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Christmas and Chanukah. 1949-1953.

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# American Jewish Congress

SUITE 800 • 28 EAST JACKSON BOULEVARD • CHICAGO 4, ILLINOIS  
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December 28, 1953

Dear Colleague:

In the December 9th issue of K.A.M. News, colleague Jacob J. Weinstein wrote the following:

"The American Jewish Congress has recently come out in strong opposition to the joint Christmas-Hanukkah celebrations in our public schools. The Congress reminds us that we can't eat our cake and have it, too. We can't complain about the violation of the American tradition of the separation of Church and State when Gideon Bibles are distributed in the schools, or when prayers are read in the classrooms, or when school time is set aside for religious instruction, and then ask that the story of Hanukkah be dramatized and Hanukkah songs be sung in our public schools.

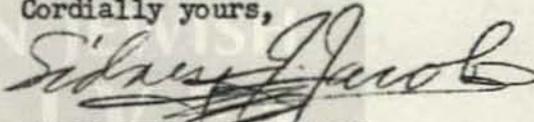
"Of course, the Congress realizes that the pressure for Hanukkah has been exerted to antidote the tremendous emphasis on Christmas. As much as it appreciates the motivation, the Congress still regrets the practice since it deprives us of moral integrity in our insistence on preserving the separation of Church and State. In its recent releases, the Congress further reminds us that to juxtapose Hanukkah, a festival built around warfare - even for a noble cause - with Christmas, with its message of child love and peace, is to put Hanukkah at a serious disadvantage. It would be far more relevant to compare Christmas to Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. There is the further disadvantage that there is a vast repertoire of Christmas material and Christmas songs while Hanukkah has as yet found little expression in the arts. Lastly, it most often happens that Christmas is interpreted by a teacher who has a personal commitment to the inner meaning of the holiday and a large experience with all its emotional overtones, while Hanukkah is left to the wayward mercies of one who has read about it in the encyclopedia or has been hastily briefed by a Rabbi.

"The Congress recommends that we leave religious instruction and religious celebration to the church and to the home. Even though the Jews may not succeed in removing Christmas celebrations from the schools, we should not sell our birthright to protest as American citizens against the involvement of the church in the schools for the so-called joint celebrations of Hanukkah-Christmas.

"The Congress faces us with a most important challenge to think through a problem we have too long juggled as a hot potato. The discussion groups at K.A.M. will place the issue on the agenda."

I believe that the enclosed questionnaire form will be of interest to you. We would be most happy to supply you with mass quantities if you can circularize this document in your congregation and thus assist in making more comprehensive the survey in which we are engaged.

Cordially yours,



RABBI SIDNEY J. JACOBS  
Executive Director

Encs.  
SJJ/amj



## SURVEY OF SECTARIAN PRACTICES IN THE SCHOOLS

The problem of Christmas celebrations in the public schools is one of the most sensitive in the entire church-state area. It is here that the American Jewish Congress, committed to the principle of strict separation of church and state, faces its strongest opposition, within as well as outside of the Jewish community. To strengthen our position, both in educating the community and, where necessary, in presenting complaints to appropriate public authorities, we need a solid background of factual information on a nationwide basis.

We are, therefore, calling upon our membership at this time to assist us in obtaining as much information as we can get on sectarian practices in the public schools, particularly on what happens during the period before the Christmas vacation. We are asking all the chapters to assist in gathering this material.

Each member can help by reporting what happens in the schools and classes that her children attend. You can tell us not only what you as parents may see in the schools but also what you are told by your children. Of course, the more accurate details you can give us, the more valuable the material will be. It is understood that your reports will be confidential and no action will be taken on the basis of any information you give us unless specifically requested by you.

This is the kind of information we need. The questions apply both to separate classes and school assemblies.

1. Is there a Christmas play or other ceremony?

If so, how much religious content does it have?

Is it limited to Santa Claus and the exchange of presents?

Does it extend to a description of the celebration of Christmas in other lands?

Does it deal with the birth of Christ?

2. Are Christmas carols sung?

If so, it would be useful to know which ones - "Silent Night" and "The First Noel" or merely songs like "Jingle Bells".

3. If the rooms are decorated, do the decorations include crosses, Christmas trees, Nativity scenes?

4. To what extent do Jewish children participate in activities of a definitely Christian character - such as singing carols and playing parts in Nativity plays?

5. Finally, to what extent do any of the activities, songs and decorations include references to Hanukkah?

We want to know when and where these practices occur and also where they do not occur. In fact, we are specifically interested in schools and classes where no major Christmas celebrations take place.

We would also like to know your best guess as to the proportion of Jewish children in the class or school and the name of the school and class to which you refer.

Send your replies to:

COMMISSION ON LAW AND SOCIAL ACTION  
AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS  
SUITE 800  
28 EAST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO 4, ILLINOIS

## SO YOUR CHILD WANTS A CHRISTMAS TREE ...

In the life of the American child, December is a happy month, for it brings holiday spirit, parties and presents. To many American Jewish parents, December brings a troublesome problem - whether to pivot these parties and presents about Chanukah, or to reserve them for the date when the community at large is celebrating its Christmas holiday.

This year, as in other years, many Jewish parents will be greatly distressed by the appeals of their children for Christmas trees and Christmas trimmings. Once again, some Jewish parents accede to the pleas of their children, offering any one of a dozen reasons (or rationalizations): To refuse would (1) make the children unhappy; (2) deprive them of something of real charm and beauty; (3) cut them off from celebrating one of America's folk holidays ("the Christmas tree really has no religious significance."); (4) give them a sense of "being different" from their neighbors and playmates, etc.

Those of us to whom Jewish life is meaningful cannot too lightly dismiss the impact of this problem upon a large number of Jewish parents. In home after Jewish home, we have encountered such situations, with children asking for what their playmates have, and parents, hopelessly confused in their thinking, proceeding even with the best intentions, to scuttle what remains of Jewish value and sentiment in the home.

Since this annually recurring crisis will soon again be at hand, it might be well to examine the problem and clarify a few fundamental points with reference to it.

### 1.

At the very outset it should be made clear that this is a problem of Jewish parents, not Jewish children....The same mother who insists upon the child eating spinach and washing behind the ears is somehow helpless to oppose his whims in the matter of a Christmas tree. The father, who, through the year, is not too concerned with giving his children a full and rich folk experience, becomes suddenly worried lest they "miss out on something beautiful and worthwhile."

In the continuous battle of wits between parents and children, the latter are quick to pick out the weak spots in their parents' line and drive through to their advantage. Most parents actually request a Christmas celebration by their own obvious indecision and by their lack of Jewish convictions and loyalties, which children are quick to perceive. Faced with the same brand of parental authority and resourcefulness that they meet in other areas of their home experience, and given adequate substitutes in terms of comparable Jewish ceremonials, children would by no means make a special issue of this request. With many Jewish parents, the Christmas problem is in the same category as the "sex problem"; the child makes a perfectly simple and normal request (for sex information - or for a Christmas tree), and the parent who has his own emotional involvements in such matters, attributes unwarranted significance to the whole affair. We point to this, not by way of

condemnation, but rather in appraisal of a cold fact; that the "Christmas tree problem" arises out of a negative condition in our parents rather than the positive devotion of our Jewish children to the inherent aesthetic qualities of a bedecked and betinselled fir tree.

## II.

Some parents rationalize their observance of Christmas by maintaining, usually with fervor, that Christmas is not a religious, but rather a folk holiday. Many of our schools justify their celebrations of Christmas on the same grounds. In this connection we must consider the incontrovertible fact that Christmas is one of the major events in every Christian church program in America. Even our public school celebrations (presumably "non-sectarian") include a "star of Bethlehem" on the tree and revolve about stories of the nativity, etc. Christmas carols are lovely melodies, but their texts are neither general nor secular. They are specifically Christian.

Other parents admit the religious foundation of Christmas, but justify the observance by Jews on the grounds of widespread commercialization of the holiday. It takes on the aspect of a national holiday, they say. Merchants gear their business to it, cities decorate streets and buildings, and hold community contests for home decoration, etc. To this aspect of Christmas, they feel their children have some right.

We would agree that Jewish children need not be forced to shut their eyes to the beauty of Christmas decorations nor their ears to the charm of Christmas carols. Parents might well make a point of taking their children out to see the most beautifully adorned streets, and residences of their Christian neighbors. This can be done exactly as children are exposed to many other things of beauty which for one reason or another, they cannot possess. That Christmas is beautiful does not alter its essentially Christian character nor justify its adoption by self-respecting Jews.

## III.

In some Jewish homes the Christmas tree is introduced because, parents tell us, the child who wants one and is deprived of it is made to feel he is DIFFERENT. "We want him to feel that he is an American just like his neighbors and playmates." We repeat the point made earlier in this discussion, that this is a typical PARENTAL rationalization having little or nothing to do with the child's attitude. For though children do indeed feel the need for belonging to the group and the urge to conform to its patterns, they learn very early that not all individuals or families or groups live by the same pattern. Let these apprehensive parents ask themselves: Do we permit our child to do everything our neighbors' children do? Would we think of letting our child go to the movies every night just because Mary and Johnny do? The basic fact is -- and it is a principle that should be made clear to every child at an early age -- that FAMILIES DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY. Meal times differ; spending money is handled in different ways; regulations vary from family to family as to toys, movies, vacations, bedtime, punishment, etc. There is obviously something peculiar which suddenly impels parents

to fit into their neighbors' pattern when December approaches.

Some children will continue to ask for Christmas trees, as they continue to ask for candy before dinner. Reasonable parents, and those who have not lost their sense of Jewish dignity, will meet the request with calm and common sense. They will point out, with dignity, that, as Jews, we have our own religious and cultural tradition; that Christmas is, therefore, not our holiday, though the trees and lights and lights and colored decorations at the first childish protest nor grasp at straws in an attempt to save their children from the inevitable discovery that they are Jews. They will be aware that the "Christmas tree problem" is not a disease, but only a periodic symptom of a much more general spiritual ailment.

#### IV.

But what, now, of the child? Will the Jewish child who is denied a Christmas tree fall prey to all these conflicts? Will he resent the Jewishness that deprives him of Christmas gaiety - and Christmas presents? The answer must depend upon the kind of Jewish home in which the particular child may live. If, in exchange for Christmas, the child's Jewishness gives him not one, but eight days of CHANUKAH, with CHANUKAH gifts, not once, but on each of the eight nights; and if, in addition, it fills his life with the rich and colorful ceremonials which children love: Shabbos with candles and kiddush, and havdalah in the deepening dusk; the fun of the Succah; Purim with masks and gragers and presents; a seder in which HE takes part, with questions and singing and AFIKOMAN; and throughout the year, the enchanting tales of Jewish Heroes and lilting Hebrew songs which children love to sing, --being Jewish offers these pleasures and satisfactions - adults call them compensation - then to miss out on Christmas as his very own holiday will certainly leave no scar on the child's personality, will create no conflict or complex about being "different" from the majority.

The parent, however, who denies his child a Christmas tree "on principle" and offers nothing in its stead may have genuine cause for concern. Children of such parents all too often are unhappy; they do have a sense of shame about their being different from, which to them means INFERIOR to, their non-Jewish friends.

The question, therefore, is not: To have or not to have a Christmas tree? This is but part of the larger problem of dramatizing Jewish values and making them meaningful in the lives of our children. It is not something that can be accomplished al regel achat ("while standing on one foot") when the Christmas spirit is already in the air. It is a matter for more sustained thinking and for all-year-round preparation. It involves re-thinking our Jewish ceremonial tradition and in most instances, re-educating Jewish parents. It means that parents must learn to capitalize every occasion in the Jewish calendar for making Jewishness pleasant and attractive and desirable for their children.

The magnitude of the American Christmas celebration and the power of the commercialized Christmas spirit are a challenge to the

integrity and the ingenuity of Jewish parents. Some may prefer to evade the challenge and ignore the consequences. Those of us who value our children's happiness will have to prepare our answer to the Christmas challenge in terms of intensified and beautiful Jewish living through the twelve months of the year.

(Reprinted from "The Reconstructionist")



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# American Jewish Congress

SUITE 800 • 28 EAST JACKSON BOULEVARD • CHICAGO 4, ILL.

WEBster 9-4523

November, 1953

Dear Friend:

Every December our members express their bewilderment and/or consternation over Christmas (and in many instances Christmas-Hanukkah) observances in the public schools. Unfortunately, the concern with this serious problem is stimulated for only a brief period each December, too late a date to do anything about the matter during that particular year.

The Commission on Law and Social Action of the Chicago Council of the American Jewish Congress, consisting of representatives of AJCongress Chapters and Affiliated Organizations, resolved at the close of 1952 not to let this matter again be forgotten an entire year. Discussions were entered into at a number of the monthly meetings of the Commission; and one of its members, attorney Sherman P. Corwin, the CLSA representative of the Aliyah Branch of the Labor Zionist Organization Poale Zion, was asked to prepare a memorandum on the subject.

We take pleasure in sending you herewith Mr. Corwin's Memorandum, in its final revision, which sets forth succinctly the position of the American Jewish Congress and the majority of the Jewish community.

Supplementing this document, which was drawn up locally, we are including a statement on the national position of AJCongress as presented a few years ago by Isaac Toubin, National Associate Director.

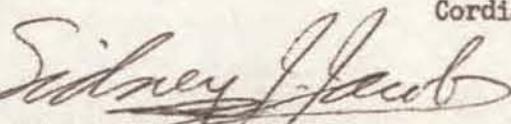
A further point should be added to the enclosed material about the negative effect of such religious celebrations in the public schools on inter-cultural relations. The whole rationale of the program is to foster inter-cultural relations. Yet, as a matter of fact, it is a violation of the religious obligations of Catholic students or teachers to participate in joint Christmas-Hanukkah celebrations. The result is that to promote such celebrations is in effect to seek to cause Catholics and others to breach their religious obligations.

This matter is discussed on Pages 410-412 of the recently-published volume on "Church, State and Freedom" by Dr. Leo Pfeffer. Dr. Pfeffer, of the professional staff of AJCongress national Commission on Law and Social Action, has written what is generally regarded as the most definitive work on this tremendously vital subject. Copies of the 675-page volume are available at the discount price of \$6.50 from our office.

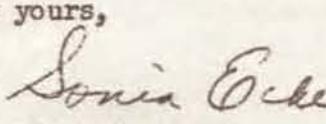
For those who request it, some copies are still available of the pamphlet "Hanukkah, Christmas and the Jewish Child", published last year by the Chicago Council of the American Jewish Congress. That booklet deals with the problem as it relates to Jewish living in America.

Finally, additional copies of the present letter and Memorandum are available upon request from the Congress Office.

Cordially yours,



RABBI SIDNEY J. JACOBS  
Executive Director



MRS. PEN ECKER  
Vice-Chairman  
Commission on Law and Social Action

#### AT HOME

To organize the American Jewish Community for Unity and Democracy in Jewish Affairs . . . To Develop an Informed Public Opinion on Jewish Problems . . . To combat anti-Semitism in all its Phases.

#### ABROAD

To represent Jewish Interests before Governments and International Bodies . . . To work for Restoration of Jewish Rights . . . To outlaw anti-Semitism throughout the world.

Memorandum On

CHRISTMAS AND CHRISTMAS-HANUKKAH CELEBRATIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\* \* \* \* \*

Statement by SHERMAN P. CORWIN for Committee on Law and Social Action of  
Chicago Council, American Jewish Congress

The organizations which encourage the celebration of Hanukkah in the public schools argue that the Christmas celebrations have been too long established in the public schools to be excluded at this date and that the joint Christmas-Hanukkah celebration presents an opportune time to promote in the public schools an appreciation of religious differences and inter-cultural understanding. They argue that through these joint celebrations moral and spiritual values can be taught without endangering religious freedom; they state that it is possible to teach about religion generally without advocating or teaching any one religious faith; they feel that the celebration and apparent equating of both religious holidays in the public schools is of emotional value to both the children and the parents, because it gives them a greater feeling of belonging and being accepted in the school community. Since we cannot take Christmas out of the public schools, let us do the next best thing and bring in Hanukkah as well.

The second, far larger, group of Jewish organizations (and there are, of course, shadings of emphasis between different organizations and different individuals within both groups) feel that all religious observances are out of place in the public schools. The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...". The 11th Amendment of the Constitution places a similar restriction on the states. Teaching in the public schools of any religious dogma or practice, Bible reading, the saying of prayers, released time, plays or tableaux in the public schools about the nativity at Christmas, or about the crucifixion at Easter, or about Judah Maccabee at Hanukkah - all are violations of the doctrine of separation of church and state which is so basic a part of our American heritage.

Christmas celebrations are firmly entrenched as part of the public school curriculum. But do we do anything to alleviate the problem when we insist that our religious celebration also be given recognition? Are we not then emphasizing all religious celebrations in the public schools? Does it then become more difficult for us to prevent the placing of "Christ back into Christmas" - an entirely legitimate effort in the Christian church and home - in the schools as well? If we emphasize the Hanukkah celebration, can we speak strongly against the celebration in the schools of Easter, of Good Friday? Can we, with any consistency, object to released time, to Bible reading? Is our opposition on the teaching in public schools by persons in religious garb more difficult to sustain?

The stress on the Hanukkah celebration in the public schools gives it an importance to which it is not entitled as a religious holiday. Would it not be a better equation with Christmas to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the public schools? Is it that we are trying to compete with the glamour treatment given by the merchants to the Christmas festival? Will we perhaps come off only second best? Will we even then later find it necessary to deglamourize what we have created in order to restore the religious and the ethical significance of the holiday? Is it really possible for our public school teachers to teach about religion without advocating or teaching any religious creed?

In many communities where Hanukkah celebrations have been held in the public schools, the experience has been unfavorable. In some communities the Jewish groups and the Christian groups have competed with each other to see which could make the more elaborate, and not necessarily the more meaningful, celebration. In other communities the Hanukkah celebration has been a very minor portion of the Christmas program. The celebrations have at times emphasized the differences between the two groups. They have sometimes made the Jewish child more conscious of his minority status.

In Cleveland, for example, the Jewish Community Council and other Jewish groups for several years actively participated in and prepared manuals for joint Christmas-Hanukkah celebrations. Since 1951, all such participation has stopped because, as one of the leaders states, of "the Rabbinical stress upon the impossibility of divorcing the religious and the cultural elements of the holidays without cutting the spiritual hearts out of both Hanukkah and Christmas and reducing them to secularized and empty mockeries of their true meaning; and the feeling that the principle of strict separation of church and state is so precious to us as Jews and as Americans that we cannot in any way compromise it, even if there may be inter-cultural values implicit in the joint celebrations." It is to be noted that the

cessation of such joint participation itself created problems since the Jewish community in Cleveland and elsewhere is not completely informed and unified in its outlook on this problem.

After a study of these arguments, the Joint Advisory Committee on Religion in the Public Schools of the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council (of which the American Jewish Congress and most other Jewish community, social and religious organizations are members, with the recent exception of the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee) on December 9, 1952, issued the following recommendation:

"Jewish community agencies and leaders should not encourage, initiate, or participate in observances or celebrations of Hanukkah in the public schools. We believe that the value, if any, of celebrations of Hanukkah in the public schools is far less than the danger to the American principle of separation of church and state inherent in the introduction of such sectarian, religious ceremonies."

The problem is even more complex with respect to the observances in the public schools of the holidays of other religious faiths. We are facing here a practice with a long background. It has been discovered, moreover, that the problem is an extremely volatile one, one which can easily burst into a serious conflagration unless carefully handled. The non-Jew does not generally realize that the religious holiday celebration in any way infringes the doctrine of the separation of church and state. Frequently any attack on a religious celebration in the public school is treated as an attack on religion itself.

As a result of the delicate nature of any solution to this phase of the problem, the Joint Advisory Committee in its release of December 9, 1952, also stated

"with respect to holiday observances of other religious faiths.... Jewish community agencies and leaders should not undertake public action either in protest or in opposition to such observances in the public schools, without prior consultation with the Joint Advisory Committee."

Certainly, however, any effort to increase the religious context of the Christmas celebration should be resisted, although only with tact and care and whenever possible through the use of a Rabbi or other religious leader as a spokesman. The right of Jewish or other non-Christian children to refuse to participate, if they so desire, in any religious program or observance should, of course, be maintained.

The problem is not a simple one. The arguments against the position of the Joint Advisory Committee and the American Jewish Congress are not without some merit. They should be met by persuasive effort, not only by affirmative action. It is nevertheless the studied conclusion of the Joint Advisory Committee and of the American Jewish Congress that the Hanukkah celebration, whether by itself or jointly with a Christmas celebration, has no legitimate place in a public school in our country.

\* \* \* \* \*

STATEMENT OF THE POSITION OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

Presented By

ISAAC TOUBIN, NATIONAL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

at the

JOINT CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL  
SPONSORED BY THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA AND THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL - SEPTEMBER 13-14, 1949

My task in stating the position of the American Jewish Congress in the matter of joint religious celebrations in the public school systems in this country is going to be a relatively simple one. I hope that the consistency of the position taken by Congress on this and other matters relating to the separation of church and state may not by this time appear to be monotonous.

For us the program of joint celebrations of religious holidays in the public school system is only one of the most obnoxious manifestations of the invasion by the church of what we consider to be the exclusive province of the state. That invasion represents a threat to the democracy of our country and ultimately a threat to

the inner, if not the outer, security of the Jewish community itself.

We recognize, and we would be naive not to recognize, that the celebration of the Christmas holiday and the Christian cultural tradition of our country and the folkways of the Christian community pervade almost every aspect of our life and inevitably have intruded upon the school system of our country. We would be equally naive and irresponsible if we did not think that this problem of the insinuation of Christian folkways into the educational system would have to be dealt with tactfully and diplomatically. A recognition of this need for tact, however, should not distract us from the basic issue that as a natural consequence of what is now the established position of the Jewish community on the subject of released time, we feel that the Jewish community (after it has persuaded itself or the majority of its members) should make clear to the total American community that it is opposed to any joint religious celebrations in the school system, just as it is opposed to the celebration of individual religious festivals or customs by any single group alone in the school system.

The acceptance of the idea of joint religious celebrations in the school system we believe to be the result of a series of rationalizations. First, there is the rationalization of the devotees of inter-cultural education who, having committed themselves to the theory of intercultural education, must now argue that joint celebrations of religious festivals in the school system is a logical consequence of this theory and therefore a valid idea.

The second rationalization is made by some who, having conceded that it is not possible to prevent the celebration of Christian folkways in the school system and who having accepted such celebrations in one form or another, now argue that Jewish folkways counterbalance these Christian celebrations. As a result, they maintain the Jewish child gets a sense of equality with his Christian neighbor and Jewish religious symbolism achieves a level of acceptance equal with Christian symbolism.

The third rationalization is made by some Jewish religious leaders who, like their Christian colleagues, now feel that the introduction of Jewish celebrations into the school system will compensate for the failure on the part of the institutions of the Jewish community to adequately reach the Jewish child. They now hope that the public schools, by introducing Jewish religious symbols as an integral part of the total American culture, will help adjust the Jewish child to a healthy Jewish life.

And, finally, there is the rationalization of those who feel that Christmas particularly is no longer a Christian holiday. It has now become a national folkway. They argue that it has completely lost its Christian connotation; that it is now being celebrated by many Jews within their own homes; that it ought to be accepted as part of the American tradition; and that, therefore, the joint celebration of Christmas and Hanukkah is a splendid idea.

We in the American Jewish Congress see a vast distinction between the doctrine of inter-cultural education and the idea of joint religious celebrations. We do not altogether disparage the value of the former, but we are prepared to deny that joint religious celebrations themselves are beneficial either to the communal relations between Jews and Christians; to the Jew's acceptance of his place in American society; or, what is even more important to us, to the Jew's acceptance of his own tradition as a Jew in American society. If joint Christmas-Hanukkah celebrations are desirable, it would follow that Passover and Easter or Pentecost and Shevuoth would be equally desirable, and the tragedy of our time might be that Rosh Hashanah and New Year's Day do not occur simultaneously.

For our part, we say that the introduction of the Hanukkah celebration does not cancel the harm done by the introduction of a Christian religious celebration into the school system. However great the amount of tact or diplomacy we may have to use in order to eliminate such celebrations from the school system, it is nevertheless the responsibility of the Jewish community itself to persuade itself and others to the end that religious celebrations be eliminated. Other religious infiltrations into the curriculum of the school system may be dealt with at another time and with different techniques; for today's purposes we are concerned exclusively with the problem of joint religious celebrations.

The continued celebration of Christmas, whether it be considered by Jews (strangely enough) as a national folkway and by Christians as a Christian folkway, makes Christmas acceptable to the Jewish community. This increasing acceptability destroys the fibre of the Jewish community, and we in the Congress are concerned not only with community relations, we are also concerned with the internal strength of the Jewish community. What strength do we give to the Jewish community, not alone

through the synagogues, Hebrew schools and Jewish organizations, but what strength does the Jew derive from the impact of the American cultural and social system upon him? One of the greatest threats to the inner security of the Jewish community is the increased acceptance by Jews themselves of the idea that Christmas is a national folkway, that it may be introduced as part of the cultural and educational system of our country and that the Jewish child may then be exposed to the equation of Christmas and Hanukkah as part of the American tradition. This child then grows up to discover in his adult life that he is really a Jew, differing in many ways from the rest of his community and unable to understand why, if in his youth both of these and other holidays were equally acceptable, the Jewish holiday alone has now become his peculiar heritage as a Jew.

The second argument that the school system will reach the Jewish children not otherwise affected by the responsible institutions of the Jewish community is also an attack on the inner strength of the Jewish community. It relieves the home and the established institutions of Jewish education of their basic responsibility; namely, that of properly interpreting the place of Jewish tradition and Jewish folkway in Jewish life so that the Jewish child will become adjusted not only to his Jewishness but to those characteristics which distinguish him from the total American community. We do not regard the school system and the introduction of joint religious celebrations as a panacea to the problems of internal strength.

Likewise, we regard the introduction of joint religious celebrations as a danger equal to the existence of independent or exclusive Christian celebrations in the school system. The mere fact that children may in some cases also be asked to celebrate Hanukkah does not vitiate the effect of the celebration of the Christmas holiday and its acceptability within the public school system. We are not opposed to the idea that Christians ought to understand Jewish traditions or that Jews ought to understand Christian tradition. But we do not think it is the province of the school system of this country, as an instrument of a democratic society, to become a vehicle of propaganda for the separate faiths. However worthwhile the exchange of knowledge about another's faith may be, this exchange should not take place within the premises of the school system lest it become a wedge, one of the many wedges sought by certain forces in the Christian community to make the school system an instrument of the church. We regard this idea of joint or independent celebrations of religious holidays as a danger equal to the whole practice of released and dismissed time in the school system.

Therefore, we of the American Jewish Congress are opposed to the introduction of religious celebrations and their practice in any shape, manner or form. And we counsel the Jewish communities, its Rabbis, its synagogues, its national and local agencies to make that position clear to the total American community.

To: Community Relations Councils  
Group Relations Agencies

From: WILL MASLOW, National Director, Commission on Law and Social Action

The rationale of Jewish intervention in defense of the status of the civil rights of other minority groups has frequently been misunderstood both within and without the Jewish community. Because this has often proved troublesome, I think you will be interested in the following reply by the American Jewish Congress to a comment appearing in the June, 1953 issue of the B'nai Zion Voice, published by B'nai Zion, a Jewish fraternal organization.

In that issue a column written by Ben David contained the following remarks. It should be observed that the Ben David column is always published under a note disclaiming B'nai Zion responsibility for his editorial views:

THE DAMASK CHEEK

"Are ye not as the children of Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel?--saith the Lord."  
--Amos 9:7

It seems that the American Jewish Congress and similar Jewish groups have taken the above too literally. Before God we are all His children, the black, white, brown, yellow and many-hued. We must not give anyone less than his rightful due. We must not differentiate one man from another because of his pigmentation or racial origin. It does not follow, however, that as a religious entity, albeit a minority, we are bound to go into battle for the rights and benefits of our fellow Americans of the Negro race.

As Americans, as liberals, as believers in justice and liberty we deem it fit and proper to stand forth individually or with others to defend and protect our fellow citizens. But why as Jews and as a Jewish body? Is there a dearth of specifically Jewish problems, difficulties, issues, that we must expend our organized and communal strength on behalf of other minorities? Most Jewish Americans are not affiliated with Jewish organizations. They are scattered among multitudinous movements, causes, wings, and trends of organized community and national activities. Too few of our kin devote themselves to our own family. Why waste our meager collective seed? Why give away our strength, leaving us weaker as our reward? We are told that minorities must unite and work together to accomplish anything. Accomplish for whom? Aside from rhetoric, when did any other minority ever aid us in fact? They are the first to turn against us at the first opportunity. Some minorities in America for whom we fought and bled eventually came into power. We still remain in the minority and it is we who get slapped by our erstwhile friends as well as by our ancient enemies. This is not the language used at so-called interfaith meetings and functions but the facts of history are inexorable.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE REPLY BY ISAAC TOUBIN, NATIONAL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,  
AJCONGRESS

Mr. Hyman J. Fliegel, Editor  
B'nai Zion Voice  
225 West 57th Street  
New York City

July 13, 1953

Dear Mr. Fliegel:

We were perplexed by the column called "Ben David's Views" in the June, 1953 issue of your magazine. What purports to be a criticism of American Jewish Congress activity is in reality a regrettably misinformed appraisal of the opportunities as well as the obligations existing for any minority in a democratic society.

In an item called "The Damask Cheek", Ben David condemns the American Jewish Congress for having undertaken "to go into battle for the rights and benefits of our fellow Americans of the Negro race." The burden of his argument seems to be that this battle is basically of little concern to us as Jews. He asserts that there are other areas more compellingly Jewish in character to occupy our attention.

Ben David speaks with the voice of a Jewish isolationism, not less troublesome because it is ethnic rather than geographic. So far as the American Jewish Congress is concerned, we accept that part of Jewish tradition which fixes an affirmative mandate upon the Jewish community to expand its horizons beyond the merely parochial. And we do not preach without practicing.

But even on a practical level our dedication to principle has yielded a profitable return. It is unforgivable shortsightedness not to see that no minority in the United States can possibly champion its own rights without at the same time lending assistance to others similarly placed. The harsh truth is that left to ourselves, we can accomplish nothing; joined with others we can and have achieved significant results.

Even if it were true, as Ben David declares, that we have received nothing in return for our efforts on behalf of others, we would not be relieved of the responsibility of fighting all manifestations of discrimination with the same vigor which we expect others to show in fighting anti-Semitism. Neither our religion nor our history nor our own personal sense of ethics condones such a mercenary approach to righteousness. Moreover, his contention is both unfair and inaccurate. To take but one example, in the litigation brought to the United States Supreme Court involving racial restrictive covenants the parties actually involved were Negroes, but the import of the case was to end the use of restrictive covenants against Jews as well. Our assistance in the campaign to end bias in hiring and firing perhaps redounded most to the benefit of the Negro community but only because job discrimination is sharpest against them. In the cure of any disease those who are most desperately sick have the most to be thankful for but this does not mean that those who are first beginning to fall ill have no reason for gratitude.

In at least one area the cooperation of Jewish and Negro membership organizations has helped Jews more than it has Negroes. Fair education practices laws, such as the Quinn-Oliffe Law in New York, were directed primarily against the quota system in medical schools and in colleges. The fact that relatively few Negroes were applicants for those appointments did not deter Negro groups from lending us their unqualified support and aid in our campaign for the enactment of this legislation.

Finally, as a Zionist group, I should not need to remind you of the assistance given by Walter White, President of the NAACP, at a critical time during the UN consideration of the Palestine partition resolution, in the negotiations with Haiti and Liberia.

These are the practical advantages we have gained. There are other advantages. It is, of course, a simple matter to write off high sounding phrases about "the fabric of a democratic society" or "cultural pluralism" either as mere glibness or as a kind of wan idealism not suitable for real life. Part of our organizational personality, however, is that we take our ideals seriously. As a Jewish minority the whole of our experience has taught us that the only way to live with others is, to some extent at least, to live for others.

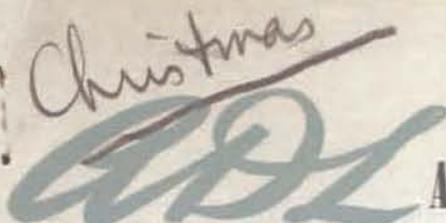
We must be concerned with safeguarding the democratic process as the best way to preserve our integrity and our identity as Jews. But democracy frequently ceases, even in this country, at the boundaries of race, color and creed. It is not always the same race, color or creed that is subjected to abuse, but this abuse, no matter what its target, always poses the identical threat to the achievement of a peaceful and just communal life. The only really significant way to guarantee or protect or extend Jewish rights is to round out democracy wherever it is imperfect. This is a far different thing from merely seeking special protection for Jews or anyone else. It involves fighting on dozens of fronts to establish and safeguard the rights of all groups in America wherever those rights are curtailed.

Ben David apparently believes that this program has meant a dissipation or a diversion of our interests from specifically Jewish problems and Jewish issues. Speaking for the American Jewish Congress, I cannot agree that our interest in one area has resulted in indifference in another. On the contrary, this very zeal and ardor for the rights of others has strengthened and stimulated our conception of Jewish needs and aspirations. We have managed within the limits of our organization, to develop and nourish a program for the extension of civil rights, while at the same time we continue to address ourselves to the replenishment and extension of those activities which even Ben David must acknowledge to be indisputably Jewish in nature. The fact that we have a Commission on Law and Social Action has not precluded us from creating a Commission on Jewish Living; in addition to the widely respected and militant Congress Weekly, we sponsor the magazine Judaism, devoted to a scholarly examination of the philosophic and religious bases of traditional Judaism. We believe it sophistry to attempt to cleave this area into Jewish interests and non-Jewish interests. Our lives as Jews, we believe, must be rich and comprehensive enough to span a host of activities. And we should be delinquent in the fulfillment of our purposes if we failed to address ourselves to the challenge of our total responsibilities.

Sincerely yours,

IT:ag

Isaac Toubin, Associate Director



# ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH

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December 6, 1950

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### To Members of the Religious Committee:

The Christmas-Hanukkah issue again received much attention in ADL work this year. The following information is provided to give you the fullest possible picture of how this issue was dealt with:

1. The Religious Committee at a meeting on November 29, was advised by ADL that Mr. Robert Gamzey had suggested that another statement be issued by the Committee on the Christmas-Hanukkah issue. Mr. Gamzey felt that last year's statement had been too negative and aggressive and had elicited a number of unfavorable comments from the Jewish community.

ADL also advised the Religious Committee that ADL's national office had formulated a statement and proposed that paragraphs 1 and 2 of the locally-issued statement be deleted in favor of a paragraph reflecting a more constructive approach to the problem.

The Committee, upon evaluating both paragraphs, expressed itself against deletion of last year's paragraph and concurred that last year's statement should not be changed.

2. The Christmas-Hanukkah issue was brought before the full Denver ADL Committee and discussed. The deliberations of the Religious Committee were presented to the Denver ADL Committee. The Denver ADL Committee felt that this issue warranted far more discussion than was possible under the circumstances. It, therefore, tabled discussion and expressed itself in favor of exploring this issue further.

3. Mr. Gamzey was advised of the decision of the Religious Committee. He did not feel that he wanted to republish last year's statement without change. We, therefore, made available to him last year's statement, national ADL's statement, and several other items on this issue

Religious Committee

December 6, 1950

from our files. Having also been present at the deliberations on this issue during the meeting of the Denver ADL Committee, Mr. Ganzey will prepare his own story from these various sources, which will appear in next Thursday's issue of the INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS.

4. Requests from the schools have been moderate and rather specific. The question of the preparation of a manual assisting teachers in the attempt to present Hanukkah to their classes--as recommended by the Religious Committee--will be determined greatly by the need for such a manual. This need can only be established by a survey of the Christmas-Hanukkah activities which have gone on during this season. Such a survey will be discussed with the Department of Instruction of the Denver Public Schools in the near future, and its results will be communicated to the Religious Committee before further discussions on the creation of a manual will be held.

Cordially,

*J. Peter Brunswick*  
J. Peter Brunswick  
Education Director

JPB:fw

Statement of Principles  
on  
Religious Holiday observances in the Public Schools. <sup>1/</sup>  
by  
Anti-Defamation League  
of  
B'nai B'rith

It is our opinion that the adoption of the proposed NCRAC-Synagogue Council statement on Religious Holiday Observances in the Public Schools (Sept. 13-14, 1949) is inimical to the interests of the Jewish community in the United States. Its adoption will injure Jewish-Christian relations for many years. Already, there is evidence which supports our fears. Recent experiences in Chelsea, Massachusetts, Camden, New Jersey and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, among others, illustrate the dangers to which we refer.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith believes that the NCRAC-Synagogue Council statement is wrong in practice, if not also in principle. The principle of separation of church and state is one of the basic political concepts of American democracy. Along side of it, a splendid system of public education, to which we are completely dedicated, has developed while the various churches and faiths have been free to pursue their own indoctrinations in whatever manner they chose as long as they did not challenge the right of every man to worship in any way he desired. However, the prohibition of the first amendment, in our opinion, does not require the broad proscription of the character contained in the NCRAC statement. We believe the public school -- a great arm of democracy in our country -- ought to be the source for explaining to all the children the ideals and beliefs of the several cultures and religions in our country. If the public school will do this, we believe that the teacher will faithfully discharge his trust and set forth objectively and sympathetically the religious and cultural patterns of America. We would be derelict in our responsibility if we did not oppose vigorously the NCRAC-Synagogue Council statement and set forth to the Jewish community our reasons for so doing. In the light of this, we, therefore, present the following statement representing the views of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith:

- (1) The American Democratic system is founded in large part upon ethical and moral concepts derived from the great religion of mankind. The preservation and fostering of these concepts are essential to the fullest realization of the American ideal and their growth and development as major forces in American life should be the deep concern of every citizen.
- (2) Religion has already been and continues to be the central core of Jewish and Christian life. The Jewish community of America is deeply concerned with materialistic tendencies in contemporary American life, which, if permitted to grow unchecked, may work great harm to the moral and spiritual basis of American Democracy. We urge all religious groups to unite in an intensified national program outside of the regular public school day, designed to enroll children of our country in the religious schools of their respective faiths. We urge religious bodies to avail themselves of all media of mass communication for this program, such as the press, radio, motion pictures, speakers' platforms and special dramatic projects.

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<sup>1/</sup> Adopted by National Commission, May 13-14, 1950, Chicago (except for stylistic changes).

- (3) We believe that the public school is not the place for the indoctrination of any sectarian philosophy or religion. The use of the public Schools for the dissemination of such sectarian dogma, is of course, constitutionally proscribed. When public school vacation periods and religious holidays such as Christmas, occur at the same time, festival celebrations are usually held in the schools. So long as no attempt is made at religious indoctrination, we do not deem such celebrations to be a violation of the American principle of separation of church and state. Furthermore, in many communities joint Christmas-Chanukah festivals have been sponsored in a spirit of festival celebration without religious emphasis, in order, first, to give the Jewish children a sense of belonging and, second, to help acquaint the non-Jewish youngsters with the nature of the corollary festival which their minority playmates enjoy in their own faith. We find in such joint festivals, without any attempt at religious indoctrination, such a spirit of mutual cooperation that, if properly developed, they can lead only to better relations between Jewish and non-Jewish children, and similarly between their respective parents.
- (4) Festival celebrations, such as Christmas, Chanukah, Easter, Passover, Chinese New Year's, the Lutherans - Martin Luther Day, Mohammedan Month of Fast (Ramadan), the Welsh - St. David's Day, and other nationality and cultural occasions, without religious indoctrination offer a unique and unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate the existence of cultures, other than Christian, in the United States. Such celebrations or commemorations, construed and practiced, as teaching about and not the indoctrination of, religion, are in consonance with the American principle of separation of church and state and with the role of education in the promotion of democratic and spiritual values. Such occasions clearly represent the school's function to give to all the children a conception of all the aspects of the society of which the children, the school and religion are organic parts. In this last year various individuals have raised a serious question with regard to the propriety of (a) the joint Christmas-Chanukah festivities, (b) even the Christmas festivals alone, since they employ school time and might, however culturally projected, be considered as fostering religious ideas through the agency of the public school system. We, however, hold that, pursued with caution and with sufficient regard for the desires of the children and their parents in the various communities, such joint Christmas-Chanukah festivals without religious indoctrination cannot but be regarded as valuable intercultural aids in a nation which is comprised of so many different denominations and nationalities. We further hold that intelligent exchanges of information on such festivals and customs cannot help but enrich the minds of our children.
- (5) We believe that the advantages all Americans have gained from the introduction of intercultural education into the public school system will continue to furnish us with insight and guidance in carrying out the above program. We recommend experimentation and a wide degree of local option in the carrying out of the above program. We recognize that further exploration and training in intercultural education, with a view to acquiring additional techniques and methods designed to create better understanding among the adherents of various religions and races, will be required.

- (6) We do not believe that the foregoing principles can be applied nationally and uniformly throughout the country. We do believe that local variations and conditions will affect the application of these principles. In the light of this, therefore, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith is prepared to offer its assistance to any Jewish community which would like help and guidance in these important matters.



# Denver Rabbis Offer Guide To Observance of Holidays

At this time of the year, many American Jewish parents face a troublesome problem. While this season marks a happy period for our Christian neighbors, Jewish parents and children are sometimes faced with a serious conflict. In view of the resulting confusion, which from year to year has reigned in our community over this issue, the Rabbinical members of the Religious Committee of the Mountain States Regional Office of ADL whose names are appended to this statement have deemed it advisable to issue the following statement:

**1.** Consistent with our stand that there should be an absolute separation between religion and state, we deplore the fact that Christmas celebrations and ceremonies are being encouraged in the public schools. We must continue to consider Christmas as a sectarian holiday, the celebration of which should be confined to the Christian home, church and Sunday school. In the same spirit we believe that Hanukkah celebrations have no place in the classroom of the public school.

**2.** However, until all religious ceremonies are eliminated from the schools, we will continue to co-operate within a framework of which we do not necessarily approve.

**3.** In order to derive maximum social and human benefits from the presentation of these holidays, let us employ this season of the school year calendar to provide the occasion for some intergroup understanding.

**4.** It should be clearly understood by all that in spite of the fact that both these holidays happen to fall within the same calendar period, Christmas and Hanukkah are two distinctly different holidays in their origin, their meaning and their tradition.

**5.** Christmas Pageants. We urge children and teachers alike to minimize the conflict described above by assigning Jewish children to the Hanukkah part of such "hyphenated" celebrations and, wherever possible, to relieve them of the obligation to partic-

(Continued on Page 7)



# Chanukah - Christmas Guide Offered by Denver Rabbis

(Continued from Page 1)

ipate in dramatic productions, pageants, Nativity plays, etc., about Christmas and other ceremonies revolving around Christmas.

**6.** Carols. The question of Jewish children participating in singing of religious hymns and carols during the Christmas season, presents a difficulty. Our suggestion is that this difficulty can best be resolved by letting the children make their own choice

according to their feelings. We are confident that with the new intercultural insights developing among Denver public school teachers and administrators, Jewish children will find a maximum amount of assistance, understanding and sympathy from their teachers in this conflict.

**7.** Trees. Some Jewish parents place Christmas trees in their homes for various reasons. In our considered judgment, Christmas trees have no place in the Jewish home. It is our feeling that the responsibility for implementing this recommendation rests solely with the parents. Reasonable parents and those who have not lost their sense of dignity will use common sense. They will point out to their children that as Jews we have our own religious and cultural tradition, that Christmas is, therefore, not our holiday, tho the trees and lights and color decorations of our friends may delight our eyes as well.

**8.** We appeal to Jewish parents to remember the loyalty, dignity and pride of the Jewish people. Our ancient tradition has been perpetuated only by adhering to the faith and beliefs of Judaism and not by the imitation of religious observances of the Christian world. In everyday life, parents would be horrified if asked to permit their children to do everything their neighbor's children do. There is no reason why the Christmas season should evoke an exaggerated sense of conformity in Jewish parents.

**9.** In respecting the feasts and religious ceremonies of our Christian friends and neighbors, we accept the responsibility of giving our own festivals the richness and dignity commanding the respect of others.

**10.** Hanukkah is a feast full of opportunities to provide joy and happiness for the Jewish child and instill within him the pride of the glorious past of the Jewish people. The greatness and the richness of American democracy is rooted in the opportunity for all groups to worship in their own way without fear of shame

or recrimination. As Jews and as Americans, let us make Hanukkah truly a feast of lights—the lights of justice and freedom.

Rabbi C. E. H. Kauvar,  
Chairman  
Rabbi Herbert Friedman  
Rabbi Manuel Laderman

# Congregation Emanuel

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## SABBATH SERVICES

Friday, December 1st, 8:15 P.M.

RABBI HERBERT A FRIEDMAN  
will speak on  
"WHY SHOULD CHRISTMAS OR CHANUKAH BE  
TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS?"

Even though we are supposed to enjoy a separation of Church and State, Christmas is observed in the public schools and Chanukah is being included in some of the Holiday programs. If it is wrong for Christmas to be observed in the schools, it is equally wrong to introduce Chanukah. Rabbi Friedman will discuss this significant question.

### KADDISH LIST

(Taken from Memorial Tablet)

Samuel Barets	Isidor Friedenthal
Emanuel Heitler	Pauline D. Klein
Sigmund Seligsohn	Max Buchmann
Leon Milton Bronfin	Abraham Rachofsky
Sam Nides	Joseph Pizer
Blanche Solomon	

GALA CHANUKAH CELEBRATION  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD, 7:15 P.M.

On the First Night of Chanukah the pupils of the Pre-School through Grade 5 will attend with their parents and friends. Following the brief service, at 7:15, a reception will take place with exchange of gifts. A dramatic play will be presented.

# Christian-Jewish Program Spurs Tolerance at Gove Junior High

By ALEX MURPHREE,  
Denver Post Staff Writer.

Pride in one's own religious observances and understanding and respect for the rites—as well as the rights—of others is essential in a democracy like the United States, educators believe.

The opportunity to instill that mutual respect is taken by Mrs. Ruth H. Anderson, principal, and the faculty of Gove junior high school each Christmas and has been for the past three years.

"We have a large enrollment of Jewish children and interfaith understanding and co-operation are high in our school," Mrs. Anderson said Wednesday as the students of the school rehearsed their holiday program.

## PROGRAM COMBINED.

Mrs. Anderson and her co-workers are keeping it that way by preparing a student program that combines the Christian observance of Christmas with the seasonal Jewish observance of Hanukkah, which is Dec. 16 this year by the Christian calendar.

The Jewish children attending Gove Junior high school are enthusiastic about showing, through pageantry and tableaux, to their fellow students of a different faith just what Hanukkah—or Chanukah—the Feast of the Lights means to Jews.

The date of Hanukkah varies on the Christian calendar but on the Jewish calendar it occurs on the sixteenth of the third month, Kislev. It is close enough, however, to Dec. 25 as to make no appreciable difference. Although it is Dec. 16 this year, it will be Dec. 24 in 1951, for example.

## 8-DAY FESTIVAL.

Hanukkah commemorates the rededication, in 165 B. C., by Juda Maccabseus of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem which had come under the control three years before of a Syrian conqueror and was used for the worship of idols.

The Festival of the Lights continues for eight days, it being the custom to light a candle each day. In some observances the candles are all lit at once and one is put out each day.

It is a solemn and proud rite of the Jews and, while it is being enacted on the stage at the junior high, wise men, shepherds, angels, Mary, Joseph and Martha watch from the wings while they await their turn to present the Christmas tableau of the Nativity, with the Babe in the manger.

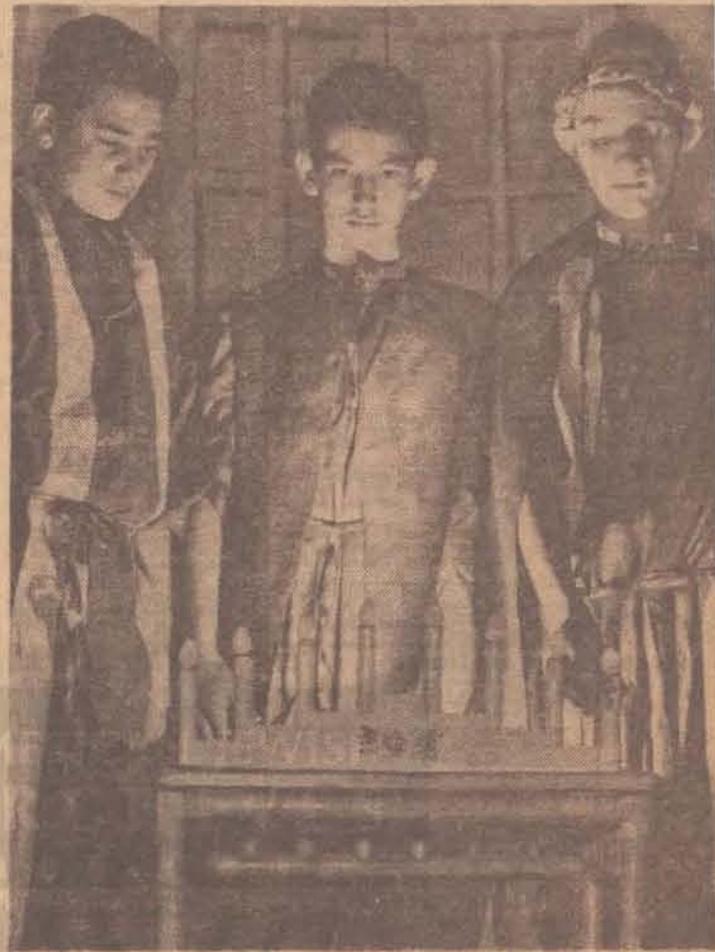
Out in the audience, Jewish and Christian students of the school watch with respectful attention and understanding hearts while both tableaux are being presented.

## CHORUS TO SING.

Traditional and seasonal music of both faiths will be sung by the chorus under the direction of Mrs. Susan Fisher and played by the orchestra under the direction of Drainerd Shay. Miss Mary Biggs directed the pageant and other features of the dramatic program.

The Jewish children thus learn about the Christian tradition of Christmas and the Christian children learn about the significance of the Feast of the Lights.

"That is the way we do it at Gove," Mrs. Anderson points out.



Denver Post Photo by Floyd H. McCall.

Students at Gove junior high school rehearse a tableau representing the traditional Jewish observance of Hanukkah, the Festival of the Lights. Shown (left to right) are: Michael Fine, Stanley Wasserman and Allen Waxman. The tableau is part of the school's annual holiday program for its students.



Denver Post Photo.

A part in the cast in the nativity scene, presented as a feature of the annual holiday program at Gove junior high school, is shown here. Left to right (kneeling) are: Kenneth Lane as Joseph; Judith Silver as Mary and Marcia Dinner as Martha. Standing are: Cecily Draper, Darlene Grossman and Marjorie Munroe, angels, and Loren Wheeler, one of the wise men.

# Christmas Can Be More Than Nutty Distraction

## Christian Holiday Should Create Worldwide Feeling of 'Belonging'

By Dr. EUGENE P. LINK.

President, Denver Unity Council;  
Chairman, sociology department,  
University of Denver.

**A** CURRENT  
BEST

**A Guest  
Editorial**

selling, humorous musical record, "I Just Go Nuts at Christmas," expresses in a realistic way the feeling of many of us at this season of the year. On all sides we are barged with the slickest appeals to



Dr. Eugene P. Link.

buy this gadget, this gew-gaw, or this "extra special" gift. Accordingly, Christmas has not only become the season of the great swap—"from Johnnie to Sis," "from Sis to Johnnie"—but it has also driven

many of us to a nutty distraction. Most clerics will remind us of the misplaced emphasis on Christmas before these holidays are over. Like the Chanukah (festival of the lights) of the Jewish faith, Christmas has become a family day to Christian and non-Christian alike. And since the very essence of religion and its fountainhead is the family, a Christmas built around good family in-

teraction cannot be an irreligious occasion.

DAD is at home more than usual at this season, re-living his boyhood with his son's trains, guns and chemistry sets. Mother is making the cakes and candies that cannot be imitated by anyone. Both are enjoying the fun of making others happy. The children feel this spirit early in life and catch the joy of bringing happiness to others.

Pleasant memories are the brick-work of good family life. Who can forget Mother's and Dad's face, the carols, the savory odors, the candle lights, and the home satisfactions of Christmas?

The psychic atmosphere of the home during the festivals of Christmas and Chanukah contains a spirit of inestimable value to all the children of man. This is called the sense of belonging, the feeling of unity. Along with food and clothing, this desire to be wanted is a basic ingredient of personality. It prevents the neuroticism of aloneness; it enhances emotional balance and stability. Brigham Young when first looking out over the valley of the Salt Lake said, "This is the place." A wise man recognizes the need of all for "a place," a home, where he or she belongs to others intimately.

AT THIS season we cannot help but think of those who because of their race, their color, or their creed do not feel they

belong to the family of man. As individuals, as families, and as a people they have little place of recognition.

Their place in life is disrespected by others because they are usually the workmen—the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. They are the overworked and the underpaid. They live in needless slums on southern farms and in northern cities.

The festive spirit of belonging seldom includes them, for those of us with "white" skins and "right" churches do not want to carry too far this idea of good will among all men.

THE Denver Unity council recently held a most encouraging and successful annual dinner. The numbers that attended and the enthusiasm expressed told us clearly that Denver has many citizens of good will.

The unity council's purpose is to bring together persons and organizations working in efforts to break down barriers that segregate and isolate certain of God's children. The solid meaning of the Christmas season is in such efforts as these. We invite others to help us expand the family spirit into the community and the nation.

Think it over on that silent night when you are alone with your thoughts and with your plans for others. Make it a New Year resolution to forward the great family. For the bells of good will this day herald the more inclusive brotherhood of tomorrow.

# Temple Emanuel

DENVER



Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

Rabbi Joel Y. Zion

VOL. XIII

November 24, 1950

No. 6

## Sabbath Services

Friday Evening, November 24, 8:15 P.M.

RABBI JOEL Y. ZION

will speak on:

**"BEWARE OF GREEKS BEARING GIFTS"**

Friday Evening, December 1, 8:15 P.M.

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

will speak on:

**"WHY SHOULD CHRISTMAS OR CHANUKAH BE  
TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS?"**

GALA CHANUKAH CELEBRATIONS

SUNDAY—DECEMBER 3rd—7:15 P.M.

FRIDAY—DECEMBER 8th—7:45 P.M.

Published Bi-Weekly from September to June  
by

**Congregation Emanuel**  
16th Ave. and Pearl St.  
Denver, Colorado

### TEMPLE EMANUEL BULLETIN

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman—Study  
AComa 2830

Rabbi Joel Y. Zion—Study, AComa 2830  
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Mr. Philip Milstein, President  
Mr. Samuel Rose, Executive Secretary  
Temple Office—AComa 2839

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#### TEMPLE SUPPER CLUB

Mr. Gerald Kay, President

#### EMANUEL CEMETERY

Telephone AComa 2839

## Kaddish List

(Taken from Memorial Tablet)

November 24

Isaac Kohn	Jessie R. Morris
Rosa Weiner	Nancy Kentor
Samuel G. Shraiberg	William Weil
Saidee H. Sands	Jeanette L. Kayser
Henrietta Friedenthal	Joseph Lehmann
Monette Hene Cohen	

December 1

Samuel Barets	Sigmund Seligsohn
Isidor Friedenthal	Max Buchmann
Emanuel Heitler	Leon Milton Bronfin
Pauline D. Klein	Abraham Rachofsky

## Sermon Notes

### "BEWARE OF GREEKS BEARING GIFTS"

During this season of Chanukah, we recall once again the struggle between Judaism and Greek culture. The philosopher, Philo, in discussing Greek influence tells of "a progressive pilgrimage of certain Alexandrian Jews from a seat in the front row of the synagogue to a place at the tail end of the processions of the heathen." It was comparatively easy at that time for a Jew to escape Judaism.

We have such "intellectually uprooted" Jews in our midst today. They have not formally abandoned Judaism, nor have they joined any other religious communion. They may not call themselves materialists or atheists. Nevertheless they would like to be the recognized leaders in the intellectual life of Jewry. There are so many similarities between the blandishments of Greek life and the seductive advances of present day intellectual movements toward Judaism that my sermon will deal with present day Greeks who come bearing gifts. J.Y.Z.

### "Why Should Christmas or Chanukah Be Taught in the Public Schools?"

There is no question that Christmas is observed in the public schools of our city and throughout the entire country. This is so even though we are supposed to enjoy a separation of Church and State in America.

As Christmas became more and more a firm and fixed part of the public school program, some Jewish individuals and organizations developed the feeling that Chanukah also should be taught and celebrated in the public schools.

I think it is dead wrong for us to compound an error. If it is wrong for Christmas to be observed in the schools, it is equally wrong to introduce Chanukah. My feeling is that *neither* Christmas *nor* Chanukah should be celebrated anywhere other than in the churches, synagogues and private homes of the worshippers.

H.A.F.

## Temple Gift Shop

The Gift Shop, sponsored jointly by the P.T.A. and Sisterhood is open. Many beautiful items for Chanukah are now on display in the Temple lobby, and members of the Congregation are urged to purchase significant gifts for their children and friends. Chanukah Menorahs, dreidelach, gift wrapping paper, ornaments, books and many other items can be purchased. Mr. Marvin Cook and Mrs. Leo Burwick are in charge.

### GALA CHANUKAH CELEBRATIONS

Sunday - December 3d - 7:15 P.M.

Friday - December 8th - 7:45 P.M.

The Chanukah festival will be appropriately observed by the pupils of the Religious School and the adult congregation in the following manner:

On Sunday, December 3rd, at 7:15, which is the First Night of Chanukah, the pupils of Pre-School through Grade Five will attend with their parents and friends. All other members of the congregation are, of course, cordially invited. Following the brief service at 7:15, a Chanukah reception will take place with exchange of Holiday presents. A dramatic play will be presented and the children's choir will sing.

On Friday, December 7th, the pupils of Grades Six through Ten, their parents and friends will attend, as well as the congregation at large. Beginning at 7:45, the splendid Oratorio, "Judas Maccabeus" will be presented. Following this service, a reception and exchange of gifts will take place, and the dramatic play will be presented.

### MEN'S CLUB

Monthly Luncheon, Tuesday,  
November 28, 12:15,  
ALBANY HOTEL

"Jewish Current Events"

**DR. MORRIS FISHBEIN**  
will address the members of  
the Men's Club at their  
**Monthly Dinner Meeting**  
**Thursday, December 7th**

### THANKSGIVING SERVICE CITY AUDITORIUM

Thursday Morning, Nov. 23rd,  
10:00 o'clock

The members of the Congregation are urged to attend the City-wide Thanksgiving Service held annually at the City Auditorium.

Rabbi Herbert Friedman will be the Chairman of this year's meeting and our Temple Choir will participate in the program with the rendition of the 92nd Psalm in Hebrew. The main speaker of the morning will be Dr. Albert C. Jacobs, Chancellor of Denver University.

**Resolve To Attend Services Regularly**

## By the Board . . . .

— This column will continue to summarize for you, some of the problems considered by the Temple Board.

The continuing serious matter of adequately seating our membership at the Holy Day services occupied the thoughts and discussion of your Board at its last meeting. Our Ushering Committee has been considering a plan for open seating, a children's service during the day, and other possible solutions to this enormous problem of seating 1800-2000 people in a synagogue with a 1300 capacity. The Ushering Committee recommended to the Board that the open seating plan be utilized as the only sensible solution. Furthermore, they suggested that the open seating plan be recommended at the next Annual Meeting, or at a special meeting to be called at an earlier date.

The speaker system has been repaired through your Building Committee and we anticipate no further inconvenience to the Rabbis and congregation.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations which held its Annual Convention from November 12-15 in Cleveland, had a goodly delegation from our Temple. The Board authorized Rabbi Friedman, Rabbi Zion and Sam Rose to attend the convention and other delegates who were designated included Mrs. Milton Lorber, Louis C. Isaacson, Edward Miller, Henry Frankel and Philip Milstein. We will report to you in this column on some of the major policy questions that were discussed, by your Board following the delegates' report of the convention. Philip Milstein

### Congregation Emanuel

East 16th Ave. and Pearl St.  
Denver 5, Colo.



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Synagogue Council of America  
National Community Relations Advisory Council

JOINT CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY  
OBSERVANCES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 13-14, 1949  
Hotel New Yorker New York City

PROPOSED STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

(NOTE: This statement, at present, is not definitive, nor does it necessarily represent the official view of any Jewish organization or group. It was formulated pursuant to the prevailing view at the Joint Conference. Participants in the Conference had no authority to commit their respective organizations or communities. Accordingly, the statement in its present form is a proposal for consideration by the constituent bodies of the sponsoring agencies. At plenary sessions of both those agencies -- the Synagogue Council and the National Community Relations Advisory Council -- in the Spring of 1950, it is expected that a definitive statement of Jewish position will be adopted.)

We reaffirm the following statement heretofore adopted by the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council:

- (1) The American Democratic system is founded in large part upon ethical and moral concepts derived from the great religions of mankind. The preservation and fostering of these concepts are essential to the fullest realization of the American ideal and their growth and development as major forces in American life should be the deep concern of every citizen.
- (2) Religion has always been and continues to be the central core of Jewish life. The Jewish community of America is deeply concerned with secularistic tendencies in contemporary American life, which, if permitted to grow unchecked, may work great harm to the moral and spiritual basis of American Democracy. We urge all religious groups to unite in an intensified national program designed to enroll all

the children of our country in religious educational institutions of their respective faiths. We urge religious bodies to avail themselves of all media of mass communication for this program, such as the press, radio, motion picture, speakers' platforms and special dramatic projects.

(3) We reaffirm the position enunciated in the joint resolution of the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council on religious instruction in the public school, that the maintenance and furtherance of religion are the responsibility of the synagogue, the church, and the home, and not of the public school system, the time, facilities, funds, or personnel of which should not be utilized for religious purposes.

In application of the foregoing we add the statement of the following principles:

(4) We are opposed to the observance of religious festivals in the public elementary and high schools because in our view such observance constitutes a violation of the traditional American principle of the separation of church and state.

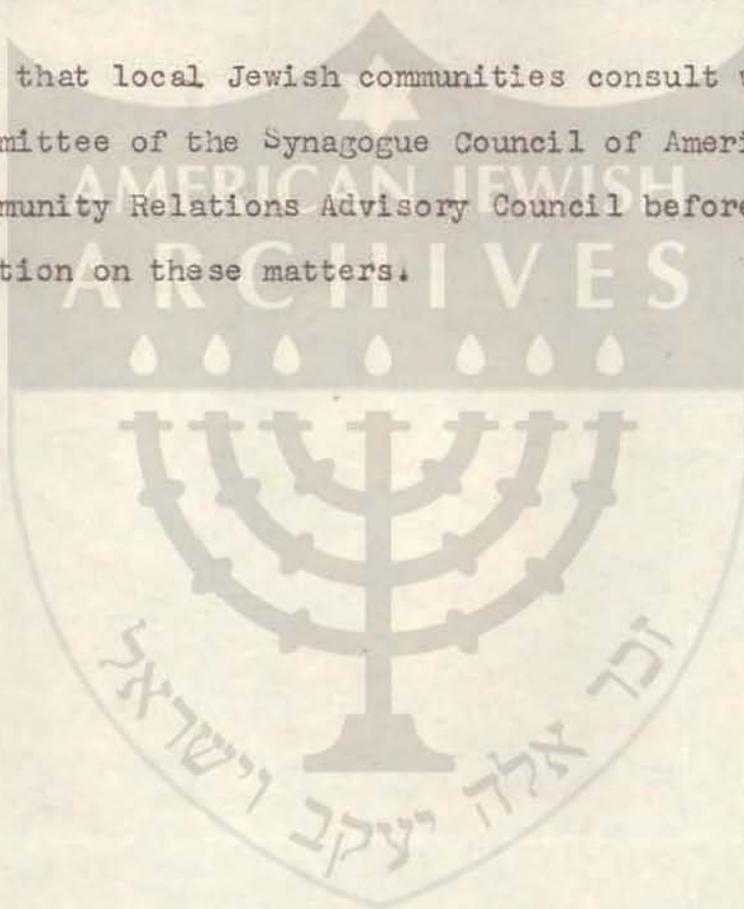
(5) Joint religious observances such as Christmas-Chanukah and Easter-Passover, are in our opinion no less a breach of the principle of separation of church and state and violate the conscience of many religious persons, Jews and non-Jews alike.

(6) We believe that the participation of Jewish children in public school observances of the religious holidays of other faiths contravenes Jewish religious principles and that therefore Jewish children have a right to refrain from such participation. We recommend that

the local Jewish communities take such action as may be appropriate to safeguard this right of non-participation.

(7) We recommend further experimentation in intercultural education, not violative of the foregoing principles, with a view to ascertaining whether or not techniques may be developed for creating better understanding among adherents of the various religions.

(8) We urge that local Jewish communities consult with the Joint Advisory Committee of the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council before taking formal or public action on these matters.



COMMITTEE ON INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Notes on Meeting  
(Cleveland, Ohio - October 7, 1949)

1. The coming holiday season is thought of as an experimental one for Cleveland Heights. Although certain general observations on the conduct of joint celebrations are herein made, there is no intention of prescribing detailed methods of observances in individual schools which face varying problems in their own communities. Rather it is hoped that there will be widespread and planful experimentation with this activity.
2. It is recommended immediately after the holiday season that a careful evaluation may be made as to the values and difficulties in the various observances conducted in the Heights schools. It is hoped that such an evaluation may lead to the establishment of a generally accepted policy on this matter.
3. Holiday observances should be conducted with an emphasis on the cultural aspect and minimization of the worship aspects. For example, the blessing over the Hanukah candles and the nativity scene should be the responsibility of the home and church or synagogue rather than of the schools, in line with the firmly established American policy of separation of church and state.
4. With the reservation contained in point 3, principals and teachers may wish to bear in mind that both the Christmas and the Hanukah traditions play an important role in the life of children during December. Hence, classroom art work, music, etc. might draw for its inspiration on both traditions. The value of such activities in individual classrooms was emphasized rather than concentrating exclusively on assembly programs.
5. The right of individual children not to participate in observances which seem embarrassing to them should be respected.
6. Teachers wishing suggestions on Hanukah materials or programs may contact the Jewish Community Council, which has prepared a pamphlet of materials on that holiday.
7. It is hoped at an appropriate and early occasion to broaden the committee to include representation from the Protestant and Catholic groups and eventually from parents as well.
8. Dr. Allen and Mr. Wallin will be invited by the committee to join us in discussing techniques for evaluating the experience during the coming holiday season.

# FACT SHEET

ON

## THE CHRISTMAS-CHANUKAH PROBLEM

### BACKGROUND

Annually in the month of December, the presentation of Christmas programs, varying from Santa Claus and Christmas trees to dramatic presentations of the Nativity, challenge the interests and security of the non-Christian students. At such times, disturbed pupils and parents have attempted, by and large, to deal with the "fait accompli" either by protest or reluctant compliance. In some few instances locally, the Christmas programs have included presentation of the Chanukah holiday. This is usually at the suggestion of either parents or an interested teacher or principal, particularly where there is a sizeable Jewish student population. In many cases this attempt to solve the problem by a positive approach has suffered from the lack of satisfactory Chanukah material.

### ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS

In arriving at a basic policy to deal with the practice of observing religious holidays in the schools (Christmas, and to a lesser extent, Easter), there are three basic alternatives which might be considered:

- (a) Do nothing to affect prevailing practices, or
- (b) Oppose the observance or recognition of all religious holidays, or
- (c) Attempt to reorient existing religious observances (as now practiced in the public schools) to include other groups' occasions, using an intercultural perspective.

### VIEWPOINTS OF NATIONAL CIVIC DEFENSE AGENCIES

1. "We oppose all observances of religious festivals in the public schools," supported by Mr. Leo Pfeffer of the American Jewish Congress.
2. "We oppose all observances, but where the practice of holding such observances is firmly established, we recommend that the observances include festivals of other faiths occurring at the same season." - supported by Rabbi Arthur Rosenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.
3. "We oppose purely sectarian observances, but look with favor upon joint observances as part of the intercultural education program in the school." - suggested by Rabbi Irving Rosenbaum of the Anti-Defamation League.

### STATEMENT BY NCRAC, THE COORDINATING HEAD OF THE CIVIC DEFENSE AGENCIES

These diverging positions were resolved in the statement of principles adopted by the Joint Conference and subsequently ratified by the 1948 plenary session of the NCRAC, as follows:

"We are opposed to the observance of religious festivals in the public schools. We recommend that further consideration and study be given to the presentation of the religious practices of various groups as a part of the program of intercultural education."

### SUBSEQUENT STATEMENT BY ADL

The attached statement may be regarded as ADL's national policy. Please note that it emphasizes the need for local and regional adaptation. (See page 3).

SUBMITTED Shall this office in cooperation with ADL's National Program Division prepare a suitable manual on Chanukah intended for use by public school teachers who request them?

OR

Shall representatives of this committee confer with the Superintendent of Schools with a view of securing an official statement of policy dealing with this problem? This policy statement to be sent to all principals of the Denver Public Schools.

OR

Shall this office take no action on this problem as it relates to the Denver Public Schools unless it is approached by teachers, principals, or other public school officials.

OR

Shall this office take no action on this problem as it relates to the Denver Public Schools.



# ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH

Mountain States Regional Office • 220 Empire Bldg., Denver 2, Colo. • MAin 6209

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November 17, 1950

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Rabbi Herbert Friedman  
Temple Emanuel  
16th & Pearl  
Denver, Colorado

Dear Rabbi Friedman:

Again, the problem of Christmas-Chanukah is upon us. There is a clear-cut statement of policy by the National ADL office (enclosed).

On the other hand, it is up to ADL's Religious Committee to determine to what extent this statement of policy should be modified for local and regional publication.

We are sending you this statement for study in advance of a meeting of the Religious Committee to be called shortly by the Chairman, Rabbi C.E.H. Kauvar.

Please give it your careful consideration and prepare whatever changes you would like to see made so that they may be discussed at that time.

Cordially,

*J. Peter Brunswick*  
J. Peter Brunswick  
Education Director

JPB:fw  
Encl.

## NCRAC Opposes Fight On Yule In School Now

National Jewish Post

NEW YORK—Delegates to the eighth plenary session of the National Community Relations Advisory Council came to a general though informal agreement that joint religious celebrations in public schools should not be pushed, it was learned this week.

The sessions, held in Atlantic City last week, took up many of the ticklish issues now before the American Jewish Community. While no formal announcements are anticipated on those discussions, it was expected that the delegates will bring back the informal decisions to their local Jewish communities.

The NCRAC is the national coordinating body for U. S. Jewish civic defense agencies.

### NO CHANUKAH PLAYS

The informal decision on joint celebrations was expected to bring to an end attempts to offset the impact of Christmas plays in public schools on Jewish pupils by including observance in some way of Chanukah in the school celebrations.

Feeling among delegates generally was understood to be that any frontal attack on the problem, such as would be involved in any new effort to get Christmas carol singing banned in public schools, was too hazardous. Delegates generally agreed that such direct action might be dangerous at the present time.

Will Maslow of the American Jewish Congress led a discussion on the threat to civil liberties involved in some phases of the current search for communists. Discussions revolved around the question of how far strictly Jewish organizations should go in defending the civil rights of indi-

viduals.

The plenary session took action on repeated complaints against national Jewish organizations which open branch offices in local communities either without consulting the local community or even over objections of local Jewish leaders.

The session named a committee to investigate the complaints. Similar accusations were aired at the annual convention early this year of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds in Cincinnati. The CJFWF represents nationally the 265 local federations and welfare funds in the U. S. Jewish community.

The most recent case involved Baltimore, where a national agency opened an office despite objections of local leaders.

*Christmas*

9

*June 50*

FACTS AND COMMENTS

An Invitation to Antisemitism

*Christmas*

Every year around this time, some Jewish religious fanatic, or notoriety seeker, raises a cry about banning the singing of Christmas carols in the elementary schools because this singing is alleged to hurt the susceptibilities of some Jewish children. This year a certain Mrs. Abraham Wolper of Chelsea, Massachusetts, petitioned the school superintendent of her district to stop carol singing in the schools because, as she wrote, "my son is unhappy when his classmates ask him why he does not join in the singing of Christmas carols." Incredible as it may seem, there are some rabbis, Jewish communal leaders and organizations who encourage such puerile nonsense. Fantastic, unreal and silly as these cries seem to the average person, they are of considerable significance, especially when they assume the form of an organized campaign as seems to be the case in Chelsea. They become the greatest menace to good Jewish Christian relationship in this country. They are literally loaded with antisemitic explosives and become actual invitations to antisemitism. One must speak out loudly and with almost brutal frankness against the stupidity and danger implied in these annual outbursts of religious fanaticism. A few rejoinders to Mrs. Wolper and her kind almost beg to be mentioned on this occasion:

1. If Mrs. Wolper's little son is unhappy because he cannot join in the singing of Christian carols, how much greater would be the unhappiness of the thousands upon thousands of non-Jewish and Jewish children who would be stopped from singing carols if Mrs. Wolper succeeded in her demand? To thousands and almost millions of American children the singing of carols is the most beautiful part of their Christmas holiday which remains in their minds as a cherished memory of youth. Why should they be deprived of this beauty and happiness because

Mrs. Wolper's boy was brought up in an atmosphere preventing him from joining them? Is it not obvious that the happiness of millions of children is more important than that of one, or of an insignificant few? It is little Wolper's misfortune that his parents brought him up in a world of taboos and isolationism which vitiate his relationship with his thousands of classmates. Why should they suffer on this account? Is it not more simple, reasonable and just for that boy to stay away from school during the carol singing, rather than destroy the happiness and joy of thousands of other children who are not even aware of the morbidity and unhappiness of their classmate? Is there not a shadow of abysmal selfishness on the part of a spoiled mother lurking in Mrs. Wolper's demand that the entire world of children suffer rather than her little boy be unhappy for a moment?

2. Carol-singing is a part of Christmas. In this country, Christmas is not entirely, and not even mostly, a religious celebration. It is a part of American civilization, of a way of life which the overwhelming majority of Jews share gladly and willingly with non-Jews. The fact is that Jewish men, women and particularly children participate in Christmas activities as much as non-Jews. They buy and give gifts as much as other people; (one sometimes thinks that they do that even more than other people). They participate in parties, in charity-giving and in the general rejoicing which characterizes the season, as much as other people. If these Jews happen to be business people and own stores, factories and workshops, they benefit from the general business spree which the country goes through annually during Christmas and the preparations for it. If carol singing is to be banned because it makes little Wolper and his mother unhappy, why not abandon also illuminated Christmas trees in the streets and parks, buying and giving of Christmas gifts, the festive Christmas dinners, the reunions of families and friends, and the general expressions of good will and friendly human relationship which is

more typical of the American Christmas than its religious flavor? Shall we eliminate the whole of this bit of American civilization because it doubtless has a Christian tinge which gives offense to Mrs. Wolper and her like?

3. Did Mrs. Wolper and her supporters stop to consider what would happen to them, to the Jews of Chelsea, of Massachusetts State and of the United States as a whole, if their pressure campaign for banning carols in the schools and other Christmas practices were successful? Americans are essentially a free and easy, generous and tolerant people. They give full freedom to all sorts of minorities, religious, political, nationalistic, to follow their own ideas provided they do not interfere with the lives customs and habits of the country and its people. But nothing--it has been found by experience--infuriates American people and provokes them more to acts of intolerance, than an attempt by a minority to impose its way of life and thinking on the majority through the use of law, political pressure, or propaganda. The simpler the things interfered with, the more violent the reaction. (Remember prohibition.) If the Superintendent of Chelsea were unintelligent enough to yield to the pressure of the few Mrs. Wolpers and actually banned carol singing in Chelsea, Mr. Wolper's boy and many thousands of other Jewish boys and grownups all over the United States would have been made much more unhappy for the rest of their lives than by not joining carol singing, for it would have started a collective irritation against the Jews of the district which would rapidly grow into an antisemitic feeling and later into a boycott of Jewish stores and later into a full-fledged antisemitic movement. The mere talk of such a ban has already started antisemitic repercussions in the district. If persisted in, such pressure campaigns, whether against Christmas carols, Shakespeare, Dickens, the New Testament and other fundamental cultural values have all the elements of a potential antisemitic ferment which can undermine the entire Jewish position in the United States.

In this there is grave danger and it is better not to hide the facts. Last year has brought two very alarming signs for Jews in America: Peekskill and Chicago. Both may be mere local accidents, but they indicate what may happen, given propitious conditions. The general theory in this country is that antisemitism must be fought hard wherever and whenever it appears, which is true. But there is another way of dealing with antisemitism: this is to avoid acts which may provoke it. And acts such as that of Chelsea are clear invitations to antisemitism.

William Zukerman

#### BOOK REVIEW

MARY A novel by Sholem Asch. New York: Putnam, 1949. 436 pages. \$ 3.50.

Both artistically and intellectually, this third volume of Asch's trilogy on the birth of Christianity, represents a challenge. Artistically, the book is a paradoxical attempt to combine religious dogma and realism, to mold myth into the form of a modern novel; intellectually, it propounds the paradoxical idea that Judaism and Christianity are essentially identical not merely on the plane of ethical teaching but on the plane of myth. Mary is thus in a sense more ambitious than the Nazarene and the Apostle, and perhaps because of that its inadequacies both as a message and as a work of art are more glaring. In the realm of religious thinking Sholem Asch has always been more convincing in his negations than in his affirmations; while his denunciations of narrowmindedness and fanaticism ring true and sincere, his attempts to deal with religious or moral problems in a positive sense suffer from obvious anemia. Even when he is at his best, as in the Tehilim Yid ( published in translation under the title of Salvation), his descriptions of mystic ecstasy, or his reflections on the wisdom of the divinity, the inevitability of human suffering, the redemption of the world by the elect, etc., do not go beyond the limits of the conventional. In Mary, with its literal interpretation of Catholic dogma, with its distortion of well established historical facts, the intellectual level is even lower.

Judged as a novel, Mary is no doubt the weakest of Sholem Asch's works. The various elements that the author tries to fuse into harmonious whole refuse to mix, they constantly jar and spoil the effect of each other. In some instances the writing is almost pathetically naive. The main characters, crushed under the weight of contradictory attributes, forced into

(continued page 4)

NEWS OF THE WEEK

ISRAEL REBUKED BY TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Prior to its adjournment, the Trusteeship Council passed a resolution severely censuring Israel for its action in transferring its capital from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem. The resolution was introduced by the French and Belgian delegates and was adopted with only five votes to none, with seven nations abstaining. Significant is that among those who abstained were the USA, Soviet Russia, Great Britain, Australia, China, New Zealand and the Dominican Republic. For the resolution were France, Belgium, Iraq, the Phillipines and Mexico.

It is clear from this vote, and still more from the several sessions of the Trusteeship Council, that its vote of censure does not represent the sentiment of the majority of the United Nations. Not only the great powers--USA, Great Britain and Soviet Russia--but even many smaller countries, including members of the so-called Catholic bloc, are evidently not unanimous in their condemnation of Israel, and still less in favor of internationalization of Jerusalem. The Trusteeship Committee revealed a disunity and confusion which had made its labors almost nil, except for the passing of the censure resolution. No one in the Trusteeship Council, nor outside it, believe that the Council will be able to enforce the internationalization of Jerusalem, or even prepare a statute for the internationalized city. It is also significant that at all the sessions of the Trusteeship Council, Mr. Francis Sayre, the American delegate on the Council, acted as Israel's defender on every occasion when the Jewish State was attacked by the Arab States. It was at his insistence that Israel was not singled out for criticism and censure in any resolution because the American delegate insisted that Jordan should be mentioned in any such action. The Trusteeship Council will meet next in Geneva on January 19th.

LONDON JEWISH CHRONICLE ON JERUSALEM

The 'Jewish Chronicle' of London, the world's leading Anglo-Jewish publication, has taken a critical view of Israel's proclamation of Jerusalem as its capital in defiance of the UN. Commenting on the decision of the Israeli government, the Chronicle states editorially that although "disappointment at the Assembly's decision will be shared throughout Jewry, nevertheless, it cannot be denied that there is some misgivings at the manner in which the Israeli government has expressed itself on the subject." The Chronicle editorial continues: "Israel was born as a result of a UN resolution, and in a short time itself was admitted as a member of the international body. Israel is therefore under obligation to accept the resolutions of the UN in the spirit of constitutional democracy. At the moment there is danger that the move may alienate much hard earned good will by too precipitate action and hasty words."

\* \* \*

THE SOVIET Union, Belorussia and the Ukraine have signed the genocide pact, thus bringing to 30 the number of nations which have subscribed to the international convention against the mass extermination of racial or national groups. So far only 4 nations have ratified the pact, while 16 are required to make it law. The Soviet bloc nations thus for the first time join in signing an international convention. Though they voted for the convention in 1948, they had previously been reluctant to sign it. Israel, though a signatory to the pact, has not yet ratified it.

MANY JEWS are returning to Germany from Israel, according to a report in the 'London Jewish Chronicle.' They are leaving Israel on account of dissatisfaction with overcrowding and lack of employment. Most of the returnees are coming to the large cities in the American zone, and now wish to emigrate to the USA, but they are receiving little assistance from Jewish organizations. Before becoming eligible for re-emigration, they must regain their DP status, which necessitates a lengthy legal process.

ALL COMPLAINTS of Jews whose property was confiscated by the Nazis will be disposed of within two years, declared Philip Auerbach, president of the West German indemnity office. Auerbach revealed that up to now, 10,770 claims of German Jews have been filed, for sums totalling 650,000,000 marks. 5,500 will be disposed of during the next few weeks. Part of Goering's confiscated property will be used to cover the indemnity payments.

JEWISH COMMUNITY elections in Vienna resulted in the joint Zionist, Socialist and Jewish Unity parties polling 95% of the vote, thus electing David Brill to the Presidency of the community.

## A JEWISH DIARY

### Another Jewish View on Internationalization of Jerusalem

"Why are you, a strictly orthodox Jew and leader of an important Religious Jewish organization, in favor of the internationalization of Jerusalem?" I asked Mr. Harry A. Goodman, political secretary of Agudas Isroel in Great Britain when he was in New York recently to attend the conference of the Aguda Executive.

"Because I do not want Jerusalem to become another Tel-Aviv," he replied quickly.

Fearing that he did not make clear his point, he proceeded to elaborate. To him, Tel-Aviv is the incarnation of modern Jewish secular nationalism which he, as a religious Jew, loaths even more than a good Socialist loathes Tel-Aviv's commercialism. Jerusalem, on the other hand, is to him the symbol of ancient biblical Judaism and he wants to save it from falling under the domination of the modern heathens. He, an ultra-orthodox Jew, makes a sharp distinction between Israelis and Jews not only politically, but also religiously. Israel, he emphasized, is not Jewish in the religious sense. It is already less Jewish than the Diaspora and within a generation or so it will lose all traces of Judaism and will become just another semi-oriental State in the Middle East. Real Judaism will remain in the Diaspora. It could be retained in its pristine pure form in Jerusalem, too, if that city remained a world religious center under an international regime. He saw also in such a common partnership of all three great religions of the world, an opportunity for better understanding and cooperation between peoples of different religions instead of greater strife that is sure to come now. That is why he and his organization were and are for the internationalization of Jerusalem, although he admitted that under the present circumstances, internationalization could not be implemented.

### British Jews and American Jews

As I was listening to the man, many thoughts, apart from Jerusalem, raced through my mind. I knew Mr. Goodman in London where he had been for many years the stormy petrel of the Jewish community of that city. I well remember him thundering against the Zionist majority on the floor of the Board of Jewish Deputies in London of ten to fifteen years ago; always frank, outspoken, critical, courageous, not afraid to stand alone and defy a clamoring crowd.

"Why doesn't a leader of a big Jewish organization in America ever talk like this?" I found myself musing when I left Mr. Goodman that evening. "Why are most of our rabbis, communal, relief and political leaders almost always on the band wagon WITH the crowd, instead of occasionally fighting its hysteria? Why are our leaders so cowed, intimidated and cowardly compared with the British; why is the mass of American Jews so standardized in thought and in emotion; why does it yield so easily to totalitarian influences and tactics? Why have we almost forgotten the art of self-criticism which was once the glory of the Jews, and why do we jump upon every nonconformist in our ranks and treat him as a traitor to Jewry, an informer, a Jewish antisemite and hate him with a hatred more bitter than a Nazi? Why do we, living in the greatest democracy in the world, feel and act on Jewish matters as a provincial Ghetto community as compared with London?" I find no answer to these questions. Perhaps others do.

W.Z.

the rigid pattern of myth, remain lifeless--how much more alive is Mary (let alone Jesus) in the few lines devoted to her in the gospels!

To this inferior work, most Yiddish critics in this country have reacted not by attempting to explain it to their public on its own merits, but by an unprecedented campaign of revilment. Asch was branded as a renegade, a traitor, and some even went so far as to demand his excommunication. The violent campaign against Asch has nothing to do with the literary demerits or merits of the book. It is a reflection of the general state of hysterical fanaticism in which the Yiddish intelligentsia stews now. The hysteria against it might have been even stronger, if Asch's Mary were a masterpiece.

N.G.

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE  
OF B'NAI B'RITH

212 Fifth Avenue — Suite 601  
New York 10, N. Y.

MEMORANDUM

To: ADL Regional Offices  
From: Frank N. Trager  
Date: November 16, 1949  
Subject:

Enclosed is a copy of a speech which I gave in behalf of the ADL before the mid-September Conference of the Synagogue Council and the NCRAC on the issue of Christmas-Hanukah, etc.

It might be helpful to you to have it at this time.

FNT

FNT:fk  
Enc.

Herbert

~~Joe~~  
~~Plaza road~~  
~~Truman~~

~~File~~  
~~Christmas~~

MR. FRANK N. TRAGER: Rabbi Minda, ladies and gentlemen, I am going to try this morning, in presenting the viewpoint of the ADL, to give to you the kind of process that we have gone through in our own organizational life as we tried to come to some tentative conclusions about this rather difficult problem.

We first put down our agreements, and I think interestingly enough our agreements within the ADL are also our agreements with all or most of you here assembled.

We agree on the principle of the separation of church and state. We firmly believe in the inviolability of the First Amendment, that there shall be no established church. We firmly believe in the fact that there shall be no state support for parochial education. We are worried, in fact, by the amorphous decisions, the four amorphous decisions, of the United States Supreme Court, beginning with the Oregon Case, in 1926, and ending with the New Jersey Bus Case a year or so ago, because the United States Supreme Court has not given us an unequivocal decision with respect to the issue of church and state. Nonetheless, in the first instance, all agree on the necessity for adhering to and educating for the "maintenance of the wall of separation between church and state."

Agreement Number Two: We agree upon the undesirability, whether in a school room or out of a school room, of release time and dismiss time; because release time and dismiss time, whether you condemn them on legal or pedagogical grounds, or both, are attempts on the part of the Church to win back to its membership students through the public schools. I happen to believe that it is wrong pedagogically to do this, but we do have the McCollum decision to help us.

We agree, thirdly, that there shall be no "indoctrination of sectarian practices." Now, that is a difficult phrase, because as some of you may have heard last night, the word 'indoctrination' is open to a

variety of interpretations. Nonetheless what we mean by no indoctrination can be simply stated: that the schools shall not be used in order to win converts for a special point of view; the schools shall not be used for propagandizing for some particular point of view; whether that be the point of view of Judaism, Roman Catholicism, or any of the two hundred and fifty varieties of Protestantism or Communism. The school and teacher hold a trust by which they shall be judged in presenting without indoctrination the data of contemporary and past life.

These are our major agreements.

Here are our worries, and here again we think that we share most if not all these worries with you:

When Lippman wrote "A Preface to Morals" in the late twenties, he pointed out what was then true: something about the "corroding acids of modernity, eating away the faith of our fathers." He took refuge then in what he understood to be Spinozism, but that is unimportant at the moment. When he spoke about the "corroding acids of modernity eating away the faith of our fathers," he was not specifically speaking about Jewish children and Jewish fathers; he was talking about the contemporary world in which there has been, if you will, to use a Partisan Review phrase, "an alienation" of individuals from their past faiths and moorings.

Just as there has been this alienation of many individuals in western civilization from their past moorings, so too there has been an alienation of Jews ever since the Emancipation. This has worried us. Israel has been the first fact, the first positive fact - Hitler was the negative one - which in a sense has reversed that trend. But we are still worried about the alienation of Jews. We mean by that that Jews are not today as secure in their faith, in their allegiances, in their Jewish values, as they once were, perhaps within the security of the medieval ghetto.

This is a worry, to the community relations aspects of which the ADL has given increasing attention. We believe that a community relations program has to be buttressed with positive Jewish understanding, positive Jewish values, positive Jewish expression.

Our second worry: there has been insufficient attention paid to Jewish education on the part of the Jewish community. I am not now speaking for any particular variety of Jewish education, but I mean that kind of Jewish education which would give to the child and to the home knowledge and feeling for Jewish life and values. This should be done so as to provide the child with security in his own birthright.

Our, the ADL's, task is not to solve this second problem. There are agencies in the Jewish community primarily created for this. We believe, however, that as a community relations agency, we can help in some way to meet the need for more Jewish awareness in the home and in the community.

As a corollary to this worry about Jewish life and values and their relation to the psychological security of the child, there is the phenomenon which has led to a kind of "passing-over," or rather a "passing-out" of the field of Jewish life. Although we are concerned about this, we realize that there are no dykes which will keep within the fold those who wish to pass out of the fold, except the dyke of self-knowledge, self-containment, security in one's own values, in one's own system of beliefs. This is the adult phase of the problem.

Now we have a third worry. It is the affect upon the Jewish child of what he finds in his early experience as he leaves the security of the home. What happens to him when he goes out to play, to become a socialized human being, at the age of 4 or 5 and from there on up? The five-year old, the six-year old and the seven-year old does talk about God in some way; does talk about immortality in some way; does talk about the church in some way; does talk about the nun who walks by in her habit; does

talk about the priest with a turned collar; and passes the synagogue or the church on the corner. These experiences involve the child's normal curiosity. Do you think you could stifle them or thwart it? They need not be treated sectarian-wise. Is it not perfectly clear that they can be handled educationally, i.e., objectively? That is really the issue.

What has shocked me - I might add parenthetically - when I listened to some rabbis and others in these meetings, is their unwillingness to grapple with this issue in its American context.

So much for our worries; now to a number of facts. About some of these there may be dispute, but I shall try to state them as we believe them to be the case at this time. We agree with Horace Kallen that the sociological climate of the United States warrants the description: "this is a Christian country." It has obvious implications. Shall we, either by our inaction, or by our negative action, fail to challenge the fact of an homogeneous, non-differentiated Christian-culture dominated country? If so, let us say so. Or, is there a chance for a self-regarding, other culture, a Jewish culture, to which we subscribe at least verbally, to co-exist with a Christian culture in our country?

The second fact: What of religion - and I am leaving that word here undefined, because I have already performed that task before a plenum of the NCRAC. What of religion and the public school? Are we only talking about Christmas and Hanukah? Of course not. For example, one cannot go into a history class anywhere in secondary education in America, without treating some aspect of religion. Protestant, Catholic and Jewish textbook writers have written such history books. But - and here is my complaint - we find in them adequate space devoted to such matters as the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter-Reformation; but seldom, if ever, is there any treatment of the Jewish role in history. Jewish history stops with Moses or, at best, with Jesus! One cannot go into an English class,

even on the junior high school level, without meeting some aspect of the religious life of western peoples. Shall these always be the Christian ones? May they not sometimes be Jewish ones? Must we always have some St. Thomas as the reverent for medieval Christendom? Why not Miamonides or if you prefer Nachmonides?

And through the entire curriculum of the school, as through the entire life of the community, be it in architecture or in art, in music or in social science, there are inescapable facts that stem from enjoyed experiences by religious people since western civilization began. To assume that the elimination of one celebration, or the avoidance of carol singing, will solve the issue seems to me to miss the main point. We have to face the fact of predominantly Christian elements in western culture. We face that fact, in my opinion, unless you theoretically take your stand on the desirability of an homogeneous Christian culture in the United States, we face that fact by planning deliberately to introduce elements from Jewish culture into the prevailing pattern, community and schools, as well as home.

Now the third fact: The Jewish child does go to school; there is no eliminating that fact. (Some of my friends in the Reconstructionist Movement - and I happen to be a member of its Editorial Board - are considering the idea of Jewish parochial schools. I do not share that point of view; I believe in the public school). The Jewish child goes to a school. If he is to meet Christian or Bahai or Islamic or Negro or Mexican children he has to have two equipments: the equipment of psychological security in his own person, which must come from his home; and the security in his own cultural roots. Otherwise he cannot face the out-group child, the rooted child of other cultures and other patterns, without some catastrophe.

The rabbis in the synagogues, the Talmud Torahs, Jewish education and above all the Jewish home can give the Jewish child these two equipments. security of person; security in one's own culture. The child, then, faces the fact of difference with confidence, "without the corroding acids of modernity, eating away the faith of our fathers," without alienation, without "passing-over." We in the ADL have been trying to find ways of emphasizing these two securities for the child in school and in the community, and also to be sympathetic to and appreciative of the other fellow's roots and cultural background. That is why we are pluralists, intercultural educationists!

Now with these agreements, and these worries, and these facts, we still think that there are certain problems, and we have not solved them all by any means.

For example: What is a sectarian observance in the school? We have bandied this phrase now for several years. We use it glibly. Is the having of a Christmas tree a sectarian observance? It could be. But it could also be an object lesson in an activity program. It depends on how it is done. Our Southern office surveyed with the help of many people, nine states in the South. There were 947 public schools in this sample (including 176 high schools) in 54 communities in 9 states. Forty-five communities felt that no change nor action was desirable with respect to current practices, even though they were presently holding Christmas and Easter observances in their schools. Six communities thought some kind of change was desirable; three had no opinion.

Shall the difficulty of the problem prevent us from tackling it? No, I do not think so. There may be those who say: let us eliminate all observances. I think this is impossible, for it would mean a revolution in the culture concepts of American society and the elimination of the school curriculum. But not only is it impossible, I think it is undesirable,

if you accept the facts enumerated above.

Or you can say: We have a job to make those 9 states, those 54 communities, and everywhere else, aware of the heterogeneity of American culture, the fact of difference, the vitality of Jewish culture.

Now, finally, reference has been made to the fact that there have been no convincing demonstrations of the intercultural approach. Tommyrot! No national organization, no CRC organization, can ignore the records of progress which we have shared for the past fifteen years.

Has the intercultural education movement succeeded in tackling all the problems in intercultural education? Of course not. But if you compare 1933, when the Bureau for Intercultural Education was started, with 1948; when some thirty school systems in America were simultaneously participating in experiments to change the curriculum; when in 1949 some 35-40 colleges devoted summer workshops and institutes to these problems; you have a great deal of evidence, if you care to examine it, see it, and apply what has been learned in one area to another.

May I say in conclusion that as far as we are concerned in the ADL, we believe that once you take a stand in behalf of maintaining Jewish culture - self-contained and growing - then you have no alternative but to help in this movement to transform the school curriculum, so that it shall more truly reflect the values of a Judeo-Christian civilization. This would be in contrast to its present emphasis which is almost entirely Christian. The logic and psychology of Jewish survival implies support for an American philosophy, "pluralistic," "multi-cultural" - in fact, democratic - in character. The school is one section of society which cannot be ignored in this task. And while we seek to transform the school curriculum to reflect in some measure the existence of a Jewish life we carry, simultaneously, another obligation: we must give to our own membership in Jewish life rootedness and security.

These aspects of character may grow from the synagogue, the home, the community - from any vital sector of Jewish life. They, and they alone give us the strength to fight "alienation," to counteract the "corroding acids," to take our stand on the fact of difference and diversity, along with unity in American life. We can do this and still support unreservedly the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

September 13-14, 1949



MEMO

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith  
220 Empire Bldg. Denver 2, Colorado MAin 6209

To Rabbi Friedman 1/24/50

I know that you will be interested  
in reading the enclosed report,  
especially in view of our own re-  
cent decision.

LOUIS E. SIDMAN

Christmas

New England Regional Office  
ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

To: Oscar Cohen  
From: Isadore Zack  
Date: December 21, 1949  
Subject: Public Reaction to Protest of Carol Singing in Public  
Schools at Chelsea, Massachusetts

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Chelsea, Massachusetts, is a city of 35,000 population and is a suburb of Boston. The Jewish community numbers 9,000 with heavy representation in the retail business area. The Christian community is mostly Catholic and includes Irish, Polish and French, mostly in the lower middle-class bracket. The Mayor, the Chief of Police and the Superintendent of Schools are all Catholics. It is also important to note that in recent political campaigns in this community, individuals running on outspoken anti-Semitic platforms have secured as many as 5,000 votes.

THE INCIDENT

In 1948 at the persuasion of B'nai B'rith-Anti-Defamation League key individuals, Christmas-Chanukah celebrations were conducted in Chelsea public schools.

This year, on December 1, at a meeting of the Prattville School Parent Teachers Association in Chelsea, which is 60 percent Jewish, Mrs. Abraham Wolper raised objection to the singing of Christmas carols in public schools and she called for support of a petition which she planned to present to the Chelsea School Committee. The petition read, "This is to respectfully request undersigned to appear before its committee to present our views in reference to the singing of Christmas carols and the presentation of religious pageants in Chelsea public schools."

The Prattville P.T.A. membership took no action on this petition. Mrs. Wolper then approached the B'nai B'rith Chapter and was again refused cooperation. She did get one other individual to sign a petition under the guise that there would be numerous other signatures to the petition. This individual was Mrs. Goldie Roller, who is president of the Hebrew School P.T.A. in Chelsea. The only other name appearing on the petition was that of Mr. Abraham Wolper.

Mrs. Wolper took the petition to the School Committee office on December 5 where she showed it to the School Superintendent, Frank Herlihy. Mr. Herlihy questioned the advisability of placing the petition before the Board, indicating to Mrs. Wolper that Jewish children did not have to sing the carols if they did not choose to. Mrs. Wolper insisted and the petition was placed before the Committee. It was at this meeting that a Catholic member of the School Board called for a public hearing on the petition declaring "such an important question merits a hearing." No date was set.

### PUBLIC AND PRESS REACTION

On December 6, all seven of Boston's newspapers carried the story of the carol singing protest, three of them on the front page. The United Press and the Associated Press released the story throughout the New England area through their wire service. The CHELSEA RECORD led its December 6 issue with a double banner headline which read, "Seek to Ban Singing of Carols in Public Schools." The names of Abraham Wolper and Mrs. Goldie Roller appeared in the headline, also.

Boston papers reported "Singing of Christmas carols and presentation of Christmas pageants in public schools makes children unhappy." They were quoting Mrs. Wolper whom they had contacted. They also quoted her as saying, "Jewish children dread this season when Christmas carols are sung." (A New England-wide clip service revealed wide distribution of the press association stories on the petition to ban carol singing.)

As soon as the filing of the petition became public information, a series of serious developments occurred in Chelsea:

1. The Chelsea School Committee office was swamped with telephone calls from persons who wanted to know the date of the public hearing.
2. Public officials such as the Mayor, School Committee members and School Superintendent received numerous anti-Semitic telephone calls.
3. Jewish merchants, carrying heavy Christmas stocks of merchandise, reported an almost immediate boycott of their establishments.
4. The CHELSEA RECORD was swamped with letters, many of them violently anti-Semitic. It was also noted that many of the letters were from Jews who wanted to go on record as opposing Mrs. Wolper's petition.
5. The Wolper residence in Chelsea was besieged with telephone calls, many of them threatening and many of them from Jews, also threatening.
6. Frightened by these numerous calls, the Wolpers called the Chief of Police in Chelsea for protection. They claimed he told them "You stuck your neck out, now you take the consequences." As a result, the Wolpers turned themselves over to the agencies for protection and they went into hiding at Brookline, Massachusetts, after taking their two children out of school.
7. A Chelsea merchant named Morris Wolper, no relation to Abraham Wolper, called upon the CHELSEA RECORD to protect him and his business by reporting in a front page story that he, Morris, was not related to Abraham Wolper and was in no way associated with the presentation of the petition against carol singing.
8. The CHELSEA RECORD said in a front page editorial captioned, "The Carol Hearing," that they were getting a record number of telephone calls pertaining to the petition and pointed out that "the large majority of those who have contacted the RECORD in the past few days were of the Jewish faith and all feel that the entire situation is casting unfavorable reflection on the Jewish people."
9. Anti-Defamation League observers who hold positions of prominence in Chelsea reported violent reaction on the part of the Christian community, and indicated that a special hearing on the subject of banning the carol singing in Chelsea schools would result in "an explosive situation which would make the Peekskill incident look like a tea party."

10. Based on the above evaluation of the situation, three emergency meetings were held on successive days by the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Community Council of Boston. Chelsea Jewish representatives demanded that the Wolpers and Mrs. Roller withdraw the petition so that there would be no public hearing on December 15, the date set by the School Board.
11. From their place of hiding, the Wolpers revealed that under no circumstances would they appear at any public hearing on the question as they feared physical harm to themselves and their family. Mrs. Roller, the other signer, heartbroken and distressed over the community reaction, wrote a letter to the editor of the CHELSEA RECORD, which was printed on the front page, in which she claimed that she was "misled" into signing the petition and indicated that she was no longer a party to it. She also indicated that she would not attend the open hearing. At the same time, Mrs. Roller revealed to the ADL that she had been contacted by the State Commander of the American Legion who voiced his disapproval to her actions. (The State Department of the American Legion had just given Mrs. Roller's son a four year scholarship to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.)
12. At the height of the incident it was noted that no Boston paper had editorialized on the petition. However, the PILOT, which is the official diocesan publication for the Greater Boston area and is read by over a million Catholics, carried an editorial in its issue of December 10 captioned, "Christmas in Chelsea." The opening paragraph of this editorial stated:

"Children, between Midnight on Saturday, December 24 and the first moments of December 26 a twenty-four hour period will elapse. This can be figured out from astronomy or from any trustworthy clock if you care to sit and watch it. I am not allowed to suggest that most of the civilized world will observe this period as a special holiday. This is Chelsea, 1949 version, although I am not permitted to tell you from what this 1949 year period is computed."

The editorial continued: "The above paragraph we feel, will probably satisfy Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Wolper of 56 Cook Avenue, Chelsea, as a suitable classroom reference to the great feast which the rest of the world will celebrate on December 25."

Although the editorial went on to point out most of the Jewish people in the Chelsea community are probably horrified over the action taken by the Wolpers, the editorial did take one more punch at the Jews when it closed with the following:

"This disagreeable incident is of no great importance. But its implications are highly unpleasant. If Jewish pressure, for example, were brought to bear on the Jewish merchants of Chelsea and elsewhere to overlook the holiday and refuse to carry Christmas merchandise, with the accompanying decorations and usual promotion, a very real damage might ensue to a friendly and cooperative group of our fellow citizens."

Unfavorable editorials appeared in other heavily populated Catholic areas such as Springfield and Fall River, Mass.

With the petitioners refusing to appear for the scheduled December 15 hearing and with terrific pressure coming from the Chelsea Jewish community for the withdrawal of the petition, the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Community Council prepared letters requesting withdrawal in the names of Abraham Wolper and Mrs. Roller, which were forwarded to the School Committee chairman on December 12. The matter was widely reported in the press and the School Board met on the night of December 13 and agreed to cancel the public hearing. This was also reported in the headlines of the CHELSEA RECORD.

Despite this action, numerous letters continued to pour into the CHELSEA RECORD. The CHELSEA RECORD cooperated with an ADL suggestion that the incident be considered a closed matter and that no further letters on the subject be published. In a front page bold face box, the CHELSEA RECORD informed its readers that they considered the incident closed and that no further letters either from Jew or Christian, dealing with the subject, would be published.

#### CONCLUSION

Jewish community leaders at Chelsea indicate that considerable and lasting damage has been done to their position within the community through the presentation of this petition. There is also a feeling that under the now existing form of government in Chelsea, Jewish political aspirants will suffer and through the lack of representation in City Government, the Jewish community position is weakened. These same leaders insist that a carol singing protest should not be reopened or tested in their community.

IZ/gk

I. Z.



*Christmas*

**TRI-STATE**

**Memo**

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai  
B'rith, 220 Empire Bldg., Denver  
2, Colo., MA. 6209

*for your  
Information*

Louis E. Sidman

**ADL REPORTS...**

December 21, 1949

To: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
RELIGIOUS COMMITTEE

During recent meetings of the Religious and Education Committees, various problems involving the Denver Public Schools were considered. As a result, specific proposals were made and subsequently approved by the Executive Committee. This is a brief report on the follow-up taken as a result of the policy established by our Executive Committee.

Rabbi Joel Zion representing the Education Committee, and Rabbi Manuel Laderman representing the Religious Committee, together with Mr. Brunswick, met with the heads of the Department of Instruction of the Denver Public Schools. The purpose of this conference was to discuss the advisability of developing a Hanukkah Manual to assist teachers during this holiday season next year. Previously, our Denver schools have had little or no guidance in the treatment of Hanukkah in the classroom. We have noted the increase in requests for assistance and information that there is a real need to guide the public schools in this issue. Thus, this conference meeting resulted in a decision to survey the extent of Christmas-Hanukkah celebrations in the schools and present this information to a specially appointed committee of teachers who will prepare this Manual. These teachers will prepare the Manual during the several-week period of the summer workshop in intergroup education which is sponsored by the Denver Public Schools in cooperation with ADL. Representatives of the Religious and Education Committees will assist this teacher's group in the preparation of the Manual.

Mr. Miller representing the Executive Committee, accompanied by Mr. Wittelshofer, Chairman of the Education Committee, and Mr. Brunswick, met with Superintendent of Schools, Kenneth Oberholtzer. The purpose of the meeting was to clearly define ADL's position concerning the "3 R's" controversy and especially to indicate our continuing support of the Intergroup Education program. Dr. Oberholtzer expressed his appreciation for our support and recommended that ADL's Education Department work closely with the Publications and Public Relations Department of the Denver Public Schools in the development of a number of newspaper features to convey a clearer understanding of the progress in the schools in Intergroup Education. The discussion also dealt with the problem of parent education and a program will be developed by the ADL and the Denver schools through which the PTA groups will be reached and supplied with materials and other services to give its membership an insight into the positive aspects of intergroup education.

We wish to report that our meetings reflected a relationship between the Denver Public Schools and this office which should make for continuing progress in Intergroup Education in our community.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that the Jewish community of Denver extend holiday greetings to its Christian neighbors at this season of the year. The festival of Christmas, which commemorates one of the two most important events in the history of Christendom, is an occasion marked by deep and solemn reverence on the part of those who adhere to its faith. It is a season when Christian men and women devoutly attend their churches and speak their prayers. Would that every Christian in the land were to be found in his church on Christmas eve or Christmas day. Then the true spirit of the holiday would be observed in its important essence.

As a rabbi, I often speculate on what the state of affairs would be if the Christians of America and the whole world would only take more closely to heart the teachings of their Prince of Peace who spoke of "goodwill to men." It seems to me that if the genuine Christian ethic prevailed there would really be "peace on earth." But there is no peace on earth possible unless men take the teachings of their religions seriously. There is no peace on earth possible unless we cease rattling the sabers at each other, in terms of nations, races, or creeds.

We approach the New Year of 1950 with a portentous feeling. It is the turn of the century, and it may witness catastrophic events. At this season, we join with our neighbors in prayer that the year ahead will mark an improvement in relations of men and nations in society. We pray that human beings on earth may come to know that there is justice and dignity for all. We pray that life become more peaceful, beautiful and meaningful. All this can be done if we only remember not to be distracted by the tinsel and glitter of life, but rather to be mindful of the inner spiritual content of whatever religion we profess.

*file - Christmas*

**CONGREGATION EMANUEL**

RANSOM AVE. AT FOUNTAIN ST.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.



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3466  
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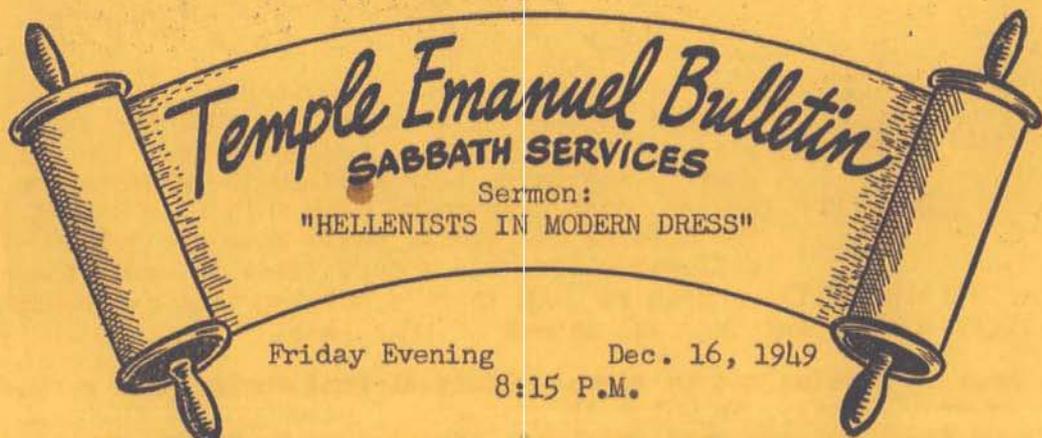


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Rabbi Herbert Friedman  
Congregation Emanuel  
1595 Pearl St.  
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**Religion**  
IT OUR MOST  
CONSTRUCTIVE  
DEFENSE



# Temple Emanuel Bulletin

## SABBATH SERVICES

Sermon:  
"HELLENISTS IN MODERN DRESS"

Friday Evening Dec. 16, 1949  
8:15 P.M.

Hosts for this Service will be: Dr. & Mrs. Jerry Kay, Mr. & Mrs. J. Remes, Mr. & Mrs. M. Weiner and Mr. & Mrs. D. Wares. Jerry Ehrlich, a member of the Confirmation Class, will assist with the Torah.

**CHANUKO SERVICE:** In observance of the Chanuko festival, the candles will be lit at the opening of our services, special hymns will be sung by our Choir and appropriate selections read.

**RADIO PROGRAM:** All members of the Congregation are urged to tune in on Station WLAJ on Thursday night, December 15, the first night of Chanuko, from 7 to 7:15 P.M. A special Chanuko program will be prepared by the Rabbi and the Temple Choir, under the direction of Maurice Glaser. This will be a good time for the families to light their first Menorah candle. We are indebted to the Men's Club for sponsoring this program for the second year.

**CHILDREN'S PARTY:** Children with their parents are invited to attend the annual Chanuko party which will be held on Sunday, December 18, at 4:30 P.M. Festivities will begin with an evening meal, to be followed by a Chanuko service and movies. An exchange of gifts will conclude the program. All the arrangements are being made by our Religious School Committee of the Sisterhood, under the leadership of Mrs. Jerome Baer.

School will be held on Saturday, December 17, but not on Sunday. Parents with children who do not as yet attend our religious school should bring gifts not costing more than 25 cents in order that these youngsters might also be able to participate in the exchange of presents. Also make your dinner reservations with Mrs. J. Baer.

**FORUM:** Congregational Forum after Services from 9:30 to 10:30.

*"Friday Night Is Temple Night"*



# The Rabbi's Corner ...

There's no denying that this time of the year is a trying one for Jewish children. But I'm afraid that by and large it's usually the parents who are the most disturbed. For this is a moment in the life of the Jewish child when the nature of his difference from his school mates is brought home to him in a most telling manner. And there's nothing that can be done to mitigate in any way the full impact of this fact.

We must be careful not to become unduly alarmed during this period of pseudo-religiosity, in which the commercial overtones of the season almost drown out any real spiritual substance. There are two errors which some of our people are tempted to make. In the first place, parents tend to exaggerate the feeling of being left out of the swing of things which their children may experience as a result of the fact that they are not heirs to the Christian tradition. Secondly, attempts are sometimes made to counteract the school's failure to observe meticulously the American concept of the separation of church and state by agitating for the introduction of Chanuko ceremonies in the classroom and assembly hall.

Now I don't want to minimize the problem at all, but at the same time let us stop kidding ourselves. We must stick by our principles or we run the risk of losing our integrity. I for one do not feel that children should be fed on myths, especially on religious fables that may warp and distort their future understanding of the phenomena of this universe. Fortunately we who are Jews are spared the trouble of taxing our credulity; ours is a pure and undiluted monotheism. If that stamps us as being different in the midst of a naive and infantile population, it is well worth the trouble. I do not believe that we should be partners in the maintenance of legends that keep the world back from moving forward.

Furthermore, the tendency of our public school system to expose the young and immature children to sectarian religious influences is to be deplored. We do not correct the situation by sneaking in Chanuko the back way. Too often is this practice used to condone the original wrong of subjecting Jewish children to celebrations that do not belong in the public school. In many places Chanuko has come to be regarded by many people as the Jewish Christmas, because it is very often brought in as an appendix to observances that commemorate the birth of Jesus. It leads to confusion rather than to clear understanding. But worst of all, it leads people to believe that two wrongs make one right.....Let's stick by our principles: if we lose them, we have lost everything!

# Temple News



CHANUKO CANDLES: Please get in touch with the Rabbi if you have not obtained as yet your box of Chanuko candles.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL: Because of the mid-winter vacation, classes of our Religious school will not be held till after the first of the new year.

BEANO PARTY: Final reminder for the annual Beano party, sponsored by the Men's Club, which will be held Wednesday evening, December 14, at 8:30 P.M. in the Vestry Rooms.

LIBRARY NEWS: Books that are returned to the library should be left on top of the book-cases. The committee will place them where they belong. Please do not put them back in the bookcases, as that makes it impossible for the committee to check them in.

Fines for books that are over-due should be paid to members of the committee who will be on duty after Friday Night Services or at Sisterhood meetings. You may get in touch with any of the following to pay your fines: Irene Bach, Lillian Klein, Joan Fogel or Mitzie Feenberg.

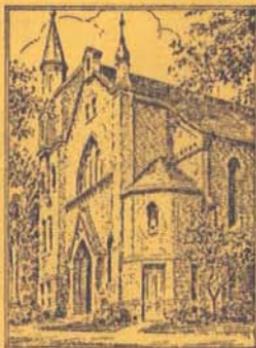
Short book reviews may be submitted to the editor of the Bulletin. No doubt some of you would like to share your impressions with other members of the Congregation. You may write a short review of a few sentences and we will be glad to publish it.

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: A notorious rabble-rouser once complained to Benjamin Franklin that the Constitution of the United States was a mockery. "Where is all the happiness it's supposed to guarantee us?" he demanded.

"All the constitution guarantees, my friend, is the pursuit of happiness," he said. "You have to catch up with it yourself."

SISTERHOOD: The next meeting of our Sisterhood, which will be held on Wednesday, December 21, will feature a Book Review by Mrs. Mark Laniado. The title of the book will be announced in next week's Bulletin.

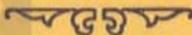
YAHREZEIT: Kaddish will be recited for: Bernhardt Baer, Rachel Berlin, Eva Belfer, Beck Cohen, Lillian Greenberg, Eugene Newman, Rebecca Rosenberg, Isidor Scheiner, Bessie Simon and Simon Yarrows.



## *Congregation Emanuel*

HARRY ESSRIG  
Rabbi

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### IN LESS THAN ELEVEN WEEKS.....

The SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA REPRESENTED YOU IN THESE WAYS. . .

GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Leaders of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbinic and lay movements meet under Synagogue Council auspices to clarify "areas of agreement" on major moral, social, and religious issues at all-day General Assembly on Monday, November 15, at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun. This parley climaxes week-end of religious Tercentenary observances, co-sponsored by New York Board of Rabbis, dedicated to theme, "The Synagogue Speaks". Citations to oldest U. S. Jewish congregations at Carnegie Hall gathering highlight observances.

HUMAN RELATIONS: Synagogue Council of America, meeting with key officials of National Council of Churches and National Catholic Welfare Conference on November 11, formulate pioneer tri-faith approach for implementing local community human relations projects, with special emphasis on integration problems of Negroes in South.

"CHRISTIAN AMENDMENT": U. S. Senate Resolution (SJR-87) introduced by Sen. Flanders (Rep., Vermont) calling for amending U. S. Constitution "to recognize the authority and law of Jesus Christ" is defeated, thus precluding possible "second-class" citizenship for American Jewry, SCA and National Community Relations Advisory Council (NCRAC) announce September 10, following appearance of SCA and NCRAC spokesmen before Senate Judiciary Committee who voiced Jewish opposition.

HANUKAH-CHRISTMAS SEASON: Joint Advisory Committee of SCA and NCRAC issue SCA's formal statement of principles "opposing religious and joint holiday observances in the public schools"; circularize rabbis and community leaders offering guidance and assistance in handling this "delicate problem".

RELIGION AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS: At close of three-day conference of 100 rabbis, community leaders, and community relations workers, Synagogue Council of America and NCRAC's Joint Advisory Committee formulate draft statement of principles "to be used as guide to policy for all American Jewish organizations and communities" in handling local efforts to introduce study of "common core religion," or "moral and spiritual values," or "objective teachings about religion" into public schools curricula.

DANISH JEWISH REFUGEES: SCA Plenary meeting, October 27, votes unanimously to hold reception on November 30 to honor Dr. Aage Bertelsen, Danish schoolmaster who during Nazi occupation of Denmark, helped develop underground movement which saved 6,000 Jewish refugees from annihilation.

INTER-RELIGIONS: SCA's executive director, Rabbi Marc H. Tanebaum, responding to National Council of Churches invitation for SCA to serve as representative for American Jewish religious community vis-a-vis Protestant community, addresses NCC workshop pledging cooperation in areas of common interest.

SCOUT MOVEMENTS: SCA's Girl Scout Commission chairman, Rabbi Max Schenk, represents SCA at two-day Religious Policy Commission of Girl Scouts of America, November 4-5; SCA President Salit serves on Jewish Service Commission of Boy Scouts of America, both advise on religious programs for thousands of American Jewish boys and girls in scout movements.

RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE: SCA meets with non-Jewish religious leaders in blueprinting nationwide movement to encourage attendance in synagogues and churches, under theme, "He Restoreth Your Soul". Dr. Salit serves as board vice-chairman.

FEDERAL CHAPLAINS: SCA plans conference around January 1955 of 25 SCA-sponsored Federal Prison chaplains to help improve religious services to Jewish inmates in correctional institutions, and their integration in home communities.

STATEMENTS: Labor Day (Sept. 7), Day of Prayer (Sept. 22), Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur (Sept. 28-29, Oct. 7), Newspaper Week's Religion and Press Day (Oct. 3), Condemnation of Bingo for religious fund-raising (Nov. 8) issued by SCA bring organized American Judaism's views to American and Jewish public through press, radio, television and Voice of America.

COMMUNITY SERVICES: Special American Jewish Tercentenary Service, written by Rabbi Albert Goldstein for SCA used by 25,000 Jewish congregants; Jewish calendar distributed by SCA to universities and schools throughout America to help educators respect Jewish students' observance of holidays; Sabbath Attendance Chart used by Hebrew and Sunday schools stimulate wide-spread increase in children's attendance at Sabbath service; Commission on Jewish Information advises communities and individuals on all non-halachic queries dealing with current Jewish practices; SCA's Social Action Commission prepares handbook on juvenile delinquency to aid rabbis and local communities in combating rise of delinquency in America.

UNITED NATIONS: U. S. National Commission for UNESCO names SCA, through its president Dr. Salit, to panel for "proper utilization of America's moral and spiritual resources" for improving relations with other nations.

RADIO: SCA's Radio-TV Commission, headed by Rabbi Theodore Adams, prepares year-long Mutual Network national radio program, "Synagogue Forum of the Air," produced by SCA executive director Tanenbaum.

(The Synagogue Council of America is the only central national Jewish agency which represents American Jewry as a religious community.)

"IF THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL DID NOT EXIST, WE WOULD HAVE TO CREATE IT..."

JOINT CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS-  
SPONSORED BY THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA AND THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 13-14, 1949

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STATEMENT OF THE POSITION OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE - PRESENTED  
BY DR. JOHN SLAWSON, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Mirda, ladies and gentlemen of the conference, I regret very much my inability to attend your other sessions. I should have liked to be present, but the pressure of other duties prevented me from doing so.

I consider the subject of this conference one of our most important problems, and it is most gratifying to find the Synagogue Council and the Community Relations groups jointly considering it.

To me this subject of religious observances in our public schools is one that is central to our accommodation to the American scene, and the manner in which we resolve it will determine in good measure the way in which we are able to live, as some have phrased it, "in a Christian world."

I was in Israel during Passover, and after a very delightful experience, I said goodbye to one of the friends I had made there. He said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I am going home." He said, "Home? Why you are home now." Here, indeed, is a great challenge to us. And this whole business of holiday observances - religious holiday observances, particularly their sectarian aspects in the schools - is important because to our way of thinking, and I know to your way of thinking here, some of these holidays have become a part of the culture of America. And when we talk about integration into America, we are talking of integration into the culture of America. A difficult problem confronts us in our effort to differentiate between that which is really cultural, and the truly religious. We are therefore taking fundamental factors into consideration in evolving the position I am about to present to you. Basic to this position is our conviction that we cannot compromise with the obvious fact that participation in Christian religious observances is contrary to Jewish religious principles.

We must also take into account that the legal aspects of this problem of church and state are at this time in an uncertain state; that there are many points of view on the subject; that litigation in this area could carry with it a tremendous amount of irritation; and that we must practice statesmanship; that we must determine what comes first in the arena of church and state - the priorities - what are the priorities? There are many factors which should determine whether the problem of religious holiday observances in the schools takes first place or fifth place or sixth place in our list of priorities. It is largely a question of emphasis.

What the American Jewish Committee has addressed itself to, ladies and gentlemen, is the formulation of a position which in our view will help create a *modus vivendi*, make it possible for us to live in a wholesome and dignified way, as part of American society. Certainly, statesmanship is involved, and strategy too. We offer no immediate solution, no panacea.

I shall read you very briefly what is the result of the thinking of those members of our staff in the American Jewish Committee who have been studying this question in a vital manner, as well as the lay leadership who have given a great deal of attention to this problem.

The first fact that we wish to record is that the practice of the observance of religious holidays in our public schools is of such long standing and so deeply imbedded that it is now generally accepted as an integral part of our American culture.

In recent years these observances have been greatly extended, as the result of the vast commercialization of some religious holidays, particularly Christmas. Many liberal Protestants readily acknowledge that Christmas is really a home festival, the more appropriately celebrated in the family circle than in the school, although this is probably not a majority view.

The second fact: such observances are almost universally of a sectarian religious character, and therefore objectionable to large sections of the Jewish community, and to many non-Jews as well. One will find very little difference among the rabbinate, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform, in their unequivocal opposition to these practices. The participation by Jewish children in a Christian religious festival is in contravention of their religious convictions; it is against Jewish religious law. Mind you - religious participation - I emphasize the word participation.

The third fact that we wish to note: religious holiday observances are but one manifestation of sectarianism in the public school, one aspect of the total church-state problem. It is extremely important to view them in that context.

Fourth: The question of religious holiday observances does not appear to have been litigated. You have discussed that phase of the problem last night I understand. Its closest counter-part will be found in the Bible reading cases, but when this practice was tested, the courts of several states have been divided. It would be sheer guesswork to hazard a prediction of what the Supreme Court of the United States would do if faced with the determination of the constitutionality of religious holiday observances in the public school.

The fifth point: There are those who urge that the intercultural approach to religious holiday observances in the public schools, such as a joint Christmas-Hanukkah celebration, offers an ideal substitute, if not a solution. Proponents hold that it is possible with the proper techniques and teacher-training to bring to a child an understanding of religions other than his own without at the same time doing violence to the principle of the separation of church and state; in fact they argue it is unnatural and dangerous to divorce religion from the school life of the child, and thus blind ourselves to the cultures among which he lives. Opponents think that Christmas and Easter are religious holidays; by adding Hanukkah and Passover you do not make them less so; that the intercultural approach merely serves to bring religion into the schools by the back door; that there is no evidence that the techniques for an effective intercultural program in this area have been developed and until such techniques are demonstrable, this approach should not be accepted as a solution.

The sixth point: It is doubtful that the American people are sufficiently advanced in their understanding of the church-state problem to comprehend or accept sympathetically opposition on the part of the Jewish community to these practices. You know that to be the case in your communities. The Kingston and Brooklyn - the Bilderssee incident, are proof of this. Furthermore, experience has demonstrated that elimination of the more recent intrusions into the public school system, such as released time, the distribution of the Gideon Bible, offers the greater possibility of success by reason of wider community understanding of the dangers implicit in these practices. That is what I referred to when I spoke of priorities; an undue

emphasis on religious holiday observances, which is but one facet of the entire problem, could at this time do irreparable damage to ongoing efforts in other areas of the church-state controversy.

Now we give you our summary of our recommendations:

(A) Religious holiday observances in the public schools cannot be viewed as isolated phenomena, but rather as one aspect of the church-state problem. It is in that context that we must seek a solution;

(B) We are opposed in principle to religious and joint religious holiday celebrations with sectarian religious references, in the public schools, as a violation of the principle of separation of church and state;

(C) We believe that our present efforts should be mainly directed toward a solution of such phases of the church-state problem as released time, distribution of Gideon Bibles, and federal aid to private schools, since a premature emphasis on the issue of religious holiday observances in the public schools could be hurtful to our efforts in other areas;

(D) The intercultural education approach is still in the early stages of development. We believe that the techniques for a successful program free of religious indoctrination and emotional involvement have not yet been sufficiently demonstrated; moreover we feel that such programs may actually perpetuate this sectarian practice. We therefore do not believe that this approach should be uncritically offered as a substitute for the present practice of religious holiday observances; nevertheless that approach should have further study and experimentation and we will gladly lend our assistance to efforts in this direction;

(E) It is necessary to recognize that community action on any aspect of this problem presents serious public relations hazards. However, there may be communities or sections of communities where for example flagrant violations are uncovered or where the schools are predominantly Jewish in population, or where there is strong non-sectarian opposition to these practices, in which it may be advisable to consider community action. Even in such instances it is essential to plan with care in terms of methods used, allies contacted, measurement of community resistance etcetera.

Finally we would urge that no steps whatever be taken before consulting with the Joint Advisory Committee of the Synagogue Council and of the National Community Relations Advisory Council.

(F) Implicit in all of the foregoing is the responsibility on the part of Jewish agencies to educate their constituency to the implications of the church-state problem.

And now, I want to conclude with an observation concerning the individual child and his parents which, it seems to me, overrides all considerations of strategy and the exercise of statesmanship, as well as the importance of preserving group harmony. It cuts through the need for observing priorities on which I spent some time further back. It is this. That the child should be completely free to give expression to his religious convictions by refraining from participation in any religious holiday observance which contravenes his religious upbringing. And it is the duty of the Jewish community to protect the child from any possible consequences of his non-participation.

Synagogue Council of America  
National Community Relations Advisory Council

JOINT CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY  
OBSERVANCES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 13-14, 1949  
Hotel New Yorker New York City

PROPOSED STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

(NOTE: This statement, at present, is not definitive, nor does it necessarily represent the official view of any Jewish organization or group. It was formulated pursuant to the prevailing view at the Joint Conference. Participants in the Conference had no authority to commit their respective organizations or communities. Accordingly, the statement in its present form is a proposal for consideration by the constituent bodies of the sponsoring agencies. At plenary sessions of both those agencies -- the Synagogue Council and the National Community Relations Advisory Council -- in the Spring of 1950, it is expected that a definitive statement of Jewish position will be adopted.)

We reaffirm the following statement heretofore adopted by the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council:

- (1) The American Democratic system is founded in large part upon ethical and moral concepts derived from the great religions of mankind. The preservation and fostering of these concepts are essential to the fullest realization of the American ideal and their growth and development as major forces in American life should be the deep concern of every citizen.
- (2) Religion has always been and continues to be the central core of Jewish life. The Jewish community of America is deeply concerned with secularistic tendencies in contemporary American life, which, if permitted to grow unchecked, may work great harm to the moral and spiritual basis of American Democracy. We urge all religious groups to unite in an intensified national program designed to enroll all

the children of our country in religious educational institutions of their respective faiths. We urge religious bodies to avail themselves of all media of mass communication for this program, such as the press, radio, motion picture, speakers' platforms and special dramatic projects.

(3) We reaffirm the position enunciated in the joint resolution of the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council on religious instruction in the public school, that the maintenance and furtherance of religion are the responsibility of the synagogue, the church, and the home, and not of the public school system, the time, facilities, funds, or personnel of which should not be utilized for religious purposes.

In application of the foregoing we add the statement of the following principles:

(4) We are opposed to the observance of religious festivals in the public elementary and high schools because in our view such observance constitutes a violation of the traditional American principle of the separation of church and state.

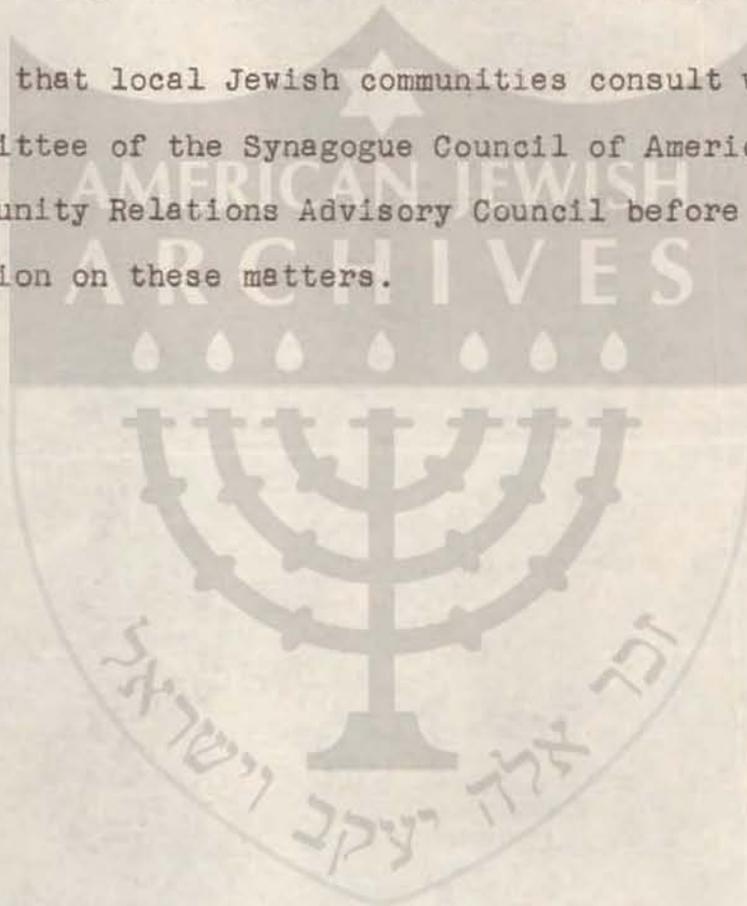
(5) Joint religious observances such as Christmas-Chanukah and Easter-Passover, are in our opinion no less a breach of the principle of separation of church and state and violate the conscience of many religious persons, Jews and non-Jews alike.

(6) We believe that the participation of Jewish children in public school observances of the religious holidays of other faiths contravenes Jewish religious principles and that therefore Jewish children have a right to refrain from such participation. We recommend that

the local Jewish communities take such action as may be appropriate to safeguard this right of non-participation.

(7) We recommend further experimentation in intercultural education not violative of the foregoing principles, with a view to ascertaining whether or not techniques may be developed for creating better understanding among adherents of the various religions.

(8) We urge that local Jewish communities consult with the Joint Advisory Committee of the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council before taking formal or public action on these matters.



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

April 29-30, 1950

BACKGROUND MEMORANDUM NO. 2

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The American Jewish Committee being deeply concerned with the maintenance of the principle of separation of Church and State, has for some time given close attention to the question of religion and the public schools. Since 1947 we have taken a position opposing such practices as released and dismissed time programs; Bible reading in the public schools; the distribution of Bibles in the public schools; the extension of school credits for attendance at Bible classes; and the wearing of religious garb by public school teachers.

We have also given attention to the practice of religious holiday observances in the public schools, such as Christmas, which is probably the most delicate of all of the many aspects of the problem. Believing that, in view of their sectarian content, such observances infringe the principle of separation of Church and State, the American Jewish Committee, as well as other civic-protective agencies in the National Community Relations Advisory Council (NRCAC), in 1948 took a position opposing these observances in principle. At the same time, it has been recognized by us and other agencies that opposition to them could not be implemented except at grave risk to inter-group relations.

In order to ensure full consideration of the subject, a two-day conference was convened in September, 1949 under the auspices of the Joint Advisory Committee of the Synagogue Council of America and the NCRAC. At that Conference our views were presented by Dr. John Slawson. In his presentation, he put the subject into its proper perspective, and submitted the views of our agency. A copy of his address is appended hereto and provides most of the background needed for chapter discussion of this topic.

Also appended is a proposed Statement of Principles adopted by the Conference in September, and submitted to the agencies concerned for their approval. Action thereon by the American Jewish Committee will be taken at the forthcoming Executive Committee meeting, and instructions given to our representatives at the plenary session of the NCRAC next month, when its member agencies, national and local, will vote on the Statement.

Since September, actual experience in some communities, notably Philadelphia and Chelsea, Mass.; has provided confirmation of the fact that, as indicated in Dr. Slawson's statement to the Conference, this subject is fraught with exceptional public relations hazards. A public seminar conducted by the Philadelphia Jewish Community Relations Council in October, provoked sharp public attacks. No support was forthcoming from even the liberal clergy, and the Jewish community itself was agitated. A petition by an individual Jewish parent, acting on her own initiative, to the Chelsea School Board, urging review of the sectarian aspects of the Christmas observances of the schools in that city, led to a vituperative newspaper campaign and to a boycott of Jewish merchants.

In general, the Jewish community, as well as the general community, is insufficiently informed on this issue, as well as divided on what should be done about it. For example, in Camden, N.J., the Jewish Community Council adopted and published a mild resolution supporting the right of any Jewish child who, by reason of his religious convictions, did not wish to participate in a religious holiday observance, to abstain from such participation. Accepted as fair and reasonable by the school board, it was, nevertheless, condemned by a number of irate Jewish parents.

The question of holiday observances was the subject of one of the Workshops at our Annual Meeting in January. Recognizing its complexity, the Workshop recommended further consideration by an appropriate national committee. It is receiving such consideration from the newly created Committee on Education, which plans to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee on the action to be taken by it on the proposed statement of principles. Reports from our chapters on local views and experiences on this subject will be of great aid to the Committee on Education.

FOR CHAPTER DISCUSSION

For purposes of chapter discussion, the following specific questions are suggested:

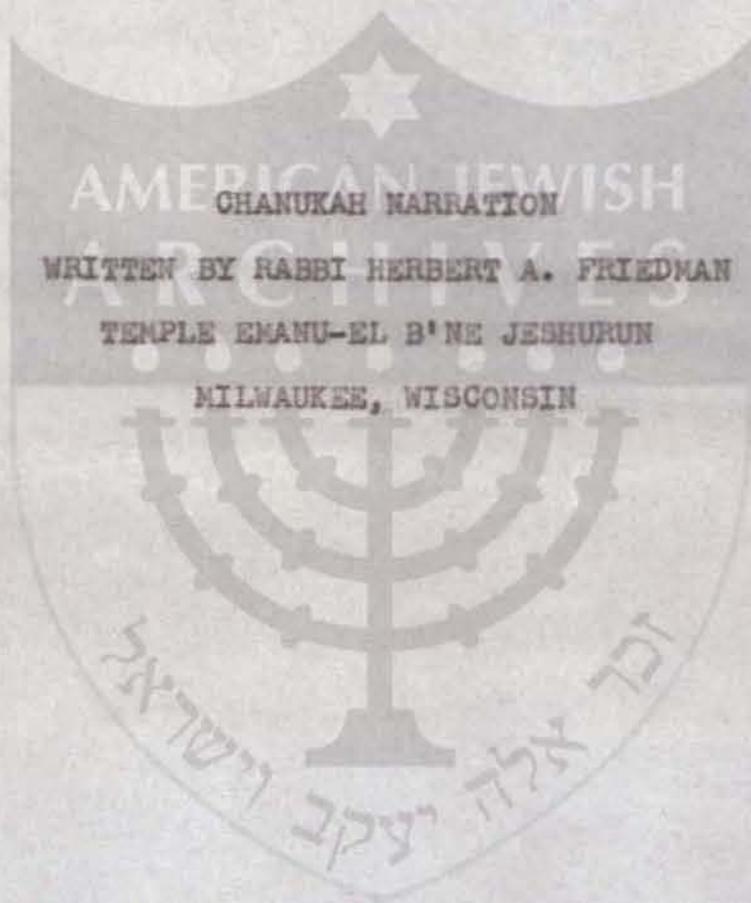
1. What is the situation in your community with respect to religious holiday observances in the public schools, including joint observances, such as Christmas-Hanukah?
2. What is the attitude of chapter members on this subject?
3. What is the attitude of other representative groups in the Jewish community?
4. Should the proposed Statement of Principles be approved? If not, what changes are recommended?
5. If so, what steps should be taken in implementing it to avert adverse reactions?

GILBERT

LANCASTER BOND

100% COTTON FIBRE

U.S.A.



CHANUKAH NARRATION

Written by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

Temple Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

To be used in conjunction with the oratorio

"Judas Maccabeus" by Handel

It was at the end of the year numbered 167 before the appearance of the Special One later called the Messiah by the Christians; it was in December, Kislev, 2118 years ago, across the coldness of time and space; it was in the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, King of Syria and so ruler of the Jews, that the Temple of the God Jehovah - the Golden Temple glittering in the sun on one of Jerusalem's hills, - the beautiful Temple whose original cedar had been brought from Lebanon by Solomon - the Temple of Zion was desecrated and given over to the uses of idolatry by order of the pagan king. Judah lay captive and her people mourned.

(Narrator first reads text of aria to be sung by solo or by choir so that congregation will be familiar with libretto. Then music is sung.)

#2

MOURN, YE AFFLICTED CHILDREN

Chorus

Mourn, ye afflicted children, the remains  
Of captive Judah, mourn in solemn strains,  
Your sanguine hopes of liberty give o'er;  
Your hero, friend and father is no more.

Under the twinkling stars of the cold, clear  
Palestine night, the heavens were split by the cries  
of the Judeans, as the fires on the altars roared and  
crackled skyward, bearing the odor of burning swine  
flesh and skin and bristly hair. Even upon the altar  
of the sanctuary itself, the blood of the filthy bear  
gushed and spurted in the supreme act of sacrifice to  
the Greek god Zeus.

And the laws of the Jews were outlawed. Those rules  
of behavior compiled in the dim past - those Mosaic com-  
mandments of circumcision and new moon observance - the  
sanctification of the Sabbath and the offering of the  
first fruits - all the laws which people used to grumble  
about, but which they loved to do because it was in their  
blood and the blood of their fathers, were now declared  
null and void. No shred of warm and pulsating Jewish  
life was left. The hearts of the Jews became as cold  
as the stone of the pig-altars. And a hush settled over  
the land, as people grew afraid of the tyranny which  
oppressed them.

Officers of the king journeyed from city to city  
all through that dark and cold winter, coercing the people  
into apostasy. Greedy were the spears of the Syrians as

they pricked into Jewish bodies, forcing the unwilling to erect altars and eat of the forbidden flesh of the sacrificial offerings. Loud was the laughter of these blond men from the north, as town after town fell under their dominion.

One dawn they made their appearance in the village of Modin, situated upon a hill near Lydda, where to-day a great airport has been built, one more pulse beat in the throbbing arteries of international traffic. But then, Modin was a quiet and sleepy place - the sheep grazing just beyond the huts and the dew steaming up, as the legion of the enemy marched into the village square and summoned all the folk to hear the proclamation of the distant monarch, which read - "Down with your God Adonai - up with Zeus."

As the first Jew of Modin stepped to the pagan block to do according to the king's will, Mattathias, an old, a priestly man, sprang out from the circle of by-standers, shrieked in his ancient, vigorous voice "Death to the traitor" - and plunged, with all his strength, the shaft of iron so that it quivered in the other's back. Another hasty slash of sword laid low the royal officer - and Judea was in revolt.

Confusion and clamor, pounding hope and nauseating

fear - all was madness and unreal in the village square -  
uncertainty, hesitation - what to do, what to do - until  
Mattathias, again composed, shouted clear and loud - "All  
those on the side of the Lord, follow me - to the hills, to  
the hills."

And the Jews, weak, timid, yet swollen with pride at  
the call of a natural leader, ran hurriedly, each to his  
hut - hasty farewells - last longing kisses from the women -  
grasping arms, a sword, a spear which had been hidden till  
this day - Judea was in revolt.

#9

ARM, ARM, YE BRAVE

(Baritone and Chorus)

Arm, arm, ye brave  
A noble cause, a noble cause,  
The cause of Heaven your zeal demands.

In defense of your nation, religion and laws  
The almighty Jehovah will strengthen your hands.

Chorus

We come, we come, we come in bright array,  
Judah, Judah, Judah, Judah thy sceptre to obey.

The third son of Mattathias, named Judah, surged to  
the forefront and when the old priest breathed his last  
during that first cruel winter of fighting, Judah was ap-  
pointed general. Strong, proud, fierce as a spirited  
stallion - harsh with his men, but dearly beloved - he was  
the Makabi, the hammerer - he smashed with all his power.

The Makabi made his secret chancellry deep in the fastness of Judean hills and hammered and welded his band. Like the molten metal beaten into shape on the anvil of necessity, so the hammer gradually took form in the lair of the strongest smith. The hammer was made of the flesh and sinews of Jewish men seeking to overthrow an enemy, but it was wielded by the spirit of one who was seeking more. He taught his men the tricks of war, and spoke around the campfire late at night of the dream of liberty.

In all centuries and all lands have there ever been men who dreamt of freedom. Tom Paine of America, who preached rebellion against the Third George; Robespierre, whose head was doomed to fall; the Marquis of Free France and the gallant underground of Norway; the heroes of the Haganah, the fighters of Israel - all these are in the line of the hammerer. All these tasted the bitterness of oppression and dreamt the dream of freedom.

Freedom train - freedom train - more than throwing off the yoke - more than merely taking a poke - at Hitler, Haman, hated hangman; but dreaming of breathing an air so free - oh life, oh love, oh liberty.

#13

O LIBERTY, THOU CHOICEST TREASURE

(Soprano)

O Liberty, thou choicest treasure  
Seat of virtue, source of pleasure!  
Life, without thee, knows no blessing,  
No endearment worth caressing.

Duet - Soprano and Alto

Come, ever smiling liberty,  
And with thee bring thy jocund train,  
For thee we pant, and sigh for thee,  
With whom eternal pleasures reign.

For four and twenty months did Makabi wage his war  
in strict guerilla fashion, venturing down from the hills  
in swift surprise to attack here, thrust there, but never  
assailing the tyrant's stronghold in Jerusalem. Now at  
Modin, now at Mizpah, gathering food, stealing armor,  
enlisting men - and sniping always, always sniping at  
the hated enemy. They cried to God for strength to fight  
or die.

#17

HEAR US, O LORD

(Chorus)

Hear us, O Lord, on Thee we call,  
Resolved on conquest, or a glorious fall.

The rich and powerful Jews - those who called  
themselves the "Hellenist Party", which was their careful  
and polite designation for sheer treachery, since they  
believed in adjusting to the times and collaborating with  
the Syrian-Greek conqueror - the leading Jews in their el-  
aborate villas began to be disturbed by the reports coming

in from the countryside about the popularity of the Hammerer. He had a force of several thousand by now, and they grew afraid - because, if by some miracle he should succeed in overthrowing the tyrant, then they would be in danger, for it was well known that Menelaus the High Priest and his coterie had made their peace with Antiochus.

They therefore - base collaborators - urged the King to send a powerful force of two score thousand to rout this hero band and utterly destroy its limbs - which request did naturally find favor in his eyes. A great infantry, plus cavalry with chariots, plus war elephants - all in burnished copper armament, took up a position in the plain near the mountain pass at Emmaus. Thirteen hundred years later Richard the Lion-Hearted sought to cut his way through that same pass - and two full millenia were to elapse before the British General Allenby used again this route against the modern Turks.

The hour was critical - up in the hills the few Judeans looked down and saw the myriad twinkling fire-lights as the Syrians encamped near the pass. They knew not what to do and trembled till Judah, in a burst of genius, saw that he must attack that tremendous host in surprise

maneuver. He could not wait for them to search him out.

All through the night his men crawled into proper strategic position. At dawn, the trumpets blasted:

#28

SOUND AN ALARM

(Tenor and Chorus)

Sound an alarm, your silver trumpets sound,  
And call the brave, and only brave, and only  
brave around!

Chorus

We hear, we hear, the pleasing dreadful call,  
And follow thee, and follow thee; if to fall:  
For laws, religion, liberty we fall.

As the dead lay face down in the mud, and the dying slowly crawled away, the weary Maccabeans raised their eyes and knew they had defeated the toughest and most mercenary army ever to be assembled.

Oh sweet fruits of victory - oh joyful taste of driving the Greeks, in all their panoplied array, as chaff is carried before the wind.

The incredible word of victory was whispered and shouted, flung from tongue to tongue - till in a few hours all the land was calling Judah hero and savior.

Dances of delirious joy marked the news in village after village. Bonfires were lit - people drank - children sang - gaily colored ribbons were flown - and preparations were made in Jerusalem for a great triumphal parade, to

greet in proper glory the one whose hammer smashed the foe.

Along the line of parade march, the crowds gathered, as they always do, to pay their homage and place their loyalty, to gaze adoringly and shriek hysterically when young Judah passed. He was the new national idol.

#35

SEE THE CONQUERING HERO COMES

(Chorus)

See the conquering hero comes,  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.  
Sports prepare, the laurels bring,  
Song of triumph to him sing.

See the godlike youth advance!  
Breathe the flutes and lead the dance;  
Myrtle leaves and roses twine,  
To deck the hero's brow divine.

But after the parade and the shouting, after the national exhilaration and the normal joy, there remained the real task of reconstruction. In all of human living it is ever so - that there is never a finish, a time of perfect relaxation and total achievement. There is always something else to do.

The task that remained was the cleansing of the central core of Jewish life - the Temple, which had been under defilement for three long years.

Oh, what a heart-rending job! The women came with water and branches, to scrub clean the golden floors and walls - to remove the excrement of man and animal which had gathered in the corridors and side chambers; while the men

broke down the heathen idols and carried out the blasphemous wood and stone of which the forbidden things had been constructed.

They repaired and again they hammered. This time to build, not to destroy - and they set the Tabernacle in order. They polished the huge candelabra and set upright the basins for libation. They arranged the table for the shewbread and they looked for pure oil with which to rekindle the Eternal Light.

Here then is an ancient hoary legend, which says that the one vial of this fuel burned and burned for eight miraculous days, when it should have lasted, by every predictable measure, for only one. How come? No one knows.

At that most solemn moment - after the Temple was entirely cleansed - after the Ark was once more re-established, Judah stood forth to rekindle the lights, as a hush fell over the massed assemblage in the outer court. He called upon God to witness this.

#31

FATHER OF HEAVEN

(Alto)

Father of Heaven, Father of Heaven from Thy  
eternal throne  
Look with an eye of blessing down,  
While we prepare, with holy rites,  
To solemnize the Feast of Lights.

And thus our grateful hearts employ,  
And in Thy praise this altar raise  
With carols of triumphant joy.

The Temple restored - the festival of Chanukah,  
Rededication, established with the lighting of the lights -  
a Jewish dynasty set up upon the throne to replace the  
foreign overlord - peace then began to settle over the  
land.

The struggle had been long and bloody, nor does it  
end with this, our tale, for much more fighting does yet  
occur. As for the "Hellenist party", the High Priest  
Menelaus was executed for treason - and many others of the  
aristocracy had to meet chastisement before they would ac-  
knowledge the Hasmonean-Maccabean kings.

But in the main, sweet peace did reign. Judah looked  
out over the land and saw the flocks and herds grazing once  
more. He looked on all the high places and saw that the  
statues and idols had been removed. He looked into the  
hearts and minds of his people, and knew that they were  
happy once more, worshipping their own God Adonai in their  
own fashion.

He looked and saw all this and found it good. He  
saw a lovely peace.

#40

OH LOVELY PEACE

(Soprano and Alto)

Oh lovely peace, with plenty crowned  
Come spread thy blessings all around  
Let fleecy flocks the hills adorn,  
And valleys smile with wavy corn.  
Let the shrill trumpet cease, nor other sound;  
But nature's songsters wake the cheerful morn.

And so do we, to this day and for this reason, light  
our lights at time of Chanukah - so that we may ever re-  
member the Maccabee and that for which he fought - his  
freedom, yea, our freedom, too - and that of all men,  
everywhere.

#41

HALLELUJAH CHORUS

(Tenor and Chorus)

Rejoice, O Judah, and in songs divine  
With cherubim and seraphim harmonious join.  
Hallelujah, Amen -  
Amen, Hallelujah, Amen.

And thus to an end - our story is told. We will  
tell it again - when another year old.

