principal reason for talking about combining and eliminating the national organizations. The principal reason would be a more efficient, smoother operation of the things we care about. That is to say, work in Israel, the Joint Distribution Committee's work around the world, the national scene. Remember, we talk about the Russian émigrés in Israel, which is, in my opinion, where they should go. Nevertheless, many of them want to come to the United States, do come to the United States, and there's a tremendous expense here in the United States for relocating them. And that became the subject of one of the very first coordinated efforts in the United States when, at a rather historic meeting, it was agreed that all of the communities would jointly try to deal with the problem of 40,000 or 50,000 Russian émigrés every year here. Some communities took none, and some communities didn't have any of them that wanted to go there. Others — New York, for example — got a tremendous percentage of them. And the feeling was here in Chicago, "We're taking millions of dollars out of our endowment fund rather than out of the campaign and shorting other things to deal with that." The feeling was, "Look, if St. Louis doesn't take any émigrés, [and] Chicago takes more than what might be called its share, why shouldn't St. Louis chip in and help?" And there was agreement.

Schwartz: What year was that?

Epstein: That was just two years ago [1989]. There was

Chicago now raises well over \$50 million annually ... Los Angeles, with more than twice as many Jews, raises less money.

an agreement that the communities which take none or take less than what might be considered their fair share should put money into a pot to help those who are taking more than their fair share. That has not entirely worked, but it has worked to some extent. Some communities haven't gone along.

Another example of a joint activity, by the way, is the loan program. It became apparent that it was impossible to raise enough money to give all of the émigrés the kind of support they needed in their early year or years in Israel. Therefore, a program was worked out by the president of the CJF, basically — who is a Chicagoan, Corky Goodman — to create a billion dollar loan fund. The loan fund was guaranteed by the federations. That is to say, the Chicago endowment theoretically has an exposure of \$70 million if that whole loan thing

collapsed. Well, that's unlikely. But out of the billion dollars, there's been a \$200 million reserve set up, the idea being

that that should be adequate, but people wonder. There's never been a thing like this before. How can they collect if the guys can't pay? Theoretically, the loss could be greater than \$200 million. But again, that's an example of where all the federations together jointly submerged a little bit of their autonomy into something where they said, "Okay, we'll do this. We'll commit ourselves to this national program."

So that's two examples — the Russian émigrés and the loan fund. That kind of thinking would be easier to arrive at, and would be arrived at in many more instances, if we didn't have to bring together four or five different organizations every time we want to plan something like that.

Schwartz: So that's the strength and the weakness of the Jewish community, and I suppose not only does it apply nationally, but it also applies locally.

Epstein: Not so much locally. We don't have too much conflict locally. The Federation has ... I don't know ... 18 or 20 odd agencies and subventees, whether it be programs for the aged, hospitals, family service, JFCS, Jewish Vocational Service, many, many more ... the Ark. And the Federation gives money to national organizations, to the American Jewish Cultural Society, to a number of think tanks, to the JTA, to the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council. But the Federation is a central funding body, and it does pretty well to bring everything together.

There are other aspects. The Zionist community in Chicago is almost a community apart from Federation, although efforts have been made to bring them together.

The synagogue community is not part of Federation, but again, through the Board of Jewish Education, the Federation is providing money that helps the synagogue schools. I'm chairing a committee right now to try and revamp the whole Jewish educational system in Chicago. There are independent organizations. There's the Northwest Home for the Jewish Aged, a good institution, which is not part of Federation. But there is not really a conflicting series of Jewish organizations here in Chicago. We have the national organizations, we have the Chicago chapter of the American Jewish Committee, the Chicago chapter of the American Jewish Congress, and a number of others, but they all come together in Federation at a committee that I think I started, at one time chaired. We

used to call it our Public Affairs Committee, the PAC. It's now the JCRC, Jewish Community Relations Council...

Schwartz: I notice in solicitation that

sometimes I get the comment from the person being solicited, "Well, this year I'm going to concentrate my efforts on this organization or that organization." When you try and convince them that the whole community deserves some support, you have some difficulty.

Epstein: If you mean by that that somebody says, "This year, instead of giving or giving as much to the JUF campaign, I want to make a direct contribution to Mt. Sinai Hospital," that's their privilege to do that. In a sense, it doesn't mean anything because if a guy who gave 50 thousand bucks to the campaign decides instead to give the 50 thousand to Mt. Sinai, it may well mean that the Federation will be relieved of a \$50 thousand burden at Mt. Sinai, and, therefore, 50 thousand more can go into the pot. So, it's a little bit fictitious bookkeeping.

However, it's good that that possibility exists because there are people, unfortunately, who don't want to give to Israel. I've talked to people who say, "I don't want my money to go to Israel." I find it difficult to control my temper with people like that, but, nevertheless ... and they don't give anything. I've said to them, "Okay, if you feel that way. It's too bad, but that certainly doesn't mean that you can't give money to Chicago organizations, which get half of what you would give anyway." Sometimes they say, "Oh, I didn't know that." Well, I don't know if that's true or not, but it's good that the alternative exists if there's no other way to get the money from the people.

Schwartz: What we're saying is the money is fungible and there's a big pot. ...

Epstein: Exactly. □

In terms of raising money, it's been a continual progression upward. Unfortunately — unfortunately — it's never enough.

About the Society

What We Are

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977 and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the American Bicentennial Celebrations of 1976. Muriel Robin was the founding president. It has as its purpose the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of information concerning the Jewish experience in the Chicago area.

What We Do

The Society seeks out, collects, and preserves appropriate written, spoken, and photographic records; publishes historical information; holds public meetings at which various aspects of Chicago Jewish history are treated; mounts appropriate exhibits; and offers tours of Jewish historical sites.

Minsky Fund

The Doris Minsky Memorial Fund, established in memory of one of the Society's founders and longtime leaders, seeks to publish annually a monograph on an aspect of Chicago area Jewish history. Members receive a copy of each monograph as it is published. Manuscripts may be submitted, and contributions to the Fund are welcome at any time.

Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations and includes a subscription to *Chicago Jewish History*, each monograph published by the Doris Minsky Memorial Fund as it appears, discounts on Society tours and at the Spertus Museum Store, and the opportunity to learn and inform others concerning Chicago Jewish history and its preservation.

Dues Structure

Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1 are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Life Membership.....	\$1000
Society Historian.....	\$500
Society Scholar.....	\$250
Society Sponsor.....	\$100
Society Patron.....	\$50
Family Membership.....	\$35
Regular Membership.....	\$25
Synagogue or Organization.....	\$25
Senior Citizen Membership.....	\$15
Student Membership.....	\$15

Checks should be made payable to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, and mailed to our office at 618 S. Michigan Ave. Dues are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Officers 1997-98

Walter Roth.....	President
Burt Robin.....	Vice President
Clare Greenberg.....	Secretary
Herman Draznin.....	Treasurer

Directors

Leah Axelrod, Charles Bernstein, Paula Chaiken, Dr. Irving Cutler, Allen H. Dropkin, Albert Erlebacher, Sheldon Gardner, Rabbi Elliot Gertel, Elise Ginsparg, Danny Greenberg, Dr. Adele Hast*, Rachel Heimovics*, Jan Iltis, Bea Kraus, Seymour Persky, Muriel Robin Rogers*, Norman Schwartz*, Ethel Shulman, Milton Shulman, Norma Spungen, Dr. N. Sue Weiler.

*Indicates Past President

Chicago Jewish History

Chicago Jewish History is published quarterly by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60605. Telephone (312) 663-5634. Please send submissions to the editor at 1416 Catalpa, Second Floor, Chicago, Illinois, 60640. Single copies: \$1.50 postpaid. Successor to *Society News*.

Editor.....Joe Kraus
Editor Emeritus.....Irwin J. Suloway

Editorial Board

Paula Chaiken, June Kraus, Burt Robin, Walter Roth, Norman Schwartz, Milton Shulman

Presort
Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Palatine, IL 60067
Permit No.307

Dated Material