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**MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980-2011.**

Series F: CIJE Accrual, 1981-2011, undated.

Subseries 1: Barry Holtz, 1988-2005, undated.

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Best Practices. Israel, 1992-1993.

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Notes from the CRB Meeting March 5, 1992  
Barry Holtz

Theme of the day:

We need to get the idea out that the Israel experience is a rite de passage as much as the Bar Mitzvah is. Need to sell via the rabbis-- the Israel experience is an essential part of anyone's Jewish education.

Best Practice

When we look at BP in the Israel experience area, it seems that the following should at least be on the agenda:

1) Good specific trips

Here we have the Cohen/Wall paper. But the paper does not name names directly. It does give very useful and helpful principles with some anonymous anecdotes. What we will need is some private names of who they are really referring to.

2) Skill at matching kids to trips

It's clear that trips have different strengths and that some trips will do better for some kids than others. Can we find examples of people or communities that succeed in matching kids to existing trips? See for example the Manitoba Israel desk that was presented at the conference.

3) Marketing

What examples of good marketing do we know about now. Of course there are the studies that CRB has commissioned, but what we should be looking for are the current practices that work in this area. San Francisco (Howard Gelbart) claims to do a very good job at this. We ought to find out if in fact they do. They run their own trips and think that this is really the only way to go. It gives the community control over what is happening and allows individualizing.

4) Staff training

Melitz is doing a lot of staff training on the Israeli side. Who is doing a good job on the American side? See what Montreal is doing here.

5) Followup

Who is doing anything about followup after the kids come back?

 **MELTON  
RESEARCH  
CENTER**  
**for Jewish Education**

February 5, 1992

Peter Geffen  
CRB Foundation  
c/o Abraham Joshua Heschel School  
270 West 89th Street  
New York, NY 10024

Dear Peter,

I was happy to receive the materials for the March 5th conference. It looks excellent-- yasher koah. I am hoping to attend, of course, but the conference is almost directly on Bethamie's due date for the new baby; so if I'm not there, you'll know why.

I wanted to mention two other things to you: first, I am hoping that we can get together with Shulamith Elster, you and if possible Barry Chazan to talk about my Best Practices Project and how your work can tie into it. I would think, as I had mentioned to you previously, that the CRB investigations of successful Israel projects can be the primary source for the inventory of best practice in the area of the Israel experience. I'd like to have this meeting so I can tell you more about how we have been working in other areas (e.g. the supplementary school) so we can see how we could work together on the Israel area. Let's see what we can work out.

The other matter is this: Seymour mentioned to me that he had received an interesting letter from you concerning the Heschel school and its connection to the CIJE work. I didn't get a chance to talk to him in more detail about this, but he suggested that I follow it up with you. Is your letter to him something you could share with me? If so, send me a copy.

Good luck with the conference. Speak to you soon.

Yours truly,



Barry Holtz

THE CRB FOUNDATION

January 31, 1992

Dr. Barry Holtz, Co Director • Consultant  
Melton Research Center • CIJE  
3080 Broadway  
New York, N.Y. 10027

Dear Barry,

We are pleased to acknowledge receipt of your registration for The CRB Foundation Israel Experience Conference on Thursday, March 5, 1992. We have planned what we expect will be a very stimulating day. We are delighted to have the opportunity to host the first gathering of the leading professionals and lay people in this vitally important field of the Israel Experience.

We have enclosed the following pre-Conference materials: 1) the preliminary program for the Conference; 2) brochures describing the work of The CRB Foundation; and 3) a brochure containing information about the Marriott Financial Center Hotel with travel directions.

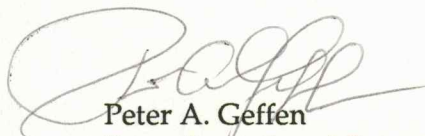
In the event that you need to send or receive messages, we will be maintaining a Hospitality Table throughout the Conference. Special concerns or problems should be directed to our Conference Coordinator, Susie Kessler. We have arranged for the luggage room to receive your luggage for the day, allowing Hotel guests to check-out in the morning before the Conference begins. If you are driving to the Conference, valet parking is available from the front door of the hotel at a cost of \$16.00

We would like to remind you that members of The CRB Foundation staff and consultants will be available for private consultation sessions at the Marriott Financial Center Hotel on Friday morning, March 6th. There are still some appointments available.

Please note that we are unable to provide display space of any kind at the Conference. However, you will receive a complete list of names and addresses of all Conference participants with whom you may wish to share your materials by mail.

If you have any questions prior to the Conference, or are interested in scheduling a consultation, please contact Peter Geffen or Susie Kessler at our New York Conference Office (212-595-7087). The Conference staff will be at the Marriott beginning Wednesday afternoon, March 4th.

Looking forward to seeing you on March 5th,



Peter A. Geffen  
Consultant, Israel Experience Program

Sincerely yours,



Susie Kessler  
Conference Coordinator



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LA FONDATION CRB  
THE CRB FOUNDATION  
קרן ק.ר.ב

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**THE ISRAEL  
EXPERIENCE**

*Summaries of Research Papers  
prepared for The CRB Foundation  
March, 1992*

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## INTRODUCTION

by Janet Aviad

The CRB Foundation is committed to strengthening ties between Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora, and to enhancing the identity of Jews throughout the Diaspora. We believe that "The Israel Experience" -- allowing young Jewish people everywhere to experience the country first-hand -- serves both these goals. Therefore, the Foundation has dedicated a large portion of its programming towards improving the quality of Israel trips for youth and encouraging more young people to travel to Israel.

During the past four years, CRBF has developed a multi-dimensional Israel Experience program. An essential part of this program is research and reflection on key aspects of youth trips, generating insights for improved and more effective programming.

The seven abstracts in this volume represent initial research findings of projects the Foundation has supported. The complete studies, as well as others to be commissioned, will be issued in monograph form and made available to the public.

"The Israel Trip: A New Form of Jewish Education," a monograph by Barry Chazan, provides philosophical and educational presuppositions for examining the program. The report proposes a rationale for the centrality of Israel trips, one which is rooted in Jewish history, psychology, and contemporary education.

The monograph "The Good Trip" by Steven M. Cohen and Susan Wall is an empirical study of criteria of excellence in several contemporary summer programs. Based on a conceptual construct developed by Chazan, Cohen and Wall, and on their observations of these qualities in the field, this study documents the functionary elements of excellence in practice.

The study "The Impact of Israel Trips" was conducted in 1990 by Perry London, formerly of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and now Dean of the Graduate School of Psychology at Rutgers University, and his associates. They employ a wide array of empirical and statistical instruments to analyze the impact of the Israel trip.

Goldfarb Consultants' report, "Attitudes Toward Travel to Israel among Jewish Adults and Jewish Youth" describes key results of a large marketing study undertaken in Canada in 1990 - 91. This report is accompanied by another abstract "Jewish Identity in Canada: National Character, Regional Diversity, and Emerging Trends" by Steven M. Cohen, which enlarges our understanding of Canadian Jewry and its attitudes towards Israel. Further, an earlier report by Professor Cohen, "Committed Zionists and Curious Tourists: Travel to Israel Among Canadian Jewish Youth," briefly summarizes some policy implications for marketing Israel trips.

"Marketing Israel Trips," by Jay Levenberg, summarizes the major conclusions of a year-long study he conducted on marketing Israel trips in North America. The questionnaire was sent to 10,000 Jewish households. The resultant data yields important information on the ways in which trips are marketed and what young people and parents regard as desirable aspects of these trips. Further, this study includes field visits and consultations with a sample of local bureaus of Jewish education engaged in trip organization.

The above documents utilize the methodologies of philosophy, psychology, sociology, education, and marketing to cast new light on the salient issues of "The Israel Experience." They represent the beginning of The CRB Foundation's commitment to developing a rich and varied body of research on the subject of Israel trips in this decade.

Dr. Janet Aviad  
Director, Israel Programme  
THE CRB FOUNDATION  
KEREN KAREV  
March, 1992

**THE ISRAEL TRIP:  
A New Form of Jewish Education**

**Abstract**

**Barry Chazan**

**February, 1992**

## THE ISRAEL TRIP AS JEWISH EDUCATION

### *Educating for Jewish Identity in the Modern Era*

As the Jewish world approaches the twenty-first century, it continues to confront the great challenge of transmitting its heritage and perpetuating its values to future generations. Throughout the twentieth century, the Jewish world has sought new approaches and structures to respond to the unique challenge of fostering Jewish identity in a modern, multi-cultural society.

This search has resulted in new forms of Jewish education and new ideas about identity formation. Today, psychologists and educators suggest several new constructs for Jewish identity (London and Chazan 1990; Kelman 1976; Herman 1989):

- Identity formation is not limited to school years and, in fact, is a life-long process;
- There are diverse paths leading to Jewish identity formation;
- Identity encompasses cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions;
- Identity education does not take place only in the classroom, but also in a broad array of informal educational frameworks;
- It is possible to affect identity formation by carefully considered interventions.

In recent decades, the informal educational framework of the Israel trip has become a profound new arena for affecting the Jewish identity of young people.

### *Israel and Jewish Identity*

Theologians and historians concerned with the Jewish experience have focused on the central role Israel has played throughout the ages in both collective Jewish consciousness and personal Jewish identity (Schweid 1986; Segal 1987). The concept of return to Zion is a major theme in Jewish thought and prayer. Religious rituals and symbolic acts expressing attachment to the Holy Land were woven into the behavior of all Jews wherever they lived. The symbolic meaning of Israel pervades the collective consciousness of Jewish religion and culture.

The role of Israel in Jewish identity has changed dramatically in the twentieth century. With the establishment of the modern state, Israel is no longer only an ideal or a metaphor. It is no longer only The Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*); it has now also become the State of Israel (*Medinat Yisrael*). Israel is a place to be experienced as much as an idea to be considered.

It has become increasingly clear that the visit to Israel has the potential of becoming an important factor and force in the identity formation of the modern Jew. The modern State of Israel may be seen as a laboratory in which prominent Jewish values, ideas, sensibilities, and history can be confronted and experienced by all visitors. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that the confrontation with these Jewish experiences can be a major force in identity formation (London and Frank 1987).

### *How Does Israel Affect Jewish Identity?*

Sociologists and psychologists of Jewish identity (Gordis and Ben-Horin 1991; Cohen 1983; Himmelfarb 1982) advise that there are some basic components of contemporary Jewish identity which are highlighted in the context of the Israel visit:

#### **1. Diversity**

Contemporary Israel is a laboratory containing the diverse lifestyles, rhythms, patterns, and personalities which characterize Jewish life. It is an arena for the dynamics of diversity and unity.

#### **2. Universalism and Particularism**

Modern Israel constitutes a testing ground for the possible integration of particular Jewish needs and aspirations with more universal factors. Israel is an experiment in the co-existence of "the twin nobilities" of Jewish and general culture.

#### **3. Community (*Kehilla*)**

Contemporary Israel is an affirmation of the collective principle in Jewish life. Israel is a country which boldly affirms the value of Jewish peoplehood and the collective responsibility of all Jews towards each other.

#### **4. Human Will**

Contemporary Israel is a statement about the ability of human beings to reshape life according to a new vision. It affirms the role of will, choice, and human action in affecting history.

5. **Jewish Survival**

Modern Israel is an attempt to guarantee Jewish survival. It evolved from the ashes of Jewish destruction, and its existence has been marked by an ongoing struggle for self-preservation. It has come to reflect, both symbolically and actually, the Jewish will to live.

6. **Jewish Pride**

The creation and existence of Israel strengthens a sense of satisfaction and pleasure in being part of what Simon Herman calls "aligned with" the Jewish people. Many of the achievements of Israel over the past forty years have been a source of pride and appreciation by both Jews and non-Jews.

7. **Jewish Creativity**

The State of Israel has become a well-spring of Jewish creativity in music, dance, sculpture, painting, architecture, design, poetry, fiction and pure research. The existence of the State affords the possibility for artistic and cultural creation reflecting motifs and themes related to Jewish, Israeli, and universal human experiences.

The first-hand experiencing of these values and ideals through an Israel visit is especially significant in affecting the personality of adolescent Jews, who are in the formative periods of their lives. As well, it can have significant impact on subsequent development of Jewish character.

*The New World of Education*

One of the significant dynamics of the modern era, according to sociologists of contemporary education and culture (Ravitch 1983), is to be found in the area of education. The last hundred years have been a period of great metamorphosis in the types of venues and methodologies of socialization, teaching and learning.

The scope and span of education has been significantly extended. Secondary, tertiary and adult learning have expanded dramatically in this century.

Non-formal frameworks have assumed important roles in educating people -- camps, youth movements, community centers, distance learning (Paulston 1973; Chazan 1991; Reisman 1991).

Radio, television, video and telecommunication systems have become important forces in our learning. They have made the global village a part of our neighbourhood, and have become powerful educators about distant worlds and cultures.

Museums, historical sites, exhibits, parks and nature preserves have become venues which are visited by scores of people of all ages.

The technological advances of the modern age have made more leisure time available to the middle and upper classes in Western societies, and recreation has become a major priority and preoccupation among many sectors of contemporary society.

### *Travel as Education*

Probably the most dramatic metamorphosis in the field of education has been the emergence of mass travel as an educational form. Travel is not, of course, a new phenomenon in human life. It began in the Bible with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden and has extended to the modern-day, "On the Road" travels of writer Jack Kerouac, to the "cruisin' classics" of rock and roll music. Sociologists and historians (Cohen 1983; Smith 1977) have extensively studied the role of travel, as well as the journey itself, in human history. These studies indicate that human beings have undertaken a diversity of journeys throughout the ages including: the divine mission (the Epic of Gilgamesh); the knightly adventure (King Arthur and his court); the religious pilgrimage (Lourdes, Mecca, Jerusalem); the search for truth and beauty (the Lake poets); the search for Self and Identity (Erikson's age of adolescence).

Travel is the source of some of the most prominent concepts and metaphors of human life and development. Death is described as "passing away"; life is a "journey"; changes are "rites of passage"; trips are "pilgrimages" (Van Gennep 1973; Turner 1974; Eliade 1965). Literary genres such as the *roman fleuve* and the picaresque novel describe the journeys of life's great travellers (Alter 1964).

Contemporary sociology has transformed the field of tourism into a major sphere of study and has developed elaborate and sophisticated conceptual approaches linking travel and tourism to basic human experiences (Cohen 1979, 1983). Tourism is conceived as:

- commercialized hospitality
- a modern leisure activity
- a modern variety of the traditional pilgrimage
- an expression of basic cultural themes
- an acculturative process
- a type of ethnic relations
- a form of neo-colonialism

### *Contemporary Travel*

Contemporary travel has assumed entirely new proportions because of its mass nature; in Leed's words, we have become "a global society of travellers" (Leed 1991). In 1987 over forty million American travelled abroad spending \$2.3 trillion. By the turn of the millennium travel will become the most important sector of world trade.

In our age travel has become available and viable for the masses. Travel today is convenient and accessible. It is relatively safe and without great danger. It is economically feasible and reasonable.

Consequently, travel has become a legitimate and desirable activity for all adults and young people; it is no longer regarded as the exclusive domain of the wealthy or the pious, nor as counter-culture pursuit. Moreover, travel has become recognized as a fully accredited and desirable form of education, popularly denoted as international education (Jonietz and Harry 1991).

The Israel trip, therefore, begins to assume new and much greater proportions than often supposed. It reflects the most contemporary theories of education, acculturation and learning.

### *Educational Dimensions of the Israel Experience*

Philosophers of education have emphasized the rich diversity of teaching styles (Joyce and Weil 1980; Bandman and Guttchen 1969). The Israel trip reflects several of these modes:

- **Experiential Learning**  
The visit to Israel teaches about Jewish ideas, events and feelings through personal **experience** rather than through instruction or lecture. Visiting Israel directly **engages** visitors in Jewish experiences and encourages self-discovery.
- **Cognitive Learning**  
The Israel Experience facilitates the transmission of a great deal of information about Jewish history, civilization and life in a relatively easy and accessible manner. The visitor to Israel learns about the biblical period, the prophets, the monarchy, the Talmudic era, and contemporary Israel.
- **Interpersonal Education**  
One learns about Jewish ideas and history in Israel through personal contact with real human beings. The people of Israel become living "texts" as much as any book, lecture, or monument. Meeting and talking with the people of Israel becomes a source of personal learning.

- **Teaching Values and Ideas**

The Israel visit does not only teach facts; it also is very effective in displaying the diverse panorama of customs, lifestyles and values which characterize contemporary Jewish lifestyle at the end of the twentieth century. It presents a broad panorama of the groups and ideologies which comprise contemporary Jewish life.

- **Identity Formation**

The Israel trip encourages visitors to reflect on key issues related to their own world view, lifestyle and Jewishness. Where should I live? What are my responsibilities as a Jew? What interests me "Jewishly?" How am I going to live my life? The Israel trip can affect the emergent identity of young people in transformational periods of their lives.

*Characteristics of Educationally "Good" Israel Trips*

In the 1980's a type of research called "the effective schools literature" developed in the field of education (Lightfoot 1983; Powell, Farrar and Cohen 1985; Sizer, 1985). This literature presented phenomenological portraits and "thick description" of educational institutions which seemed to reflect good educational principles and practices. The Jewish world is beginning to think along these lines (A Time to Act 1991) and my colleagues, Steven M. Cohen and Susan Wall, and I have been working on models which depict the criteria of "the good Israel trip:"

1. **The good trip is child-centred.**

A good Israel trip is one that cares for and loves its children, and treats them as the key focus of the enterprise. Such a trip is sensitive to developmental levels and stages of life, particularly to adolescence as a period of transition, search for identity and move towards autonomy.

2. **The good Israel Trip is "a total experience".**

The good Israel trip utilizes the entire venue of the trip as a learning setting and it regards every place and moment in Israel as its "stage". It does not view learning as related only to formal lectures, seminars or speeches by the guide, but rather it regards all aspects of the program as arenas for learning.

3. **The good trip has a "curriculum" which reflects a thought-out philosophy or ideology.**

A good trip reflects a thoughtful blueprint of issues and topics related to Israel and Judaism, organized in an interesting and connected fashion. It has a "curriculum" in the sense of a set of guiding contents, values and ideas which youngsters experience during the summer. A good trip is not simply an "itinerary" or schedule of events; rather it is a thoughtful scenario which reflects a larger plan of ideas and concepts.

4. **The good trip incorporates both formal and informal "curriculum".**  
The good trip utilizes both the formal, regularly planned moments for learning as well as the many spontaneous learning moments that occur during the trip: walking along the Midrachov in Jerusalem, having coffee in Dizengoff, meeting people on buses, watching TV and listening to radio, spending free weekends with relatives, shopping in supermarkets, "hanging out" with Israeli teenagers. Many of the most important "lessons" of an Israel trip occur on such occasions. The good trip always leaves time for such moments and takes full advantage of their impact.
5. **The good trip uses travel as an organic part of its curriculum.**  
A good trip integrates the travel and touring aspects of the program with an overall curriculum. Travel and touring are not separate from, and/or instead of, the rest of the program, but rather as an integral part of it.
6. **The good trip is fun.**  
The good trip is committed to enabling its participants to enjoy their summer. Feelings of pleasure, joy, and excitement are primary human experiences and the Israel visit should be associated with such feelings. It should include moments when young people enjoy a summer evening's breeze in Jerusalem, the excitement of a stroll on the Tel Aviv boardwalk, and the fun of splashing in the Kinneret. These breezes and splashes are important parts of good education.
7. **The good trip is shaped by a high-quality professional educator.**  
The literature of effective schools was unanimous in asserting that an essential ingredient of good educational institutions is strong, consistent and inspired leadership (Blumberg and Greenfield 1980). The good Israel trip is orchestrated - - much as a fine symphony -- by a director with an overall vision and picture of the whole. The director must be able to develop the "curriculum", orchestrate the flow, integrate travel and the program, train and supervise staff, and most important, care for and interact with young people.
8. **The good trip is staffed by a team of high-quality teachers, counsellors, and tour educators.**  
The good trip is staffed by teachers, counsellors, and tour educators who can help make the Israel visit understandable and meaningful for their charges. The people who work with the summer program are critical in mediating and illuminating the Israel experience. Hence, a program should seek a total staff which reflects traits and qualities that you would like young people to encounter.
9. **The good trip maximizes group dynamics as an educational force.**  
Trips are group experiences. The good trip makes maximum use of the group experience as an educational force. The development of a positive climate among participants and between staff and participants is a powerful force in a good trip. Sharing and learning from each other can enrich a trip greatly; divisiveness and intra-group tensions can be tiresome and counter-productive.

10. **The good trip is interactive with Israelis.**  
The good trip does not simply come to look at buildings and monuments. It also comes to talk to people. It is important to enable teenagers from abroad to meet and spend time with Israeli teenagers. They should talk together; they should listen to music together; they should work together. In such a way a genuine connection is created between Israelis and young people from abroad.
  
11. **The good trip is preceded and succeeded by a well-developed educational program.**  
The good trip is part of a larger educational continuum which encompasses a pre- and post-trip learning process. The potential impact of a trip is greatly enhanced to the extent that it is preceded by a preparatory program and succeeded by a well-integrated follow up. The summer should not be episodic, but rather part of an ongoing educational process.

*The Challenge Before Us*

Sociologists and historians of American Jewry agree that the State of Israel has become a central dimension of North American Jewish life (Fein 1987; Hertzberg 1990). However, the same claim cannot be made about North American Jewry's commitment to the primacy of Israel trips for young people. North American Jewry has yet to definitively affirm the centrality of the Israel trip for Jewish development and education of every young Jew. Great effort must be devoted to this objective on both the national and local scene in the next decade.

The great formative events of twentieth century Jewish life -- migration, modernity, Holocaust and Statehood -- have created new challenges for transmitting Jewish values and developing Jewish identity. The visit to Israel promises to be a remarkable resource in that endeavour.

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# **THE GOOD TRIP TO ISRAEL**

**A Report to The CRB Foundation**

**January, 1992**

**Steven M. Cohen and Susan Wall**

*This material has been excerpted from the draft report on "The Good Trip to Israel." The final version will be submitted at the end of March, 1992. The purpose of these excerpts is to provide a brief overview of the objectives, methods, and findings of the study from which they are drawn.*

## INTRODUCTION

### *Organized Youth Trips to Israel and Their Importance*

Every year, in one framework or another, thousands of North American Jewish young people travel to Israel. Some accompany their families; others go to study at a university or a yeshiva for several months to a year; and still others travel in the context of organized educational programs. For many, especially those in the later high school years, these organized programs constitute their first serious encounter with Israel. These experiences often become the gateway to more lengthy visits in the years ahead. The vast majority of college-age students who are now studying in the year-long academic and yeshiva programs first came to Israel as adolescents in some organized summer experience.

Both formal research and personal testimony demonstrate convincingly that the short-term summer-time Israel experience very often profoundly influences how youngsters relate to Israel and to their Jewishness. Of course, not all teenagers experience the same effects; but, in general, participants in Israel summer programs do come back changed in one or more ways. Thus, they certainly return to North America with a more vivid picture of Israel; they frequently acquire or strengthen friendships with other participants, and sometimes with Israelis as well; most are more willing and able to advocate Israel's cause in organized and informal settings; some become more involved in their local youth group or synagogue; some become more religiously observant; and many become interested in returning to Israel. For many, these changes are both enduring and dramatic.

The reasons underlying the power of the Israel experience are not hard to fathom. Israel, to say the least, is a compelling, absorbing, and complex country that inevitably speaks to the Jewish identity of Diaspora Jews. The landscape is rich and varied, as are the people who inhabit it. The society is alive with conflicts and tensions that often command the world's attention. Moreover, the organized summer trips take place at a crucial point in identity development and, as informal educational experiences, they can touch individuals in many different ways.

In recognition of the potentially positive impact the Israel experience can have upon North American Jewish young people, The CRB Foundation of Montreal has embarked upon a multi-pronged effort whose chief objective can be summarized as follows:

- 1) To sharply increase the quantity of young American Jews who visit Israel; and.
- 2) To dramatically improve the quality of the educational experience of those young people who travel to Israel in organized programs.

This study of "goodness" in trips to Israel advances the latter objective. By better understanding what makes for a good Israel trip, The CRB Foundation hopes to help practitioners, policy makers, and their supporters, enhance the quality of the Israel experience.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The chief objective of this study is to identify and elucidate the key components of a "good" short-term trip to Israel for North American Jewish adolescents. Our purpose here is not to evaluate specific trips, to suggest that certain trips are better than or worse than others. Rather, we understand that there are elements of "goodness" in all trips and, frankly, shortcomings in all. We seek to find those elements in the minds of trip purveyors, young participants, parents, and outside observers which generally tend to enrich and magnify the educational impact of the adolescents' experience in Israel. As a matter of definition, we are concerned only with organized group trips to Israel, and not with the experience of individual travellers or independent groups such as families and friends.

We readily concede that "goodness" is an elusive and ambiguous concept. Trips differ widely in their objectives and in their clientele. What is good for one trip may not be good for another. Nevertheless, we do contend that these differences notwithstanding, certain features of goodness generally characterize most sorts of organized experiences in Israel for Jewish youngsters. Indeed, with slight modification, we believe that the lessons we draw below can be extended to older age groups as well.

We have chosen to define the good elements as those which we believe promote the achievement of educational goals. This approach is consistent with the professed goals of the Israel youth programs. As contrasted with, for example, tour operators who bring Europeans to Eilat's very attractive beaches. Israel youth program directors view themselves primarily as educators and measure their success in educational terms. Typically, they define the ultimate objectives of their programs in at least one of the following ways (if not all three):

- 1) Enhancing Jewish commitment, knowledge, skills; and/or
- 2) Enhancing Zionist commitment, or knowledge of Israel, past or present; and/or
- 3) Strengthening formal and informal ties to the community, in part by building relationships with Israelis and committed Jewish youth.

To be clear, we can offer no convincing evidence that the elements of goodness we identify below will actually help programs achieve these goals. Nor can we single out with confidence those elements which are most crucial, that is, those which exert the most salutary impact on the participants.

Rather, we make a more modest claim. We work off of the axiomatic premise that educationally sound trips are somehow "better" than those which violate very fundamental principles in the educational literature. By analogy, a "good" concert is not defined as one where the audience wants more, or wants to come back, or has had its musical senses aroused and satiated. Rather, a good concert is one that meets the highest aesthetic standards of musical performers, composers, and critics. Presumably, such performances will ultimately achieve the desired impact on their audiences. But, just as critics of music judge excellence by internal aesthetic standards and not by the impact on the audience, so too do we advance our judgments of what constitutes excellence in trips to Israel on the basis of standards internal to the world of informal Jewish and Zionist education.

## INTENDED AUDIENCE

We address three audiences in this report:

- 1) supporters of Israel educational travel, such as The CRB Foundation itself, Jewish federations, and private philanthropists;
- 2) communal professionals who organize, sponsor or recommend Israel educational travel, such as those who typically manage Jewish community center programs, Jewish schools, boards of Jewish education, synagogue youth groups, and others who work with North American Jewish youth; and
- 3) purveyors of Israel educational travel, that is, those who direct programs, large and small, that cater to groups of adolescent Jewish youth.

For the supporters of Israel youth travel, we hope to help them make wiser and more confident decisions about which trips to support and which sorts of innovations they can support that will make trips more valuable. We are also ready to admit that we see a study of Israel youth travel as serving, in part, as a piece of advocacy that may well stimulate philanthropic agencies and individuals to extend further assistance to this important field of adolescent Jewish education.

For the communal professionals, we hope to alert them to the critical value of a highly planful, educational approach. We hope to alert them to the complexity of this field, the diversity of programs, and the importance of matching the right participants with the right programs. In our experience, educators who should know better all too often cede near-total responsibility for planning and executing Israel youth trips to outside agencies. In doing so, they often fail to attend to the particular needs of their young people and fail to clarify, or shape, the specific objectives of their particular trip.

Finally, we also hope to inform and provoke the purveyors of Israel travel, the true experts in this field. We hope that they will find some concrete uses for this document. One reviewer of an early draft thought it would serve to help train his middle-management and line staff. Another told us that our early research helped him advocate the cause of higher educational standards in a particular institutional context. We hope that this study will cause even some very experienced purveyors to re-think some of their procedures and to challenge some of their fundamental assumptions and educational philosophy. Perhaps it may remind some of important issues that they themselves articulated to us but freely admitted that they had failed to attend to.

## METHODOLOGY

In the last decade or so, researchers have published several works that seek to identify goodness or excellence in schools, large corporations, or other organizations. These works have been ethnographic in character, that is, they rely heavily on informal observations of the organizations at work and in-depth interviews with key participants located at all points in the hierarchy, from top to bottom. Although less ambitious than those other well-known book-length monographs, this study on goodness in young people's trips to Israel is situated within this research tradition.

The research for this project took place during much of 1991 and early 1992. The period itself was one relatively free from the unusually disturbing events that have disrupted Israel travel in the past. However, just prior to this period, the Gulf War had seriously obstructed recruitment efforts during many of the crucial months when teenagers and their parents make decisions regarding summer travel and vacation plans. As a result, almost all of the Israel summer programs in 1991 experienced an "off-year," although enrolment certainly rebounded after the conflict ceased in late winter. As far as we can tell, the unusual events in this period had little impact on the conclusions we drew about what constitutes excellence in trips to Israel.

We decided at the outset to focus our research on North American Jewish youth trips for high school age youngsters participating in short-term, summer-time programs. If more young people will participate in Israel educational travel programs, they are likely to do so in the context of these sorts of trips.

We began our research by developing a set of working hypotheses. These set forth our initial hunches as to what constituted the key ingredients of goodness. These were drawn from several disparate sources, most notably, some preliminary work by Dr. Barry Chazan, a cursory review of the literature on good schools, and our own professional experience.

In consultation with about a dozen experts and leading practitioners, we then selected several groups to observe in the field, that is, while they were participating in a program in Israel. We selected these groups (see Appendix) so as to achieve diversity in terms of several characteristics: ideology of sponsor, geographic origins, duration, cost, selectivity, and other factors. We intentionally over-selected those groups possessed of certain initial advantages. Thus, we observed several groups that are the recipient of very significant philanthropic support or, in one case, of unusually high fees for participation. We also chose to observe several groups affiliated with camps and youth movements. We felt that we could more readily witness especially distinctive elements of goodness when a program operates without significant fiscal constraints or where the youth are among the most Judaically committed and socially cohesive.

We or our research associates spent a full day or more with each group. We were free to ask questions of staff and participants. Universally, trip purveyors, staff, and the youthful participants welcomed our presence and were gracious and forthcoming in the interviews.

We also chose to observe groups at different sorts of sites while they were engaged in different sorts of activities. These included hiking, sight-seeing, lectures, meals, wrap-up sessions, bus travel, and social service projects.

During the next stage of our research, we spoke with roughly two dozen senior practitioners in the field of Israel travel for North American Jewish youngsters (see Appendix for list of interviews). Interviews typically lasted about two hours. The trip purveyors talked freely about their programs and the larger issues raised in this research. They also readily provided a range of written materials that we requested and subsequently examined. These included: recruitment brochures, pre-trip information for parents and participants, training materials for counsellors, itineraries, instructional materials, and source books.

Finally, we produced a penultimate draft version of this report and circulated same for comments from various experts in the field. We are grateful to them, to the senior professionals who gave us of their time and ideas, and to the participants and staff on the several groups we observed.

## SUMMARY OF KEY ELEMENTS OF GOODNESS IN YOUTH TRIPS TO ISRAEL

**OVERALL:** The design, planning, and execution of the trip are all undertaken with a great degree of seriousness, with a keen attention to details, and with the awareness that both formal and informal experiences and all encounters, planned or unplanned, are part of the educational experience.

### *Recruitment, Selection and Preparation of Participants*

- Participants are recruited for and matched with the program that is right for them.
- The program understands who the participants are and plans the trip accordingly.
- The program provides the participants with accurate information before the trip so that the young people know what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Good programs get "good kids" through selective recruitment or excellent preparation.
- The participants undergo pre-trip preparation that enhances their cognitive, emotional, and social readiness for the trip.
- The trip recruits young people who share common background, common interest, or common salient characteristics.

### *The Staff*

- The director projects a clearly articulated vision and translates that vision into reality.
- The counsellors exhibit excellence as informal Jewish educators of Jewish adolescents. They can interact well with teenagers, they personally reflect the program's Judaic philosophy, they serve as positive and accessible role models, and they understand their role as informal educators rather than glorified chaperons.
- The staff is well-trained as informal Jewish educators, in the specific objectives of the program, and in how to make use of Israel as a learning experience.
- The program manages to retain veteran staff from one year to the next.
- The counsellors are numerous enough to attend to the needs of the participants.

- An experienced educator is a continual and ongoing presence with the group.
- The guides see themselves as informal Jewish educators.

### *The Philosophy: Judaic and Educational*

- The program has a clearly articulated Judaic and educational philosophy that the staff has "bought into" and that pervades the trip experience.

### *The Itinerary and Curriculum*

- The Jewish and educational philosophy strongly influence the choice of the sites to be visited and how they are utilized.
- The trip is built around educational sub-themes; days are planned as educationally thematic units.
- The program units are individually successful. Each such unit should stand on its own as an island of excellence.
- The itinerary is planned with awareness of the sequence, flow, rhythm, and balance of experiences.

### *The Trip Experience: The Fundamentals*

- Participants enjoy the trip; they have fun. But recreational activities have educational import.
- The logistics of the trip run smoothly and they facilitate a flexible itinerary, one that can change during the trip in accord with the changing needs of the group. But the staff is committed to an educationally intensive schedule of activities.
- The trip has clear safety guidelines that are well-understood and observed.
- The staff articulates and enforces consistently clear disciplinary guidelines regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

*The Trip Experience: Elements of Distinction*

- The program manages to engage the participants in conventional educational activities: e.g., classes, lectures, and readings.
- The trip experience early on establishes group cohesiveness.
- The participants develop pride in themselves and in their program as distinctive. The trip conveys and reinforces a shared sense of purpose or mission.
- The participants are actively involved learners, rather than passive onlookers.
- The program capitalizes on the adolescent life stage. It provides intellectual, physical, social, and emotional challenges that allow the young adult participants to grow and mature within the context of an Israel experience.
- The staff regularly monitors and evaluates the individual participants' and the group's experience as the trip proceeds and responds accordingly.

*Post-Trip Follow-Up*

- The program or sponsoring agency at home provides follow-up for the individual, a way of internalizing what they have experienced after they return.
- The broader community (parents, synagogues, communities, etc.) is involved in some way with the experience of the participants.

## APPENDIX

### List of Sponsors of Trips Observed, Summer 1991

Alexander Muss High School in Israel  
Am Echad, Montreal  
Bronfman Fellows  
Camp Ramah  
Ezra Academy (spring, 1991)  
National Conference of Synagogue Youth  
National Federation of Temple Youth  
Nesiya  
Shorashim  
United Synagogue Youth  
Young Judea  
Youth and Hechalutz Department, WZO,  
Short Term Programs Division

### List of Formal Interviews with Program Directors and Professional Staff

Etan Cooper (Young Judea)  
Ross Culiner (Jerusalem Neighborhood Game)  
Rabbi Lee Diamond (NFTY)  
Rabbi David Forman (NFTY)  
Dr. Joe Friedman (Ramah)  
Jules Gutin (USY)  
Charles Herman (Nesiya)  
Annette Hochstein  
Avraham Infeld (Melitz)  
Alec Meir  
Nurit Orchan (Youth & Hechalutz)  
David Katz (NCSY)  
Hanan Naveh (Middle East Conflict Resolution Game)  
Rabbi Michael Paley (Bronfman Fellows)  
Dan Paller (Nesiya)  
Leah Praver (Middle East Conflict Resolution Game)  
Arna Poupko (Am Echad)  
Rabbi Benjamin Segal (Ramah)  
Shai Solomon (NCSY)  
Ina Strauss (American Zionist Youth Foundation)  
Moshe Toledano (Young Judea)

**THE IMPACT OF "SUMMER IN ISRAEL" EXPERIENCES  
ON NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH TEENAGERS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Randy R. Kafka, Perry London, Susan Bandler, and Naava Frank**

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Randy R. Kafka and Perry London**

## **FOREWORD**

**by Janet Aviad**

As part of its Israel Experience project, The CRB Foundation has launched a research program to promote the empirical study and systematic analysis of issues related to youth trips to Israel. It is hoped that the insights gained will then guide future programming in the field.

It is clear to all those involved in Jewish education that the Israel trip has great impact in affecting the attitudes, thinking and sensibilities of participants. It has even been suggested that this experience is one of the most powerful educational vehicles in the Jewish world today. However, empirical confirmation of these perceptions is lacking. Without such evidence, discussion of the impact and influence of the trip will remain on the level of individual impressions and thus inconclusive.

Accordingly, The CRB Foundation commissioned an initial study of the impact of youth trips on North American Jewish teenagers. The research team conducted interviews with participants of several trips during the summers of 1988 and 1989. Closed quantitative questionnaires were distributed, designed to analyze alterations to ideas, values and attitudes. The executive summary which follows does not include questions and data. The full study is available through The CRB Foundation.

It should be noted that this impact study is an initial contribution. It was not intended to replace the longitudinal study which alone can demonstrate the long-range impact of The Israel Experience.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document describes and evaluates several "summer in Israel" Jewish youth programs. It concludes that, on the whole, North American Jewish teenagers who spend several weeks of their summer vacations in Israel come away with increased knowledge of Israel, of their relationship to it as Jews, of themselves as Jews personally and of themselves as members of a worldwide Jewish community.

We studied five programs in the summer of 1988 and three in the summer of 1989. A total of 229 people participated in the eight groups. Of these, 71 completed "before" and "after" questionnaires, and 55 were interviewed by telephone five-to-ten months after their trip. Many others participated through interviews or by being observed during their summer programs. In addition, 33 parents were called while their children were in Israel, and 34 parents were interviewed at the time of the followups.

Our findings for each program are presented separately in a modified "case-study" format. In this way, we hope to preserve some of the richness of the interview findings while also incorporating the statistical results in a "user friendly" way. As will be seen, the groups differed from one another in a number of interesting ways: readers involved in the design and implementation of summer programs may find those differences suggestive. In addition, we present our statistical findings in more detail in the Appendix, for those who may be interested in using the questionnaire for future studies.

While the breadth and duration of this study do not permit ironclad conclusions, its results do suggest that the effects of these programs are substantial both in their immediate impact on North American teenagers and in fostering the continuation of their interest in Israel and in the Jewish people. If these findings are understood in the social context which gives rise to the proliferation of these programs in the first place, moreover, then the strategy they suggest for further vitalizing the North American Jewish community would be to expand the availability of summer-in-Israel youth programs, to plan their contents carefully, and to develop follow-up programs for students who participate in them.

Let us look at the background and context of these programs.

### *The Assimilation Fears of Diaspora Jewry*

Varied dirges to the effect that Judaism or the Jewish people as a group is somehow "going under" are not of recent invention ("*Yiddishkeit geit unter*" was a common turn-of-the-century comment on the secularization of recent Jewish immigrants to the U.S.), are not peculiar to the North American Jewish community alone, and are not necessarily true. On the contrary, though the state of Jewish communal and affiliative life in contemporary America may be weak, it is still probably stronger in terms of membership numbers, acts of affiliative behavior, attitudes of positive Jewish identity, and public commitment to the continuity of Jewish life than has ever before been the case.<sup>1</sup>

Even so, fears for the future of Diaspora Jewish communities are widespread. And some facts of Jewish demographic, educational, religious and communal life, at least in the United States, do seem to support such fears. Age of marriage among Jewish young people is later than it was a generation or two ago; the Jewish birthrate is not rising; the numbers of intermarriages are increasing between Jews and non-Jews in which the non-Jewish spouse does not convert to Judaism; attendance in Jewish schools continues to decline; and most Jews in North America appear to be, at best, only marginally affiliated with any kind of Jewish communal, educational or religious activity.

### *The Role of Israel*

Israel has been an increasingly important factor in American Jewish life since at least the Six-Day War of 1967, when Israel's very existence was threatened. Until recently, however, though Israel was a great source of pride to world Jewry and a continued focus of its anxious and sympathetic concern, it was not widely seen as a Jewish educational resource of much potential importance to the Diaspora. Nor did Israel itself make much effort in that direction other than for purposes of promoting *aliyah*. Until very recently, borne on the continuing rhetoric of Zionist movements, the main thrust of Israeli educational efforts in relation to the Diaspora has been the promotion of *aliyah* rather than the strengthening of Diaspora Jewish communities in their own right or even in their ties to Israel.

In recent years, the Israeli view of North American Diaspora, at least, has changed dramatically. The North American Jewish community's view of the benefits it could derive from using Israel as an educational resource has changed even more -- not so much for promoting *aliyah*, about which it is ambivalent, but for strengthening Jewish communities "at home," about which it is not.

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<sup>1</sup> Steven M. Cohen, 1990, personal communication.

*The Israel Experience as Alternative Jewish Education*

The "summer in Israel experience" has been a natural outgrowth of the changed perceptions on both sides. For the Diaspora, it offers an alternative or supplementary form of Jewish education to summer camps, family retreats, and, in some respects, Jewish schooling. And for both Israel and the Diaspora, it offers a unique opportunity to promote mutual interest in Israel-Diaspora relations and to promote Jewish kinship and identity.

The results of our study suggest that the educational promise of the Israel experience for Diaspora communities is equally great for teenagers from secular, from religiously observant, from Zionist and from relatively unaffiliated backgrounds, all of whom participated in our research. Though we were not able to follow up the participants at great length, we were able to learn enough about them during their trips and to follow some of them for long enough afterwards to surmise that the trip had an immediate impact and a potentially enduring effect on most of them. Their feelings of concern for Israel, their sense of kinship with Jews around the world, and their identification with many Jewish values, were heightened by these relatively short tours.

Eleven months in the life of a teenager is a significant length of time. The fact that the participants were reporting changes in their attitudes and behavior up to eleven months after their return from Israel -- and directly attributing those changes to their trip -- strongly suggests that these changes are enduring. These changes seem also to be qualitatively different from the initial, euphoric "transformations" which may alarm parents and fuel the myth that visits to Israel breed fanaticism. The changes which still endure almost a year later are not radical changes, but they are nevertheless significant.

The long-term benefit to the Jewish community from those effects, however, probably depends on policy decisions and implementations which lie beyond the scope of this study. While the research did not address them directly, they deserve some mention and consideration here.

### *Optimizing the Israel Experience*

Many problems and questions need attention if the summer-in-Israel experience is to optimally serve Jewish communal needs.

First, the value of such programs will be affected by the efforts communities make to extend opportunities for these trips to youngsters who otherwise could not afford to go or would not think to do so. This is a resource problem which needs attention at the community (Federation) level.

Second, which groups ought best be targeted for such trips? High school students? College students? Families? It seems to be widely assumed that high school teenagers are especially positively influenced by Israel trips, and most such trips are made by high schoolers. (Most of our research, accordingly, focused on this age group). But this may be a selective result of the fact that it is easier to "corral" high school students into spending their summer the way their parents want them to -- and in reality, the struggle over one's Jewish identity may be more hotly fought in college than in high school as, for instance, problems of intergroup dating and relationships probably are. If so, then with limited community resources available for them, perhaps college students should be high priority candidates for trips.

Third, the quality of organization and the educational content of the trips are probably vital to their success. We need to develop stimulating and informative "curricula" and suitable recreational opportunities and, perhaps most important, to train a cadre of teachers and "*madrichim*" who can inspire interest, appreciation and involvement among the participants. Programs such as Nesiya seem to accomplish these goals, but at very high dollar cost and with a narrowly focused curriculum (centering on the arts).

Fourth, the durability of positive impressions from such trips will surely depend, for many participants, on the availability and quality of follow-up programs they can attend after returning home and of contacts they maintain with other "graduates" and with Israelis they have encountered.

Devising and implementing policies to meet the above goals could greatly increase the effectiveness of Israel trips. But doing so requires a more focused and sustained effort on the part of Diaspora Jewish communities and educational institutions than has characterized their past efforts in this connection. Even without such an effort, we believe, the summer-in-Israel experience already serves as an invaluable Jewish experience for many of its participants. With it, the experience could further strengthen the ties which bind Jewish people throughout the world to each other.

ATTITUDES TOWARD TRAVEL  
TO ISRAEL AMONG JEWISH  
ADULTS AND JEWISH YOUTH

*A Research Report*

*for*

CHARLES BRONFMAN FOUNDATION

*Project #909099*

*March, 1991*

## INTRODUCTION

The objective of this project was to assess experience and attitudes toward Israel among Canadian Jewish adults and Canadian Jewish youth in order to evaluate what could entice more Jewish youth to participate in youth trips.

Results are based on a total of 972 interviews with a random cross-section of Jewish adults across Canada, and an additional 359 with the children of these people in the 13-24 year age range.

Interviewing was conducted in-house with the majority of the survey self-administered by the respondent.

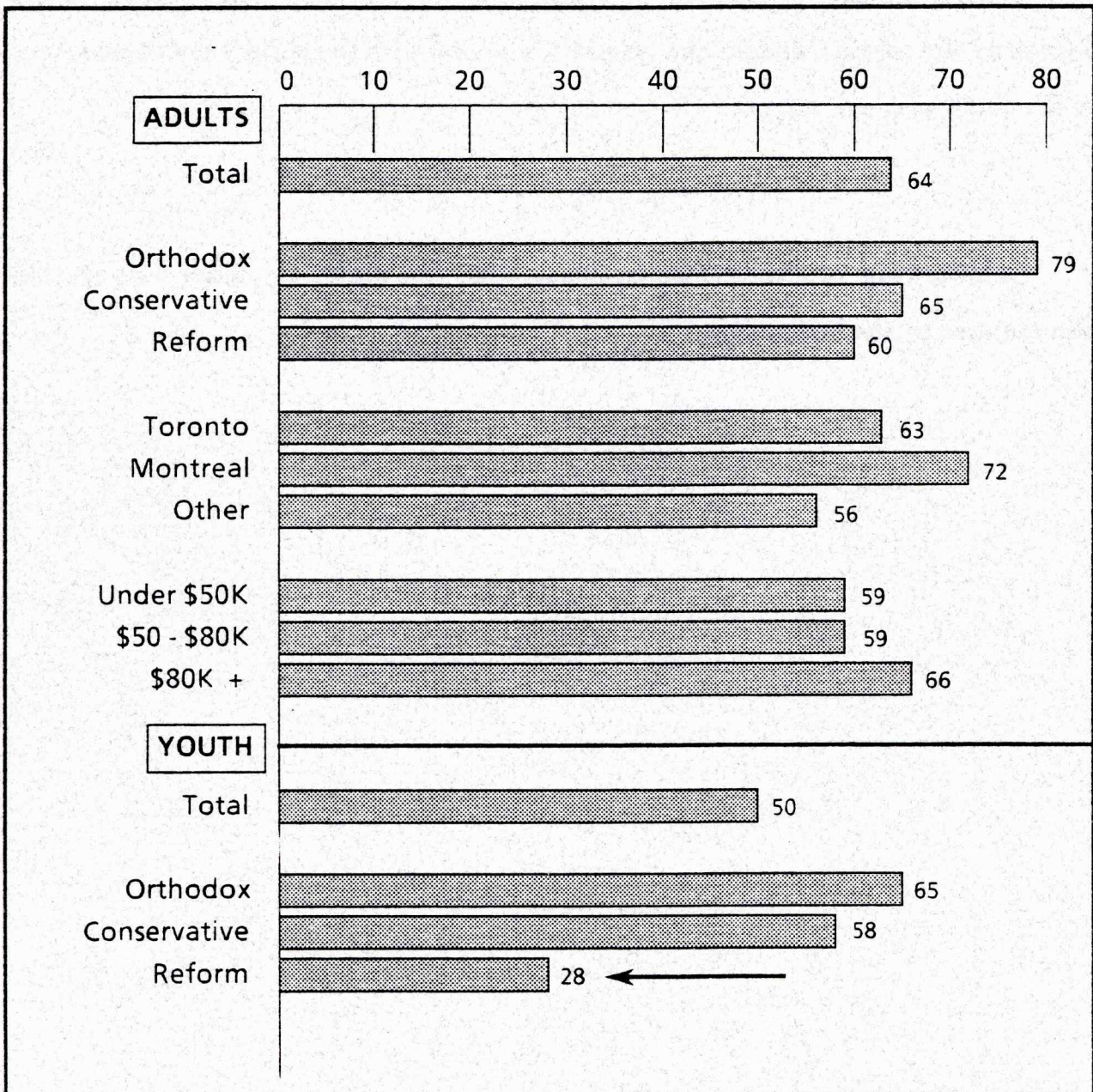
## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### 1. PAST BEHAVIOUR

#### Most Canadian Jews Have Been To Israel

Data collected indicate that 64% of Canadian Jewish adults, and 50% of Canadian Jewish youth have been to Israel. These results vary across denomination, and demographic lines as shown below.

In the youth movement, the biggest challenge exists in the reform community.



**Two In Five Jewish Youth Who Have Been To Israel, Claim To Have Made Their Most Recent Trip In The Past Two Years**

The data indicate that a higher proportion of Canadian Jewish youth are traveling to Israel now than Jewish adults, half of whom have not been for over six years.

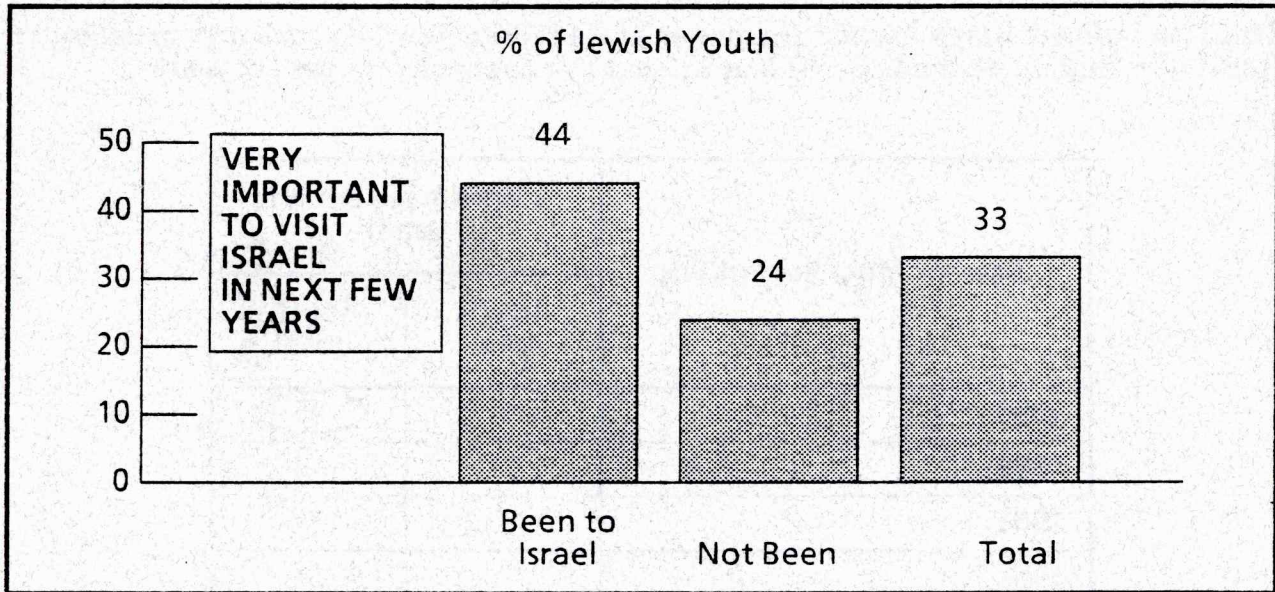
Year Of Most Recent Trip	% Who have been to Israel	
	Adults total	Youths total
1990	9	25
1989	11	17
1988	10	11
1987	7	13
1986	6	7
1985	6	4
1984 or earlier	49	20

**Those Who Have Been To Israel Are More Likely To Have Personal Attachments There**

Personal attachments correlate strongly with travel to Israel. Both youth and adult alike are more likely to have people there that they know.

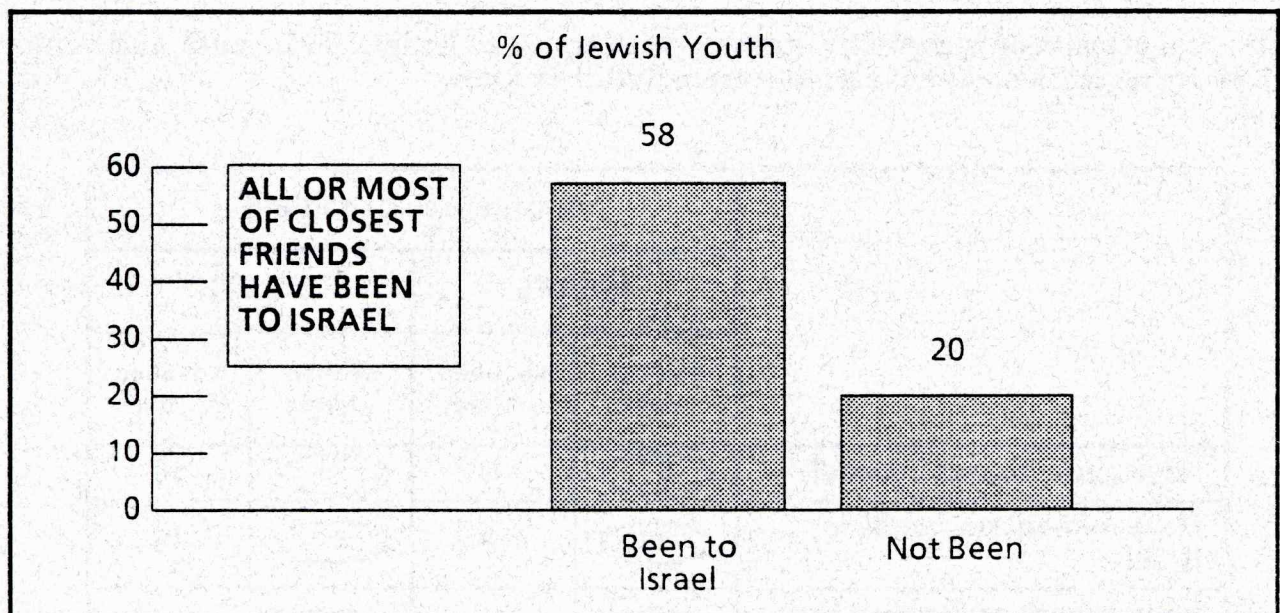
	% of Jewish Canadians			
	ADULTS		YOUTH	
	Been to Israel	Not been to Israel	Been to Israel	Not been to Israel
Have close friends in Israel	45	13	71	50
Have immediate family in Israel	46	19	49	16
Have friends or family who moved there	43	28	49	33

**One In Three Youth Believe It Is Important To Travel To Israel In The Next Few Years -- But More Ambivalence Among Those Who Have Never Been**



**Most Youth Who Have Been To Israel Know Other Youth Who Have Been -- Those Who Have Not Been To Israel, Do Not Know Others Who Have Been**

Peer pressure is important in the adolescent life, and result, of this survey indicate that youth travel to Israel is much more likely among those who have close friends who have also traveled to Israel



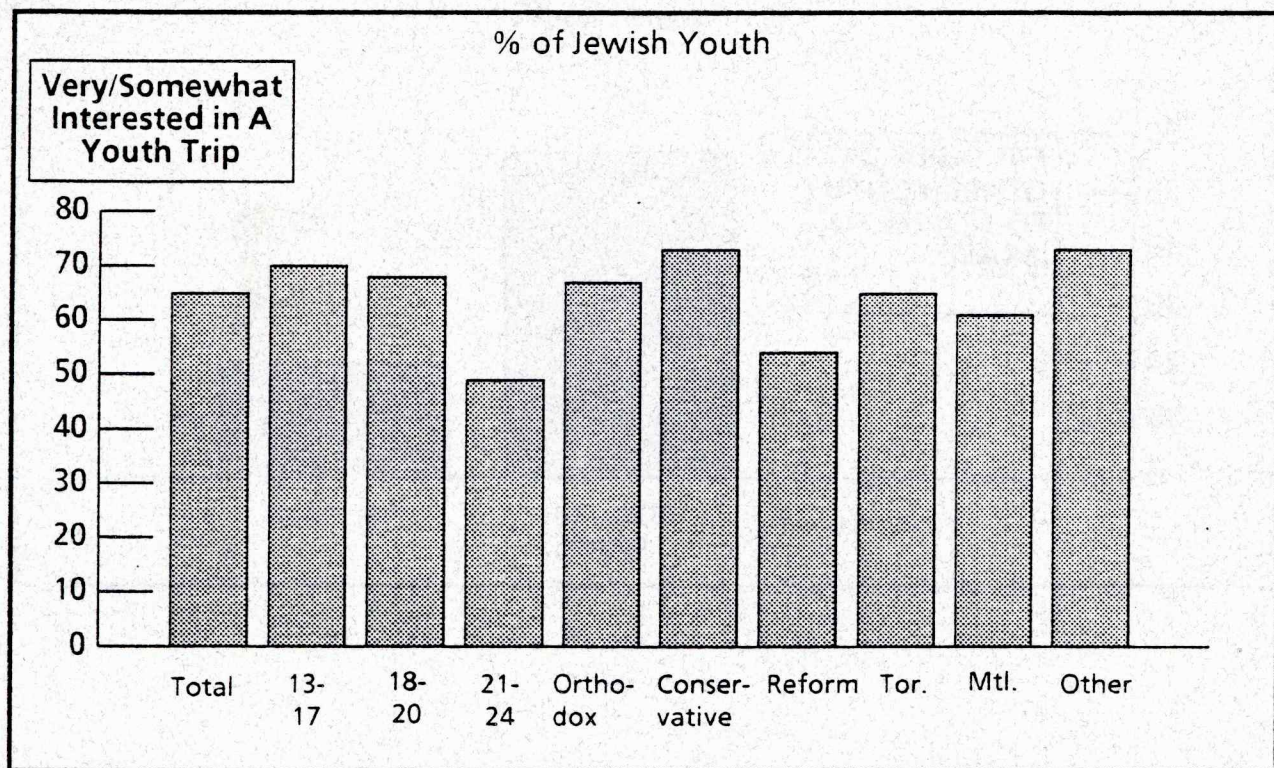
Jewish Youth Who Have Traveled To Israel Act As Agents To Encourage Others To Participate



One In Five Canadian Jewish Youth Surveyed Claimed To Have Traveled To Israel As Part Of An Organized Or Educational Trip

	% of Jewish youth									
	Total	AGE			DENOMINATION			CITY		
		13-17	18-20	21-24	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Tor	Mtl	Other
Went as part of education or organized trip	22	14	27	35	27	31	9	18	27	19

**A Great Many More Youth Than Have Taken One Are Interested In Participating In An Organized Youth Trip -- This Would Indicate That There Is Room To Grow**

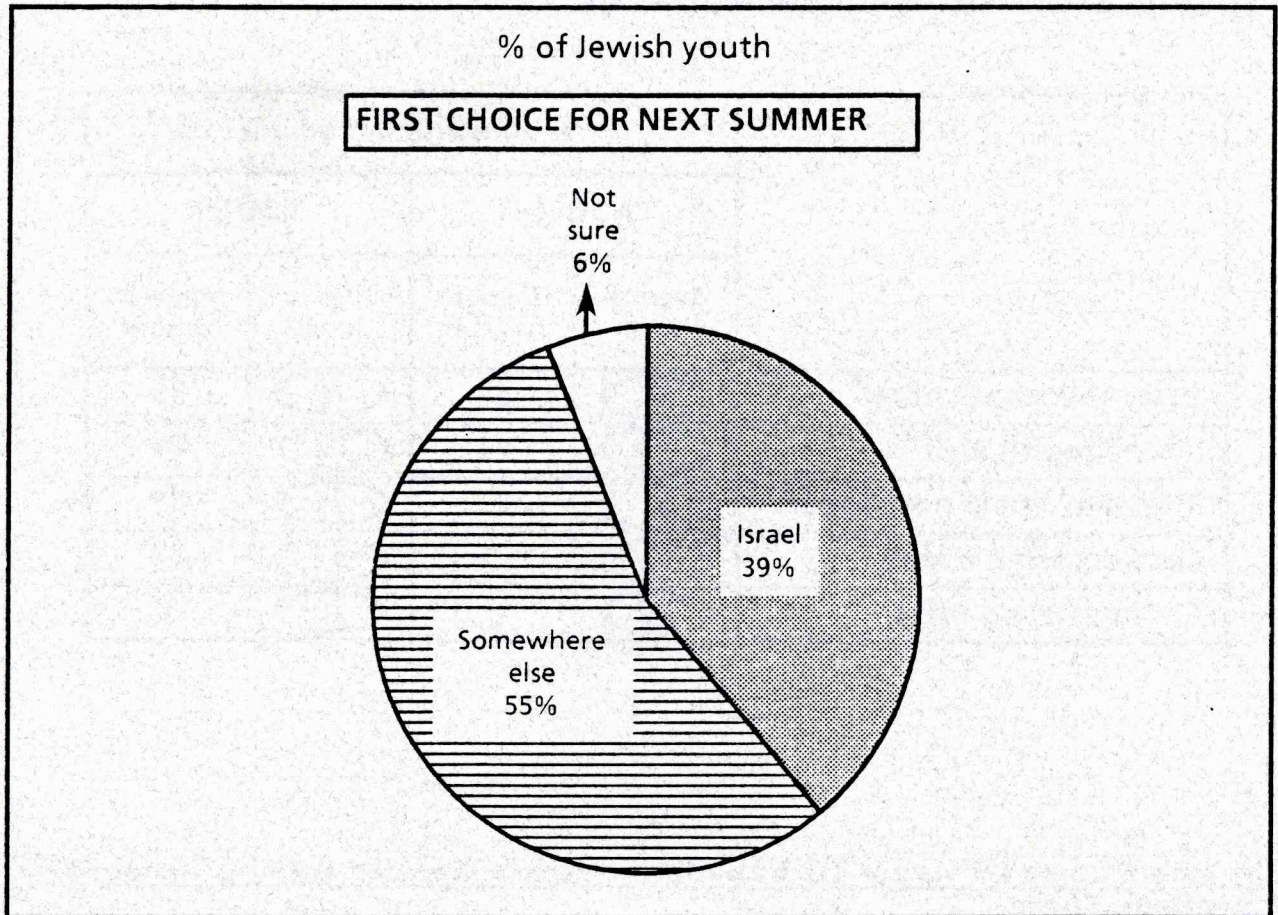


**Jewish Groups And Word-Of-Mouth Are The Dominant Source Of Information About Youth Trips -- Family And Synagogue Way Down The List**

Where Did You Learn About The Trip?	% Who have been on an organized youth trip
Other Jewish groups	54
Word-of-mouth	44
Friends in Canada	35
Family in Canada	13
Advertising	22
Family in Israel	9
Friends in Israel	8
Synagogue	5

Given A Choice Most Youth Pick Somewhere Else As A First Choice Over Israel

Over half would pick another country (not Israel) as their first choice for next summer's vacation. This means that, for these youth, traveling somewhere else is seen as more desirable, and has a high level of appeal.



2. ATTITUDES TO ISRAEL

Results Indicates That Travel to Israel Raises Its Stature In The Thought Process Of Canadian Jews

Jews (youth and adults) who have been to Israel are more likely to talk about it, want to go again, and to consider themselves Zionists.

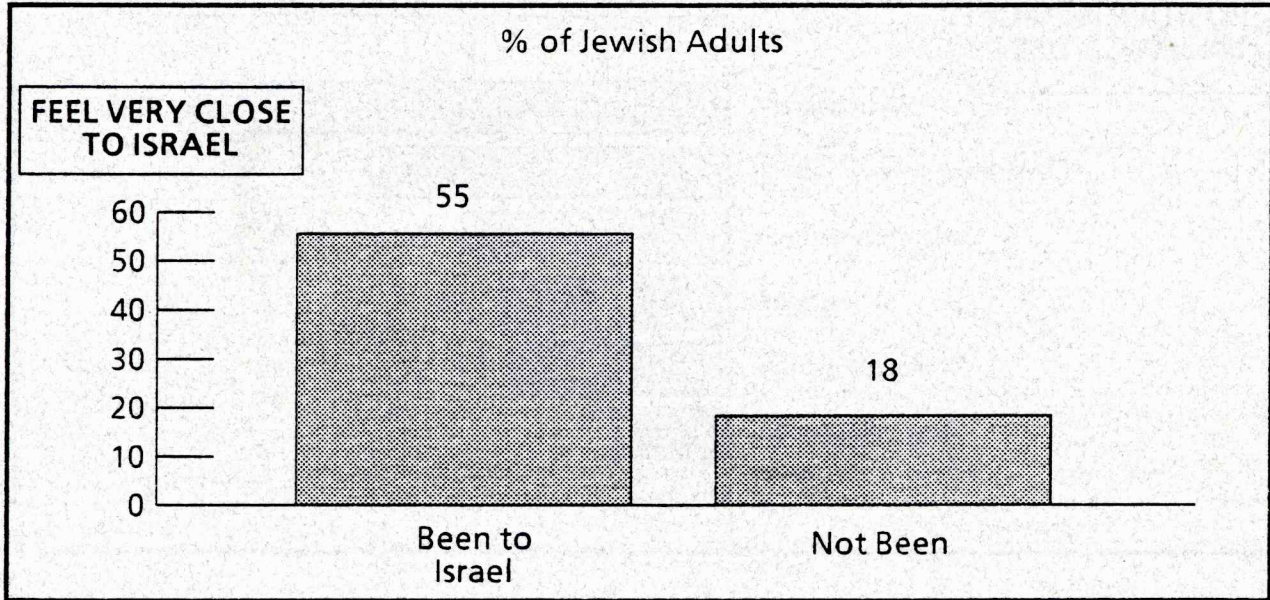
	% of Jewish Canadians			
	ADULTS		YOUTH	
	Been to Israel	Not been to Israel	Been to Israel	Not been to Israel
Often talk about Israel	80	54	70	39
Intend to visit ever	75	61	82	71
Intend to visit in next 3 years	57	22	57	28
Consider self a Zionist	52	25	32	14
Consider living there	29	8	23	5

The Importance Of Israel To Canadian Jews Is Greater Among Those Who Have Been There

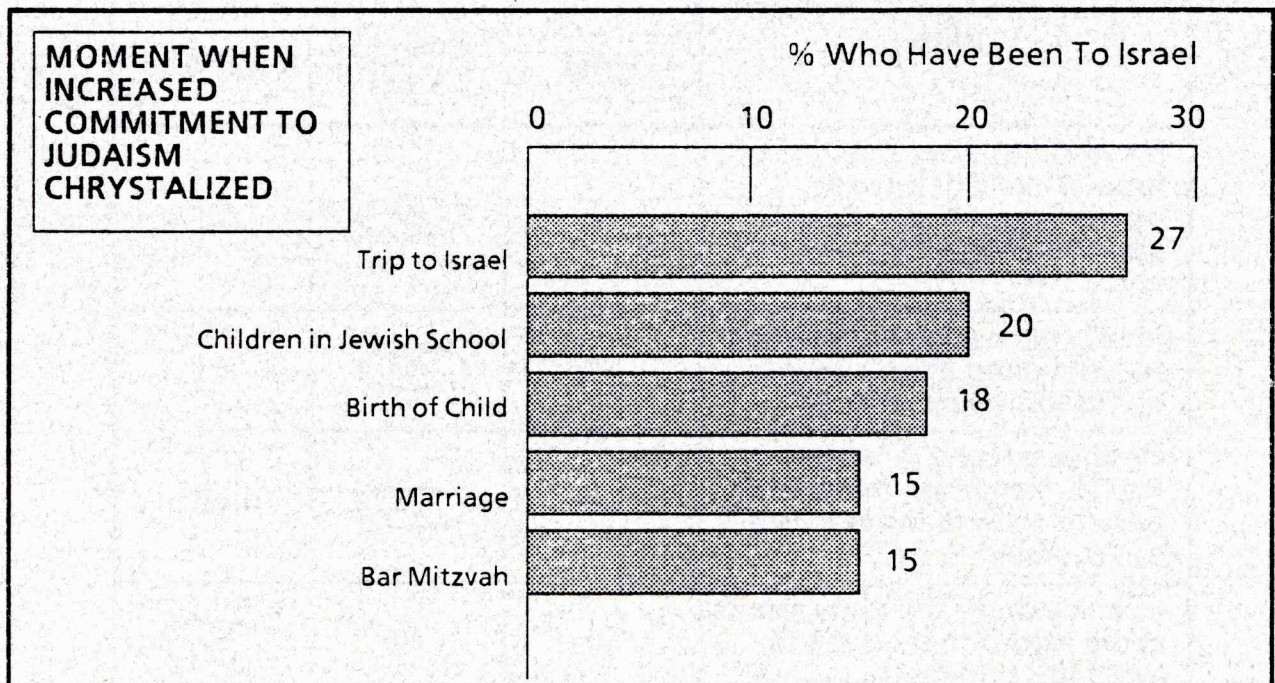
	% of Jewish adults	
	Been to Israel	Never been to Israel
If Israel was destroyed I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest personal tragedies in my life	75	50
Caring about Israel is a very important part of being a Jew	72	43

## Experience And "Closeness" Are Related

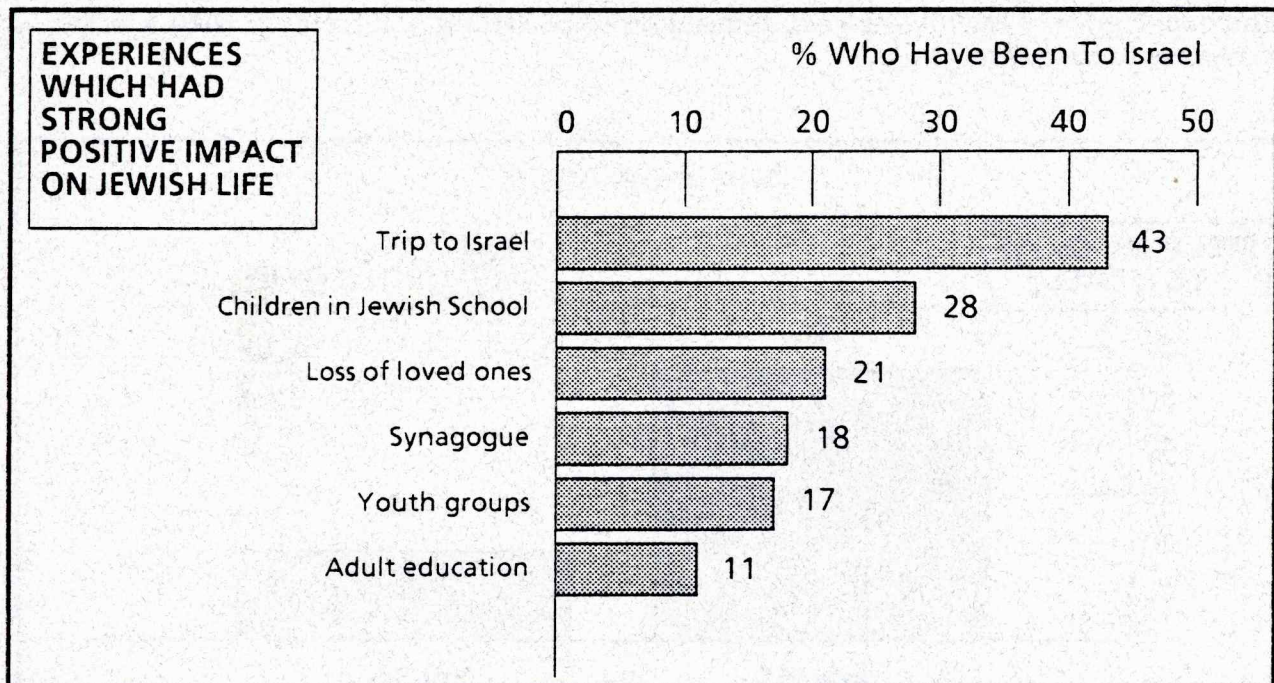
The experience of travel to Israel also shows to be strongly correlated with a sense of closeness to the state.



## Those Who Have Been To Israel Cite The Trip As A Chrystalization Of Increased Commitment To Judaism -- Number One On The List



**A Trip To Israel Seen As Strongest Experience In Jewish Life**

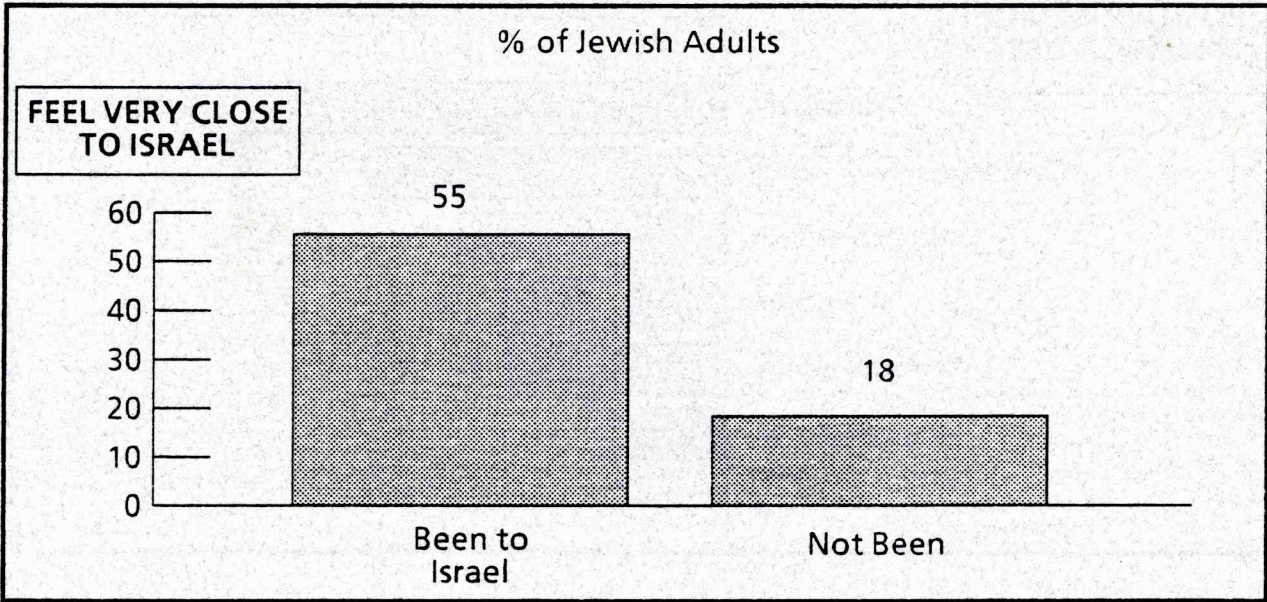


**Youth Believe In The Positive Aspects Of Travel To Israel But Are Cognizant Of Cost And Safety Issues As Well**

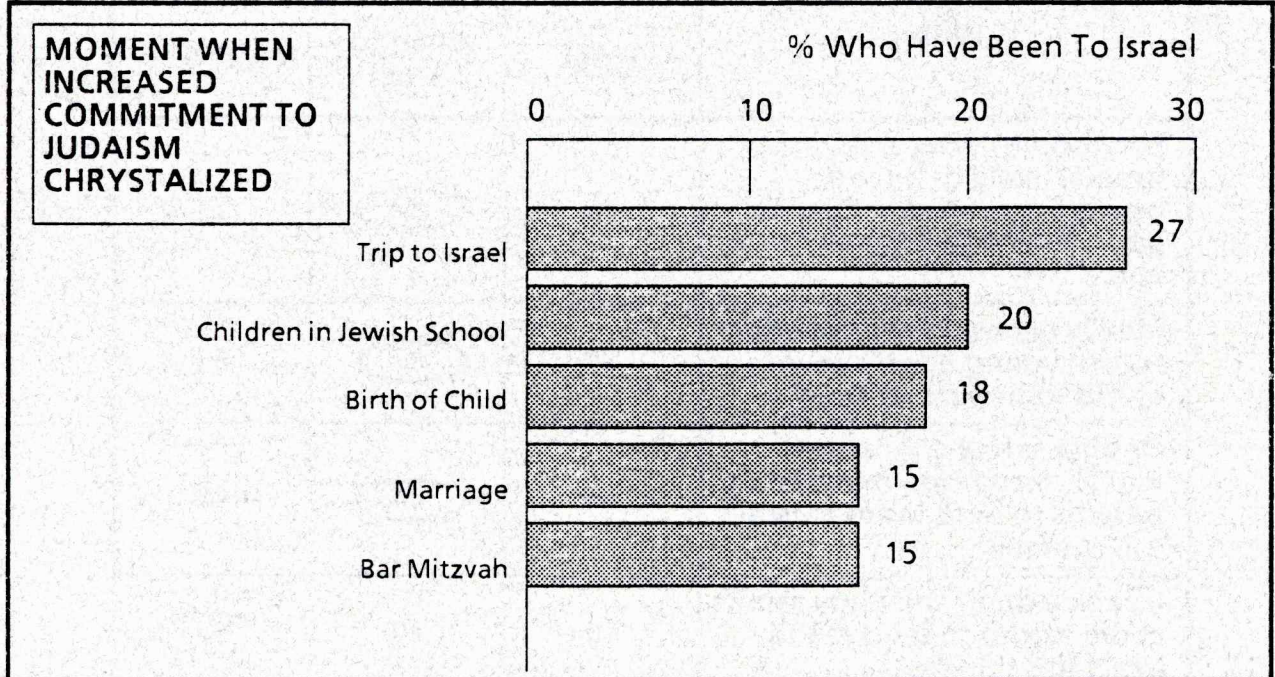
Agree Strongly/ Somewhat With:	% of Jewish youth		
	Total	Been to Israel	Never been
For people my age, a trip to Israel is likely to have a powerful positive influence upon their development as a Jew	76	82	71
Ideally almost every Canadian Jewish young adult should spend some time in Israel	74	87	61
Despite safety concerns I would encourage my friend's parents to send them to Israel this summer	60	68	49
I frankly don't think my family could afford to send me to Israel this summer	46	40	52

**Experience And "Closeness" Are Related**

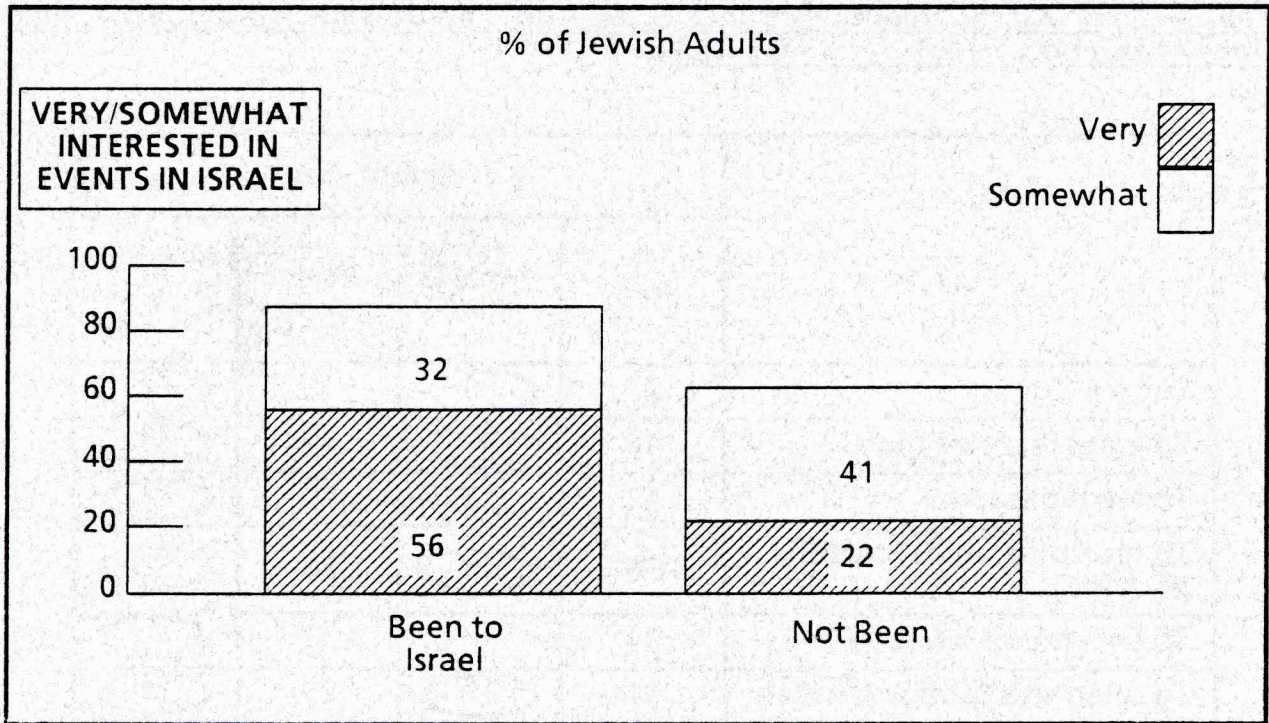
The experience of travel to Israel also shows to be strongly correlated with a sense of closeness to the state.



**Those Who Have Been To Israel Cite The Trip As A Chrystalization Of Increased Commitment To Judaism -- Number One On The List**



Youth Have Some Interest In What Is Happening In Israel, Especially If They Have Been There



Parents And School Play Largest Role In Shaping Attitudes To Israel

Those who have never traveled to Israel are more likely to rely on media for information about Israel, but parents and school are the key sources.

	% of Jewish adults		
	Total	Been to Israel	Never been to Israel
Parents	62	73	50
Friends	53	60	47
Newspaper	38	35	41
School	36	45	26
Synagogue	36	35	37
Television	35	32	39
Magazine	29	28	30

### 3. MOTIVATIONS TO ISRAEL TRAVEL

**The Strongest Motivator For Youth Is To Have Fun, Followed By Meeting People They Know, Seeing Biblical Sites And The Jewish Homeland -- Fun More Important Factor By 2 To 1 Ratio**

	% of Jewish youth			
	Total	Been to Israel	Never been	Intend to go in next few years
To have fun	77	80	75	84
To meet relatives there	44	51	37	56
To see biblical site	42	43	42	53
To see homeland of Jewish people	38	46	30	50
To experience kibbutz life	34	37	33	43
To celebrate Bar/Bat Mitzvah	31	37	25	38
To meet Israelis	29	33	25	40
To go to school	16	24	19	28
To see political environment	10	13	8	15

### Longer Youth Trips Preferred To Shorter Trips By Parents

Strongly Favour Your Child	% of Jewish adults with teenage children
1-3 week trip in summer	38
4-6 week trip in summer	48

**Learning About Jewish Heritage; Working On A Kibbutz; Organized Teen Tours Are More Strongly Favoured By Jewish Adults**

Strongly Favour Your Child	% of Jewish adults		
	Total	Been to Israel	Never been to Israel
Learning more about Jewish heritage	54	59	45
Spending summer working on a kibbutz	45	53	34
Spending a summer with an organized teen group	44	50	38
General touring	41	48	29
Studying hebrew in Israel	37	46	23
Attending university in Israel	35	44	24
Exchange program with Israel's youth	35	42	24
Studying art and culture in Israel	34	41	26
Studying nature and environment in Israel	31	35	24
Spending time on an archaeological dig	28	32	20

**While Adults Want An Educational Experience For Jewish Youth, Youth Want To Be Tourists -- Visiting Sites; Sunning On The Beach; Experiencing City Life; Experiencing Kibbutz Life And Touring Archaeological Digs**

Youth Do Not Want The Tour To Prevent Them From Experiencing Israel	% of Jewish youth		
	Total	Been to Israel	Never been to Israel
Visiting major sites	66	68	66
Sunning on the beach	63	69	58
Experiencing city life in Israel	52	59	47
Touring archaeological sites	49	49	49
Experiencing kibbutz life	44	47	42
Spending Time with Israeli youth	34	37	31
Experiencing Israeli arts/ culture	33	37	29
Traveling on own	27	33	21
Studying hebrew	21	24	18
Working in Israel	19	27	12
Studying Israeli history	16	18	15
Studying Judasim	13	14	11

**Close Friends And/Or Others Their Own Age Are The Preferred Company For Trips To Israel**

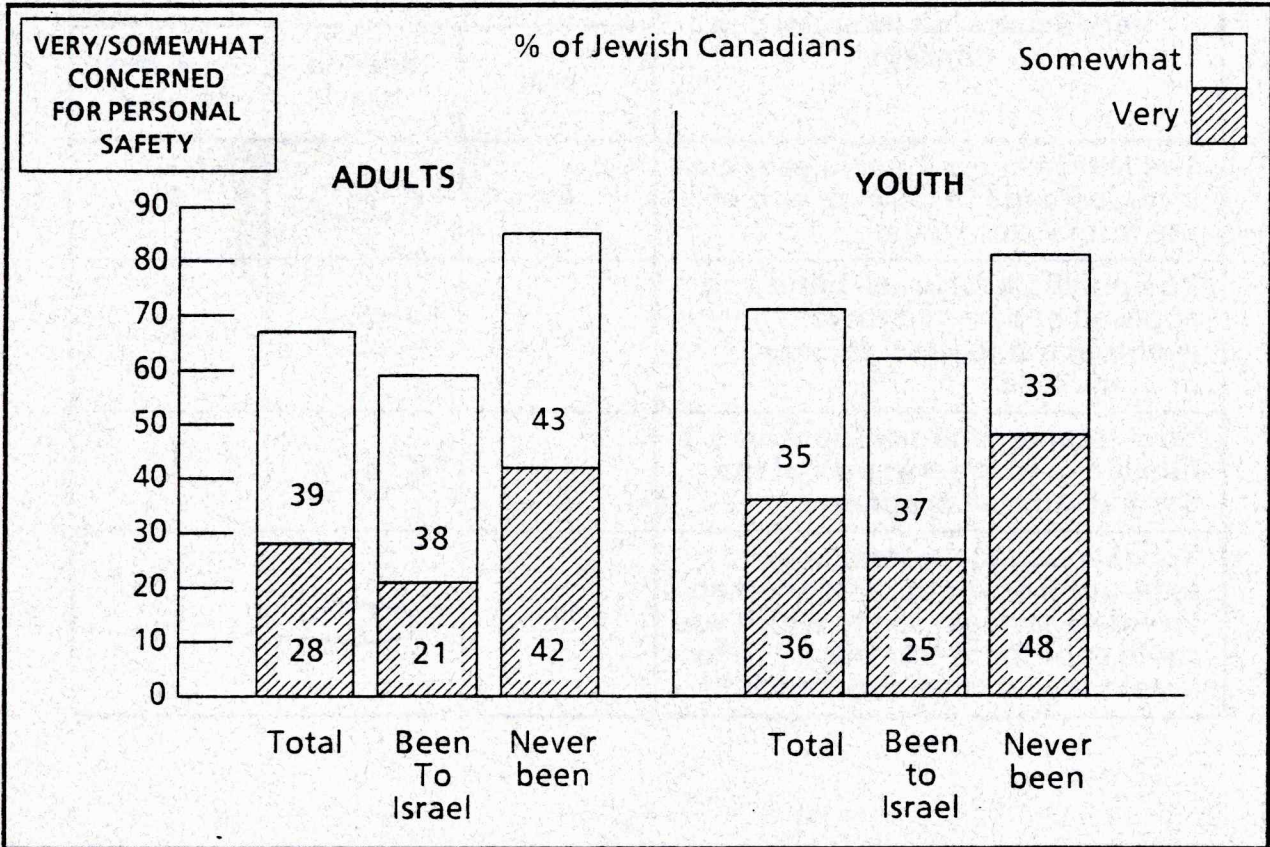
Friends/ People Own Age Deemed Most Appealing Company For Israel Trip	% of Jewish youth		
	Total	Been to Israel	Never been to Israel
Close friends	72	79	67
People your age	48	56	39
Parents	25	26	24
Synagogue group	22	26	19
Alone	11	16	6

**A Bond Program As Well As A High School Program Elicited The Most Interest In Terms Of Creative Packages**

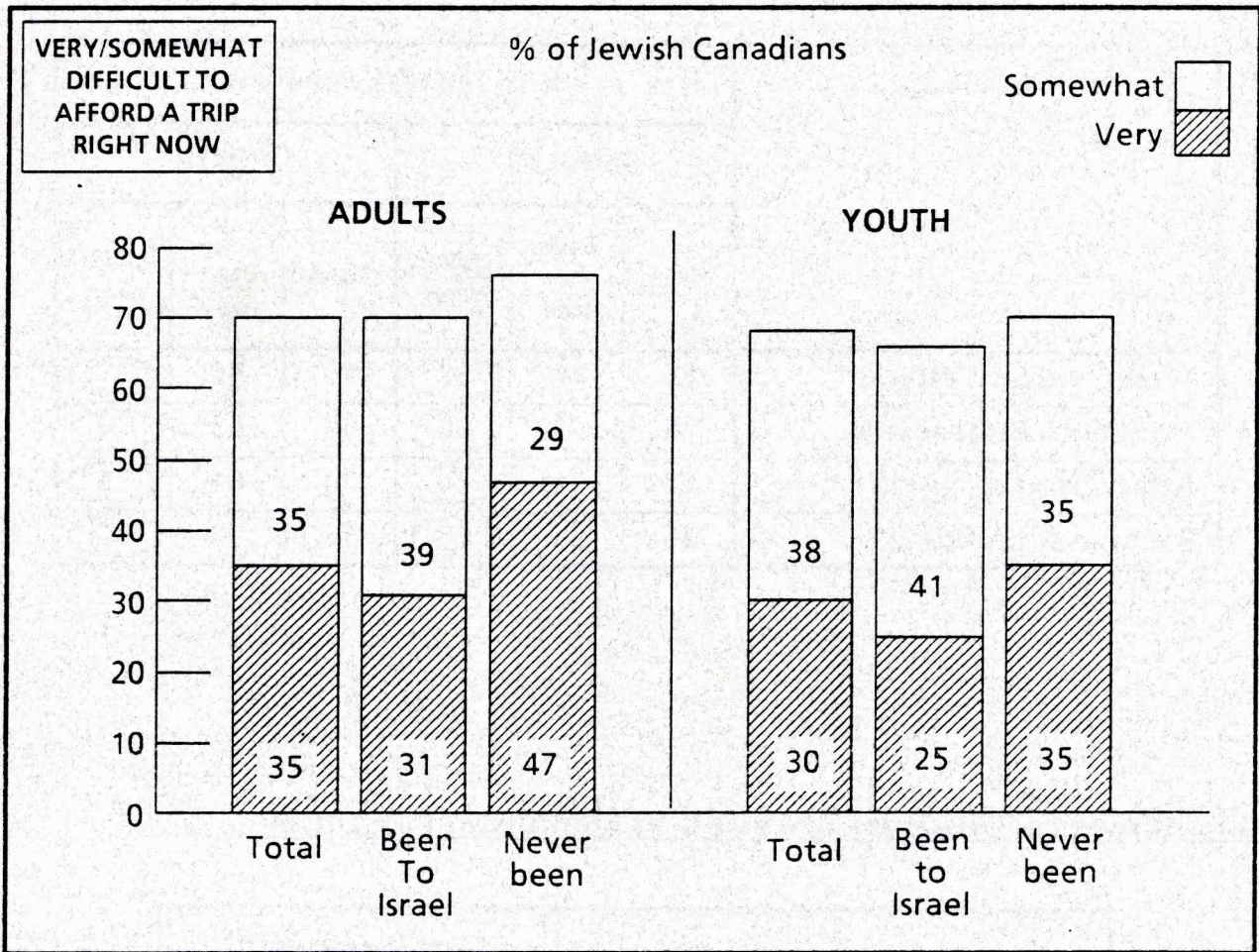
Very/Somewhat Interested In Concept	% of Jewish adults		
	Total	Been to Israel	Never been to Israel
The Jewish high school in your area included a trip to Israel as part of the formal curriculum	49	56	41
You purchase an Israeli bond and apply all or part of it toward an eventual trip to Israel for your child or grandchild	48	54	38
Your local community sponsored a family trip to Israel as part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program	42	47	33
Your Synagogue, community federation or youth centre had an incentive savings plan to which you could contribute towards a trip to Israel for your child or grandchild	38	42	34

#### 4. OBSTACLES

### Safety Concerns Are A Major Issue -- Especially Among Those Who Have Never Been To Israel



# The Cost Of Israeli Travel Is Also Foremost On People's Minds



**Terrorism Is The Key Safety Concern - All Concerns High For Those Who Have Never Been**

	% of Jewish Canadians					
	ADULTS			YOUTH		
	Total	Been to Israel	Never been	Total	Been to Israel	Never been
Armed terrorist attacks	85	84	92	83	76	90
Stoning by Palestinians	79	76	88	69	63	74
Attack by Arab military	75	71	84	70	61	79
Random street crime	56	51	68	58	50	67

**Other Potential Obstacles Are Far Less Significant For Youth**

Very/ Somewhat Likely To Prevent Travel	% of Jewish youth	
	Intend to go in next few years	Do not intend to go
Education commitments	49	69
Political situation	49	55
Family commitment	27	45
Attitude of family	16	17
Attitude of friend	11	8

## CONCLUSIONS

- Two in three Canadian Jewish youth say they are interested in participating in an organized youth trip to Israel -- a strong base from which to start. Interest in highest ...
  - ... among the 13-17 age group
  - ... outside Toronto and Montreal
  - ... among Orthodox and Conservative groups
- Interest falls off in the post high school years.
- Reform Jewish youth are disproportionately less involved in youth trips -- only 9 % have participated thus far compared to 22% overall, and fewer (54%) are interested in this type of trip (versus 65% overall). This should be an immediate challenge.
- People who have been to Israel before are not only more interested in a structured youth trip for themselves, but are more likely to want to recommend Israel travel to other people their own age. Word-of-mouth is a key source of information for potential youth trip participants.
- Friends are perhaps the most important consideration for the youth in deciding whether to go on a youth trip -- peer pressure drives the decision process more than family pressure.

- Those who have never been to Israel (50% of all Canadian Jewish youth) are less likely than others to recognize the emotional and spiritual benefits of such a trip, and while the results on the emotional and spiritual side are evident throughout the database, teaching this is not the answer for the "never experienced" group. It is too abstract a concept.
- In a very real sense, trip providers need to play up the "fun", "comradeship", "share-an-experience-with-your-friends" attitude. Nothing else is close on the motivational spectrum. If the potential participants do not think it will be enjoyable, they will fight it. The educational and spiritual aspects of the trip should be developed further when people have committed. Parents should be assured that the serious side will be covered, and the impact is measurable.
- Greater effort to ensure that youth can travel with close friends and people their own age needs to be made.
- Meeting family (relatives) in Israel is a significant motivator for youth. This too should be developed further in trip planning.

- Since data also indicate that desire to travel to Israel is related to past experience, trip providers should be encouraging former participants to sell the concept to others.
- Data also indicate that those who know others their age in Israel are more likely to want to travel there. A "pen pal" project should be considered.
- Given the choice, more than half of all Canadian Jewish youth would pick some other destination over Israel for a summer trip -- a tie-in with other destinations would make sense.
- Parents exhibit less support for the shorter (1-3 weeks) trips. The preference from the parents standpoint is for trips in the 4-6 week category.
- Both youth and parents have the same perspective on what obstacles exist to Israel travel -- safety and cost. Moreover, safety is an even greater concern for those who have never been to Israel. Obviously every effort to allay these concerns for all parties needs to be made. Our recommendation here is to discuss the issue openly with youth and parents in order to have an open dialogue on the matter, and let all concerns be vented.

- Creative costing programs need to be considered -- the bond program makes sense and should be developed.
- CRB could also consider the feasibility of an annual contest in which, for each of a series of age categories, people are asked to submit papers on Israel youth travel, the people writing the papers deemed most interesting would than be rewarded with a free youth trip of their choice. A program like this could also spark interest in the process among our youth, and enhance their interest in participating.
- Results of the study leave the following positioning statement for Israel travel -- travel to Israel leaves an indelible mark on the spiritual consciousness of Jews. It gives them a sense of attachment, a sense of community, and solidifies their commitment to Judaism. Travel to Israel offers security of roots for Jews, which, in turn, helps them to define the Jewish experience in more confident assertive terms. In this sense, travel to Israel functions as a rite of passage.

**JEWISH IDENTITY IN CANADA :**  
**NATIONAL CHARACTER, REGIONAL DIVERSITY,**  
**AND EMERGING TRENDS**

**July 1991**

**Steven M. Cohen**  
**Professor of Sociology**  
**Queens College, CUNY**

**A Report to:**  
**The CRB Foundation,**  
**Montreal**

## **PREFACE - Data, Methods and Measures**

This analysis relies primarily upon data collected in a survey of a national sample of 972 Canadian Jewish households conducted in late 1990. Goldfarb Consultants of Toronto fielded the study on behalf of The CRB Foundation of Montreal. On the provincial level, the regional breakdown of the sample closely approximates the geographic distribution of Canadian Jews reported in the 1986 Canadian census.

The principal aim of the original research was to learn about how to stimulate travel to Israel by teenagers and young adults.

## JEWISH IDENTITY IN CANADA

What is the nature and quality of Jewish commitment and involvement among Canadian Jews today? To address this question, this report on the first national random sample door-to-door survey of Canadian Jews begins with the prevailing assumptions held by most Canadian Jewish leaders. Using these assumptions as a starting point, the analysis treats them as working hypotheses to be tested, interpreted and refined. In short, this report asks to what extent are the characterizations of Canadian Jewish identity advanced by most knowledgeable observers in Canada truly valid and accurate?

Probably the most fundamental widely held assumption is that the identity of Canadian Jews is quite distinct from that found among their Jewish counterparts in the United States. In the view of many leaders, Canadian Jewry is "one generation behind" the United States in the "assimilation" process. Correlatively, it is one generation closer to the well-spring of rich Jewish life in the Europe of yesteryear.

A second critical assumption entails regional diversity. Canadian Jewish communal leaders often speak of significant regional variations across their vast country. They believe that although Canadian Jewry has a distinctive national character, the major Jewish population centers within Canada differ in crucial respects from one another.

The third key assumption entails the younger generation. Notwithstanding what they regard as a well-founded pride in current high levels of Jewish involvement and participation, many Canadian Jewish leaders also express fears for the persistence of intensive Jewish commitment in the next generation. They are concerned that today's younger adults will fall short of their parents' levels of Jewish involvement. If they do, then, by implication, the Jewish community ten or twenty years down the road may fail to exhibit the same degree of vitality and participation as it does today.

Drawing upon these three elements in the self-image of Canadian Jewish communal leadership, this report revolves around these questions:

- 1) To what extent are Canadian Jews qualitatively different from American Jewry? Specifically, are Canadian Jews really "more Jewish" than U.S. Jews?
- 2) To what extent do Canadian Jews in the major population centers exhibit significant regional variations in the distribution of key measures of Jewish involvement and participation? Are the Jews in some cities generally "more Jewish" than those elsewhere?
- 3) How do younger adults differ from their older counterparts in their Jewish behaviour and attitudes? More critically, is Canadian Jewry becoming less Jewishly active with the passing of earlier generations? Are older Jews "more Jewish" than younger Jews?

These three themes -- national character, regional diversity, and emerging trends -- provide the framework for this report on the contemporary state of Canadian Jewish identity and involvement.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

1. Canadian Jews observe more ritual practices than do American Jews. The gaps between the two groups are especially large with respect to lighting Sabbath candles and to maintaining meat and dairy dishes.
2. Relative to American Jewry, Canadian Jewry is characterized by more sizable Orthodox and more sizable secular Jewish population segments. In contrast with the United States, the appeal of Canadian Reform Judaism is, at this date, rather limited. In both countries, Conservative Judaism is the largest single branch.
3. Canadian Jews are far more closely knit, substantially more Jewishly philanthropic, and somewhat better organized than American Jews. Canadian-American gaps are especially pronounced with respect to philanthropic giving, in-group friendship, and fluency in Yiddish and Hebrew.
4. When compared with American Jews, Canadian Jews are more in touch with Israel and Israelis, more knowledgeable about Israel, more actively pro-Israel, and more Zionist in many senses of the term.
5. Jewish identity patterns vary considerably by locality. Montreal Jewry is more observant and more Orthodox than other Canadian Jewry. Montreal Jews are also generally more communally active than Jews elsewhere. Winnipeg Jewry is noted for its Yiddishism, organizational life, Conservative synagogue affiliation, and, for Canada, a lower than average level of attachment to Israel. British Columbian Jewry falls below the national average in several measures of ritual observance and institutional affiliation. And Toronto Jewry is distinguished by its typicality. With over 40% of Canadian Jews, Toronto generally scores neither very high nor very low on measures of Jewish involvement. On the whole, Toronto area Jews are somewhat less involved in many aspects of Jewish life than those in Montreal, but more involved than most Jews elsewhere.
6. The stability across age groups in most forms of ritual observance, the apparent growth in traditional observance and in Orthodoxy among the young, and the signs of stability in synagogue membership all suggest persistence in the intensity of religious life among younger Jews. Clearly, with respect to religious activity, fears for the commitment of younger Jews are unfounded.
7. Despite some aspects of Israel involvement where younger adults match or exceed their older counterparts, the key items that measure feelings of closeness to Israel do demonstrate an unmistakable gap between older and younger Canadian Jews.

8. Taken in their entirety, the diverse findings of differences in Jewish identity between older and younger Jews in Canada present a mixed picture. In some ways, such as traditional ritual observance, younger Jews are actually more involved than older Jews. In other ways, such as many forms of communal affiliation and most forms of ritual practice, younger Jews are hardly different from their elders. In still other ways, such as emotional attachment to Israel or fluency in Yiddish, younger Jews score lower than older Jews. These patterns certainly point to change in the nature of Jewish commitment in Canada. But they do not point to any clear shift in one direction or the other. If these data do tell us something about the future directions of Jewish involvement in Canada, they suggest neither massive erosion of Jewish identity nor wholesale intensification.
9. Vast numbers of Canadian Jews express anxieties about anti-Semitism even though very few have suffered verbal or more serious abuse because they are Jews.

**COMMITTED ZIONISTS AND CURIOUS TOURISTS:  
TRAVEL TO ISRAEL AMONG CANADIAN JEWISH YOUTH**

**Submitted to:**

**CRB Foundation, Montreal**

**Prepared by:**

**Steven M. Cohen  
Professor of Sociology  
Queens College, CUNY  
April, 1991**

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

1. Young people who have been to Israel ("visitors") score much higher than those who have never been to Israel ("non-visitors") on several measures of Israel attachment.
2. Two-time visitors are much more attached to Israel than one-time visitors.
3. Moreover, one-time visitors are not much different in their attitudes toward Israel than non-visitors who intend to go.
4. Tentative conclusion: One trip is not "enough." Strong Israel attachment is developed for most only in the second trip.
5. Implication: We need to develop stage-two programs and to market return travel to Israel for those who have already visited.
6. Inference: Israel attachment is fostered by the home, school, peer group, and community prior to travel, as well as by the experience of being in Israel.
7. Most one-time visitors do not intend to return within three years. Many are not passionately committed to Israel.
8. Inference: Some programs "work" better for some people; some people are more readily influenced by a trip to Israel.
9. Implication: We need to understand what constitutes a good trip to Israel for which participants, and what makes for a good participant.
10. Attachment to Israel decays rapidly after the visitor returns to Canada.
11. Implication: Return trips should be marketed at the end of the first visit to Israel, or soon after the participant returns home.

12. Parents who send their children to Israel or encourage them to go are those parents who have been to Israel before, who are highly attached to Israel, are Orthodox or Conservative, are less concerned about physical danger, and are less concerned about cost.
13. Implication: Parents who have been to Israel offer an ideal target audience for marketing and for recruiting others.
14. Four factors especially influence youngsters' chances of going to Israel: prior trips to Israel, parental encouragement, interest in Israel, and friends who have been to Israel.
15. Implication: Israel sells itself; parents sell Israel, friends sell Israel.
16. Parents are concerned about safety and safety concerns impede encouraging children to visit Israel. Safety concerns are highest among parents who have never visited.
17. Cost concerns are highest among households earning under \$60,000 combined income a year. They are also high among affluent families who have not sent any children to Israel.
18. Implication: For lower income homes, lowering costs is useful. Upper income homes may imagine exaggerated costs of travel.

**MARKETING TRIPS TO ISRAEL:  
Recommendations of the  
Israel Experience Marketing Project**

**. Jay Levenberg**

**February, 1992**

## **MARKETING TRIPS TO ISRAEL**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE MARKETING PROJECT**

During the course of the past year, the Israel Experience Marketing Project administered the following research:

- ▶ a 16 page survey among 1063 families throughout the United States with children between the ages of 11 and 24
- ▶ a 20 page survey among 31 program providers in the United States and Canada
- ▶ personal interviews in 5 communities with "influentials" (rabbis, educators, youth group leaders, Israel desk personnel, shlichim, and lay leaders from all segments of the community)

We also examined the materials used by 15 program providers to promote their youth trips to Israel.

We asked each of the three groups (families, program providers, and community "influentials") to assess for us what makes youth travel to Israel more or less marketable. All of our questions were intended to reveal which aspects of programs and/or marketing were appealing to parents and children, and which aspects were seen as obstacles. Additionally, in the community interviews we explored how community dynamics enhanced or hindered the ability of local agencies to "sell" their youth travel programs.

The purpose of this research was to help us develop a set of marketing techniques and themes that will have a universal applicability to North American agencies offering youth travel and study programs in Israel.

The following are the marketing recommendations that we feel will have the greatest positive impact on promoting youth travel to Israel among North American Jewish youth and their families.

## **RECOMMENDATION #1 -- MARKET SEGMENTATION**

**We should segment our target markets and tailor our marketing strategies according to the benefits most appealing to each group.**

Most of today's marketing of Israel youth travel programs is a "mass market" approach that reflects very slight or no target market segmentation beyond age of the participant. Our research reveals that different benefits will trigger interest among various target groups. The following are groups and corresponding benefits that we have identified:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
Children Generally	Fun, friendships, passage to maturity, adventure
Parents & Grandparents Generally	Development of independence, self-confidence, academic growth
Religiously Active Families	Reinforcement of Jewish identity, long term link to Israel
Secular Families	Development of Jewish cultural identity
Families That Have Never Been to Israel	Safety, modernism, no hidden conspiracies of long term commitments or selling of aliyah
Youth Who Have Been to Israel	New dimensions, more depth, new experiences that build on their earlier visit(s)

All marketing efforts including brochures, advertising, videos, and personal presentations should address these various groups and the particular benefits. Program providers should also structure their marketing to single out certain groups for targeted promotions. These segmented approaches should emphasize the benefits that most appeal to that particular group.

## **RECOMMENDATION #2 -- INFORMAL EDUCATION (PUBLICITY)**

**We need to develop an ongoing publicity campaign involving recurring stories about the positive benefits of youth travel to Israel.**

Our research reveals that families with a history of formal Jewish education (for the children) and/or a familiarity with Israel were more likely to send their children on organized youth trips to Israel. However, there is a large portion of the Jewish population that is not regularly exposed to the environments that build commitment to Israel travel. For this "uninitiated" group, we need to circulate stories that educate about Israel and its potential meaning to all kinds of Jewish youth.

Stories should focus on past participants and highlight the benefits as listed under Recommendation #1. The key is to make the reader literally or unconsciously exclaim, "That person is like me" (if it's the youth reading it), or "That youngster is like my child" (if it's the parent reading it). The family may never have pictured their child in an organized youth trip to Israel, but an effective story now has the family seeing the possibility of such a trip.

Story angles should be matched to a particular medium as in the following examples:

### Story Angle

### Potential Media

Adventure of Israel travel as a passage to maturity

Children's magazines; synagogue bulletins; Jewish and secular school papers

Reinforcement of Jewish identity

Secular and Jewish Press lifestyle or cultural sections; synagogue bulletins

Academic Development

Secular and Jewish Press education sections; synagogue bulletins; Jewish day school and secular school papers

Not only will publicity generate interest and "sell" on its own, it will also set the stage for future advertising or direct mail. Ads with limited space that are developed within stringent budgets cannot be expected to sell to anyone except those already inclined or initiated. Ads that follow a publicity campaign of awareness and commitment building will have an effect on much larger populations.

### **RECOMMENDATION # 3 -- BUILDING ANTICIPATION**

**We should build anticipation of a trip to Israel among youngsters long before they are age eligible.**

Studies that we have conducted in the private sector reveal that building anticipation is one of the most effective marketing strategies when trying to cater to youngsters. Rather than wait until the child is age appropriate for youth travel to Israel, we should begin building anticipation to participate in an Israel trip among children 9 to 12 years of age. (For their parents, we should begin educating them at the same time that youth travel to Israel will benefit their younger teens.)

Here are the practical ways to implement this concept of anticipation:

- ▶ Rent mailing lists of local Jewish youth between the ages of 9 and 12.
- ▶ Send brochures along with a cover letter designed to build up the excitement of a trip to Israel when the recipient becomes age eligible.

This letter could offer literature about Israel, Israeli postage stamps, opportunities to view travel slides and to meet Israeli personalities such as soldiers, athletes, and others.

- ▶ Develop a pre-teen youth travel club that will be a one or two year long program of "study" and preparation.

Each participant could receive a "passport" that is stamped each time the youngster attends the travel club program. At the end of the year or two, when the participant is age eligible, the completed "passport" could qualify him or her for a reduced travel program fee.

- ▶ Set up a pen-pal club, sponsored by one local program provider or a consortium of program providers, which matches North American pre-teens with Israeli youth.
- ▶ Offer ongoing programs and mailings to all incentive saving plan participants to build and maintain the excitement and anticipation of the trip.

#### **RECOMMENDATION #4 -- COHORT TRAVEL GROUPS**

**Groups of cohorts (common interests like Boy/Girl Scouts, common bond like classmates, etc.) should be encouraged to plan and participate in group trips to Israel.**

Both our survey data and our community interviews reveal a growing interest in group activities among the age groups we're targeting for youth travel to Israel. The approach of cohort travel groups also capitalizes on the anticipation factor referred to earlier (a group of third graders can begin planning the trip and itinerary as a class project).

To implement the approach of cohort travel groups, agencies should develop:

- ▶ a curriculum guide for classroom teachers that integrates classroom preparation with a class trip to Israel

This can be an after-school program or extra curricular activity so you don't alienate families who don't want to participate.

- ▶ group travel packages for youth groups such as Jewish Scout troops, youngsters from the same synagogue, JCC youth groups, and athletic teams
- ▶ working partnerships with summer camps to offer group trips for camp alumni

The partnership agreement could offer campers a special travel discount incentive after a predetermined number of years in that camp. It could be built into the camp program, thus adding an attractive marketing strategy for the camp as well.

- ▶ working relationships with the various incentive savings plans

## RECOMMENDATION #5 -- AD AND PROMOTIONAL THEMES

**We should apply very specific benefits like friendship, building confidence, developing independence, etc. to theme ad campaigns and promotional literature.**

Our research confirmed specific benefits of youth travel that interest parents and potential youth participants. These benefits should be reflected in our advertising and promotion.

For example, if we know that building confidence and developing independence are appealing benefits for parents, we should run testimonial ads that attest to the realization of this benefit.

*"Our fifteen year old son was a shy, young man unsure of himself. After four weeks on an organized youth trip to Israel, he is brimming with confidence and self esteem."*

Parents of recent participant in ABC Youth Travel Program. Call 555-1234 for details.

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*"I have seen an amazing transformation among teens that have gone on organized youth trips to Israel. They come back worldly, sophisticated, and sure of their Jewish identity."*

Susan Gold, high school guidance counselor. Call ABC Youth Travel Programs at 555-1234 for details.

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If we know that friendships and adventures are benefits for the youth participants, an ad like the following could run:

*"The four weeks in Israel was exciting enough. But, the bunch of American and Israeli friends I now have made this trip really awesome."*

Josh Goldberg, age 16, recent participant in ABC Youth Travel Program. Call 555-1234 for details.

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If we know that the development and/or reinforcement of Jewish identity is a benefit sought by parents, we could run the following ad:

*"No matter what the level of Jewish education, there is no better way to reinforce Jewish identity in your child than an organized youth trip to Israel."*

Rabbi Sam Gold. Call ABC Youth Travel Programs at 555-1234 for details.

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## **RECOMMENDATION #6 -- USE OF CHILDREN'S MEDIA**

**The marketing of youth travel to Israel must include the use of advertising and publicity in children's media like children and teen magazines, school papers, radio, brochures written for youth, camp brochures, and the like.**

The first impetus to consider a youth trip to Israel can come from either the parent, grandparent, or child. However, agencies promoting youth travel to Israel basically rely on adult media (including Jewish press, secular press, and direct mail) to promote their trips. The problem with this approach is that you're not cultivating the interest of the child; he or she has to wait for the parent's initiative.

To develop the effective use of youth media, agencies should begin:

- ▶ Subscribing to and studying youth magazines like Teen, Sassy, Boy's Life, Sports Illustrated for Kids, Zillions, Scholastic News, etc.
- ▶ Identifying the current interests, concerns, and fears of young people.

For example, teen research tells us that teens are very concerned about the environment, diet and nutrition, self image, socialization, coping and ethics. These issues should be woven into Israel travel programs and marketing.

- ▶ Developing advertising placements in these media either on a regional basis or as part of a consortium of agencies.
- ▶ Developing publicity stories that would fit into the format of teen literature

For example, if a youth trip to Israel had a component of environmental issues built into the program, a follow-up story in Scholastic News would reach every teenager in North America.

- ▶ Using inserts or tag-on messages in camp brochures and Jewish Community Center brochures that children read

## **RECOMMENDATION #7 -- CENTRALIZED INFORMATION SOURCE**

**Local, regional, and/or national centralized information sources for Israel programs should be developed.**

There are some examples we found of effective city-wide Israel Travel Program Desks in the United States and Canada. However, we also see a great deal of ignorance and confusion among prospective clients as well as community "influentials" about availability of programs, financial aid, etc. There is a vital need among clients and community leaders for easy access to a non-partisan information source of Israel youth travel information.

The services that could be offered by centralized information sources include:

- ▶ a widely advertised toll free telephone number
- ▶ electronic bulletin board
- ▶ a program directory

Regional ads can fund an electronic bulletin board and directory.

- ▶ counseling and referral services to determine the appropriate program for individual needs and interests
- ▶ information on financial assistance including scholarships, loans, and incentive savings programs

One possible structure of centralized information is a tier system that begins with regional centers in the major Jewish population areas. A national information center would work in conjunction with regional centers and provide services to areas not in the service vicinity of the regional offices.

## **RECOMMENDATION #8 -- TRAINING**

**As new marketing techniques are developed for Israel youth travel, there should be increased training in the "field" in the proper implementation of these techniques.**

The program providers to date have needed to be program developers, counselors, recruiters, salespeople, advertisers, and their own publicist. We need to round out the skills of program providers especially in the areas of marketing, public relations, and advertising. This training is important in the provider-client relationship, but also in the provider-community relationship.

Training is needed in the following areas:

- ▶ Matching potential participants with appropriate programs

Both families and community "influentials" cite skepticism about providers' ability or interest in the proper matching of program and participant.

- ▶ Developing a better working knowledge of all available programs and ways to enter into referral network partnerships
- ▶ Developing ongoing opportunities to keep community "influentials" better informed and articulate about Israel travel programs
- ▶ Presentation skills that convey a sensitivity to a prospect's unique needs and interests
- ▶ Developing public relations and publicity skills
- ▶ Developing advertising and literature that reflect an awareness of issues important to parents and children
- ▶ Developing training skills to train other community leaders to promote Israel youth travel

## **RECOMMENDATION #9 -- CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING**

**Agencies should develop co-operative marketing and sales approaches, perhaps by regions, that increase the possibility of a trip "sale" with every call.**

Our work in this area tells us that many trip leads are being wasted when a prospect calls for one type of trip experience but doesn't ultimately sign up for that trip experience. A structure is needed that formally and consistently refers the prospect to another suitable Israel trip possibility. Otherwise, the party who may still have a general interest in youth travel to Israel is left to wander through the maze of trip programs on his or her own.

Co-operative approaches should be developed in the following areas:

▶ Advertising campaigns

Advertising can be more sophisticated and extensive if resources were pooled.

▶ Referral networks should be established especially among programs that get viable candidates for the other's program

▶ Videos

These should promote youth travel to Israel and then end with sponsorship statements from a number of agencies.

If we looked at the Israel youth travel as a continental wide business effort of North American agencies, it is a business that is too fragmented and that is losing sales as a result. Collaboration and cooperation will be an investment with high returns for all concerned.

## **RECOMMENDATION # 10 -- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Formalized and consistent approaches should be developed for program providers to mobilize the support of key community leaders.**

In every community, there are key individuals who, by virtue of their positions and/or personalities, have the potential to greatly influence teens and their families regarding participation in organized youth travel to Israel. Their influence is felt either through active support and advocacy, or through ambivalence, inaction, or support of conflicting agendas.

The following influentials were identified as key gatekeepers in all communities we visited.

(The first three were cited most frequently.) Rabbis; Alumni; Friends of Parents and Children; Educators; Federation Leadership; Youth Group Leaders; Guidance Counselors; College Year Abroad Counselors; Israel Desk Personnel; Shlichim

Because of their physical and social proximity, these influentials are in the best position to recruit their constituents, friends, and acquaintances for Israel youth travel. But, they must be provided with current marketing tools, knowledge, and techniques.

Here are some practical guidelines for mobilizing support among community leaders:

- ▶ Local Federations should be encouraged to include a component of youth travel to Israel in their Israel missions for lay leaders.
- ▶ Israel youth travel program providers should sponsor semi-annual city wide lunch programs where current data about youth travel to Israel is presented.
- ▶ A simple newsletter that highlights interesting facts and figures about specific travel programs should be mailed on a regular basis to all community leaders.

This newsletter should especially feature the specific individuals that went on recent trips, so community leaders can start to picture their constituents and acquaintances in this kind of program.

- ▶ All current brochures should be mailed with a personal cover note to all community leaders.

DRAFT -- COMMENTS INVITED

January 24, 1992

The Good Trip to Israel

Steven M. Cohen and Susan Wall

A Report to the CRB Foundation

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## INTRODUCTION

### Organized Youth Trips to Israel and Their Importance

Every year, in one framework or another, thousands of North American Jewish young people travel to Israel. Some accompany their families; others go to study at a university or a yeshiva for several months to a year; and still others travel in the context of organized educational programs. For many, especially those in the later high school years, these organized programs constitute their first serious encounter with Israel. These experiences often become the gateway to more lengthy visits in the years ahead. The vast majority of college-age students who are now studying in the year-long academic and yeshiva programs first came to Israel as adolescents in some organized summer experience.

Both formal research and personal testimony demonstrate convincingly that the short-term summer-time Israel experience very often profoundly influences how youngsters relate to Israel and to their Jewishness. Of course, not all teen-agers experience the same effects; but, in general, participants in Israel summer programs do come back changed in one or more ways. Thus, they certainly return to North America with a more vivid picture of Israel; they frequently acquire or strengthen friendships with other participants, and sometimes with Israelis as well; most are more willing and able to advocate Israel's cause in organized and informal settings; some become more involved in their local youth group or synagogue; some become more religiously observant; and many become interested in returning to Israel. For many, these changes are both enduring and dramatic.

The reasons underlying the power of the Israel experience are not hard to fathom. Israel, to say the least, is a compelling, absorbing, and complex country that inevitably speaks to the Jewish identity of Diaspora Jews. The landscape is rich and varied, as are the people who inhabit it. The society is alive with conflicts and tensions that often command the world's attention. Moreover, the organized summer trips take place at a crucial point in identity development and, as informal educational experiences, they can touch individuals in many different ways.

In recognition of the potentially powerful positive impact the Israel experience can have upon North American Jewish young people, the CRB Foundation of Montreal has embarked upon a multi-pronged efforts whose chief objectives can be summarized as follows:

- 1) To sharply increase the quantity of young American Jews who visit Israel; and.
- 2) To dramatically improve the quality of the educational experience of those young people who travel to Israel in organized programs.

This study of "goodness" in trips to Israel advances the latter objective. By better understanding what makes for a good trip to Israel, the CRB Foundation hopes to help practitioners, policy makers, and their supporters enhance the quality of the Israel experience for the young traveler.

## The Purpose of This Study

The chief objective of this study is to identify and elucidate the key components of a "good" short-term trip to Israel for North American Jewish adolescents. Our purpose here is not to evaluate specific trips, to suggest that certain trips are better or worse than others. Rather, we understand that there are elements of "goodness" in all trips and, frankly, shortcomings in all. We seek those elements that in the minds of trip purveyors, young participants, parents, and outside observers generally tend to enrich and magnify the educational impact of the adolescents' experience in Israel. As a matter of definition, we are concerned only with organized group trips to Israel, and not the experience of individual travelers or independent groups such as families and friends.

We readily concede that "goodness" is an elusive and ambiguous concept. Trips differ widely in their objectives and their clientele. What is good for one trip may not be good for another. Nevertheless, we do contend that these differences notwithstanding, certain features of goodness generally characterize most sorts of organized experiences in Israel for Jewish youngsters. Indeed, with slight modification, we believe that the lessons we draw below can be extended to older age groups as well.

We have chosen to define the good elements as those that we believe promote the achievement of educational goals. This approach is consistent with the professed goals of the Israel youth programs. As contrasted with, say, tour operators who bring Europeans to Eilat's very attractive beaches, Israel youth program directors say they see themselves primarily as educators and measure their success in educational terms. Typically, they define the ultimate objectives of their programs in at least one of the following ways (if not all three):

- 1) Enhancing Jewish commitment, knowledge, skills; and/or
- 2) Enhancing Zionist commitment, or knowledge of Israel, past or present; and/or
- 3) Strengthening formal and informal ties to the community, in part by building relationships with Israelis and committed Jewish youth.

To be clear, we can offer no convincing evidence that the elements of goodness we identify below will actually help programs achieve these goals. Nor can we single out with confidence those elements which are most crucial, that is, those which exert the most salutary impact on the participants.

Rather, we make a more modest claim. We work off of the axiomatic premise that educationally sound trips are somehow "better" than those which violate very fundamental principles in the educational literature. By analogy, a "good" concert is not defined as one where the audience wants more, or wants to come back, or has had its musical senses aroused and satiated. Rather, a good concert is one that meets the highest aesthetic standards of musical performers, composers, and critics. Presumably, such performances will achieve the desired impact on their audiences as well. But, just as critics of music judge excellence by internal aesthetic standards and not by the impact on the audience, so too do we advance our judgments of what constitutes excellence in trips to Israel on the basis of standards internal to the world of informal Jewish and Zionist education.

## **Intended Audience**

We address three audiences in this report:

1) supporters of Israel educational travel, such as the CRB Foundation itself, Jewish federations, and private philanthropists;

2) communal professionals who organize, sponsor or recommend, Israel educational travel, such as those who typically manage Jewish Community Center programs Jewish schools, Boards of Jewish Education, synagogue youth groups, and others who work with North American Jewish youth; and

3) purveyors of Israel educational travel, that is, those who direct programs, large and small, that cater to groups of adolescent Jewish youth.

For the supporters of Israel youth travel, we hope to help them make wiser and more confident decisions about which trips to support and which sorts of innovations they can support that will make trips more valuable. We are also ready to admit that we see a study of Israel youth travel as serving, in part, as a piece of advocacy that may well stimulate philanthropic agencies and individuals to extend further assistance to this important field of adolescent Jewish education.

For the communal professionals, we hope to alert them to the critical value of a highly planful, educational approach. We hope to alert them to the complexity of this field, the diversity of programs, and the importance of matching the right participants with the right programs. In our experience, educators who should know better all too often cede near-total responsibility for planning and executing Israel youth trips to outside agencies. In doing so, they often fail to attend to the particular needs of their young people and fail to clarify or shape the specific objectives of their particular trip.

Last, we also hope to inform and provoke the purveyors of Israel travel, the true experts in this field. We hope that they will find some concrete uses for this document. One reviewer of an early draft thought it would serve to help train his middle-management and line staff. Another told us that our early research helped him advocate the cause of higher educational standards in a particular institutional context. We hope that this study will cause even some very experienced purveyors to re-think some of their procedures and to challenge some of their fundamental assumptions and educational philosophy. Perhaps it may remind some of important issues that they themselves articulated to us but freely admitted that they had failed to attend to.

## **Methodology**

In the last decade or so, researchers have published several works that seek to identify goodness or excellence in schools, large corporations, or other organizations. These works have been ethnographic in character, that is, they rely heavily on informal observations of the organizations at work and in-depth interviews with key participants located at all points

in the hierarchy, from top to bottom. Although less ambitious than those other well-known book-length monographs, this study on goodness in young people's trips to Israel is situated within this research tradition.

The research for this project took place during much of 1991 and early 1992. The period itself was one relatively free from the unusually disturbing events that have disrupted Israel travel in the past. However, just prior to this period, the Gulf War had seriously obstructed recruitment efforts during many of the crucial months when teen-agers and their parents make decisions regarding summer travel and vacation plans. As a result, almost all of the Israel summer programs in 1991 experienced an "off-year," although enrollment certainly rebounded after the conflict ceased in late winter. As far as we can tell, the unusual events in this period had little impact on the conclusions we drew about what constitutes excellence in trips to Israel.

We decided at the outset to focus our research on North American Jewish youth trips for high school age youngsters participating in short-term, summer-time programs. If more young people will participate in Israel educational travel programs, they are likely to do so in the context of these sorts of trips.

We began our research by developing a set of working hypotheses. These set forth our initial hunches as to what constituted the key ingredients of goodness. These were drawn from several disparate sources, most notably, some preliminary work by Dr. Barry Chazan, a cursory review of the literature on good schools, and our own professional experience.

In consultation with about a dozen experts and leading practitioners, we then selected several groups to observe in the field, that is, while they were participating in a program in Israel. We selected these groups (see Appendix) so as to achieve diversity in terms of several characteristics: ideology of sponsor; geographic origins; duration; cost; selectivity; and other factors. We intentionally over-selected those groups possessed of certain initial advantages. Thus, we observed several groups that are the recipient of very significant philanthropic support or, in one case, of unusually high fees for participation. We also chose to observe several groups affiliated with camps and youth movements. We felt that we could more readily witness especially distinctive elements of goodness when a program operates without significant fiscal constraints or where the youth are among the most Judaically committed and socially cohesive.

We or our research associates spent a full day or more with each group. We were free to ask questions of staff and participants. Universally, trip purveyors, staff, and the youthful participants welcomed our presence and were gracious and forthcoming in the interviews.

We also chose to observe groups at different sorts of sites while they were engaged in different sorts of activities. These included hiking, sight-seeing, lectures, meals, wrap-up sessions, bus travel, and social service projects.

During the next stage of our research, we spoke with roughly two dozen senior practitioners in the field of Israel travel for North American Jewish youngsters (see Appendix for list of interviews). Interviews typically lasted about two hours. The trip purveyors talked freely about their programs and the larger issues raised in this research. They also readily provided a range of written materials that we requested and subsequently examined. These included: recruitment brochures, pre-trip information for parents and participants, training materials for counselors, itineraries, instructional materials, and source

books.

Finally, we produced a penultimate draft version of this report and circulated same for comments from various experts in the field. We are grateful to them, to the senior professionals who gave us of their time and ideas, and to the participants and staff on the several groups we observed.

## **SUMMARY OF KEY ELEMENTS OF GOODNESS IN YOUTH TRIPS TO ISRAEL**

**OVERALL:** The design, planning, and execution of the trip are all undertaken with a great degree of seriousness, with a keen attention to details, and with the awareness that both formal and informal experiences and all encounters, planned or unplanned, are part of the educational experience.

### **RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

Participants are recruited for and matched with the program that is right for them.

The program understands who the participants are and plans the trip accordingly.

The program provides the participants with accurate information before the trip so that the young people know what to expect and what is expected of them.

Good programs get "good kids" through selective recruitment or excellent preparation.

The participants undergo pre-trip preparation that enhances their cognitive, emotional, and social readiness for the trip.

The trip recruits young people who share common background, common interest, or common salient characteristics.

### **THE STAFF**

The director projects a clearly articulated vision and translates that vision into reality.

The counselors exhibit excellence as informal Jewish educators of Jewish adolescents. They can interact well with teen-agers, they personally reflect the program's Judaic philosophy, they serve as positive and accessible role models, and they understand their role as informal educators rather than glorified chaperons.

The staff is well-trained as informal Jewish educators, in the specific objectives of the program, and in how to make use of Israel as a learning experience.

The program manages to retain veteran staff from one year to the next.

The counselors are numerous enough to attend to the needs of the participants.

An experienced educator is a continual and ongoing presence with the group.

The guides see themselves as informal Jewish educators.

## **THE PHILOSOPHY: JUDAIC AND EDUCATIONAL**

The program has a clearly articulated Judaic and educational philosophy that the staff has "bought into" and that pervades the trip experience.

## **THE ITINERARY AND CURRICULUM**

The Jewish and educational philosophy strongly influence the choice of the sites to be visited and how they are utilized.

The trip is built around educational sub-themes; days are planned as educationally thematic units.

The program units are individually successful. Each such unit should stand on its own as an island of excellence.

The itinerary is planned with awareness of the sequence, flow, rhythm, and balance of experiences.

## **THE TRIP EXPERIENCE: THE FUNDAMENTALS**

Participants enjoy the trip; they have fun. But recreational activities have educational import.

The logistics of the trip run smoothly and they facilitate a flexible itinerary, one that can change during the trip in accord with the changing needs of the group. But the staff is committed to an educationally intensive schedule of activities.

The trip has clear safety guidelines that are well-understood and observed.

The staff articulates and enforces consistently clear disciplinary guidelines regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

## **THE TRIP EXPERIENCE: ELEMENTS OF DISTINCTION**

The program manages to engage the participants in conventional educational activities: e.g., classes, lectures, and readings.

The trip experience early on establishes group cohesiveness.

The participants develop pride in themselves and in their program as distinctive. The trip conveys and reinforces a shared sense of purpose or mission.

The participants are actively involved learners, rather than passive onlookers.

The program capitalizes on the adolescent life stage. It provides intellectual, physical, social, and emotional challenges that allow the young adult participants to grow and mature within the context of an Israel experience.

The staff regularly monitors and evaluates the individual participants' and the group's experience as the trip proceeds and responds accordingly.

### **POST-TRIP FOLLOW-UP**

The program or sponsoring agency at home provides follow-up for the individual, a way of internalizing what they have experienced after they return.

The broader community (parents, synagogues, communities, etc.) is involved in some way with the experience of the participants.

## FINDINGS

### **The First Principle: The Details are Important**

This report proposes several components of the good youth trip to Israel. But underlying all of them is a single, fundamental principle: Good trips take very seriously the planning and execution of each of their operational decisions from recruitment to the return of the participant to the North American community. Experienced trip purveyors view every encounter, every experience as loaded with educational potential. In our interviews, most spoke of extraordinary attention to detail, of the need to closely examine seemingly trivial decisions and to make those decisions in accord with the program's Judaic and educational philosophy. Throughout our research on good trips to Israel, we became impressed with the importance of detail, of the enormous significance of the very little things that make one program or one group, or one summer experience, better than another.

In their research on excellent corporations, Peters and Waterman write: "There is a value set--and it is a value set for all seasons. ... However, it is executed by attention to mundane, nitty-gritty details. Every minute, every hour, every day is an opportunity to act in support of overarching themes." [In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies, p. 324.]

### **RECRUITING, SELECTING, AND PREPARING THE PARTICIPANTS**

Participants are recruited for and matched with the program that is right for them.

The program understands who the participants are and plans the trip accordingly.

The program provides the participants with accurate information before the trip so that the young people know what to expect and what is expected of them.

Good programs get "good kids" through selective recruitment or excellent preparation.

The participants undergo pre-trip preparation that enhances their cognitive, emotional, and social readiness for the trip.

The trip recruits young people who share common background, common interest, or common salient characteristics.

### **The Right Trip for the Right Participants**

Quite obviously, both participants and programs vary. Some participants are ideally suited for certain programs, and conversely, some programs are ideally suited for certain participants. Just as young people choose colleges with respect to such issues as academic intensity, campus life, size, intimacy, and other factors, so too should they be afforded the opportunity to select Israel educational programs that, at least "on paper," suit their needs and interests.

Many local educators who serve as sources of advice to youngsters and their parents shopping for the right trip to Israel fail to appreciate the importance of understanding both the youngster and the program. We are saying that the ideal process would match the right participants with the right trips. .pa

### **Learning About the Participants**

The good trips learn about the participants, work on what they can do to help prepare them, and decide how the trip needs to be adjusted for the particular group of youngsters. Their age, their knowledge and background, their learning styles, their personalities, and their interests are all important considerations in determining their suitability for specific programs.

Ideally, well before the trip gets underway, the educational staff should know a little about the participants so as to be able to anticipate special needs and problems that may arise. To achieve this objective, some trips entail extensive pre-trip meetings between participants and the educators. In a few programs, the top staff even make an effort to get to know the parents. The programs that grow out of schools or other agencies where participants and educators know one another for many years enjoy a built-in advantage that other trips would do well to acquire.

Unfortunately, not all educators who are responsible for planning and leading such trips have the interest or ability to tailor-make the trip for their students (or campers or youth group members). Of course, there are practical limits to how much can be done to modulate a pre-existing program.

## Truth in Advertising

Programs should enjoy more success if they can accurately inform would-be participants of the salient features of the particular Israel experience they offer. Of course, some programs can more readily assume that their participants know what to expect. This is usually the case for those who are actively involved in a summer camp, youth group or movement. Many participants in these circumstances know for years in advance that they plan to visit Israel with one particular program.

However, quite a number of participants fall into one trip or another, because their rabbi suggested it, their school mate went on it, or they happen across an advertisement or brochure. For these participants in particular, the presentation of the program prior to the trip needs to be accurate.

Well-designed promotional literature, candid recruiters, and the formal requirements of the individual programs allow the teenagers to self-select, to opt out of programs that are not suitable for them and opt into programs that meet their needs. "Applying to this program was more difficult than filling out my college applications," commented one participant.

One youngster explained that she had gone to a fair where representatives spoke about a number of trips. Other programs arrange for people in the local communities to meet with potential candidates. One trip purveyor remarked, "Our recruiters want to make sure that participants are aware of the the nature of the program and that they develop reasonable expectations. Of course we also want to make sure the kids are suitable for the program."

In contrast, young people who found themselves on programs that vary markedly from what they initially had been led to expect were among those who were most disappointed with the summer encounter with Israel. In our observations, we encountered several youngsters (certainly representing a minority) who complained that some aspect of the program failed to meet their expectations. One young woman claimed, for example, that the literature sent out never explained the program's heavy emphasis on community-building. In another program, a teen-ager complained that she anticipated what may be called a Zionist catharsis, and instead found that the program was, at heart, philosophically neutral about some very fundamental Zionist principles.

Ideally a good trip should be able to pick and choose participants to insure that in fact those who will be part of the trip do adhere to its basic philosophy. But it is only the trips with a limited number of highly sought-after openings that can afford to be highly selective. One of the larger trips does interview each of the participants and even asks parents to fill out forms regarding their own religious beliefs. But, for the most part, programs are reluctant to turn away prospective participants. In part they are financially hard-pressed and need each participant to hold down unit costs; and in part they fear that the young person they turn away may lose interest in visiting Israel at all that summer. Nevertheless, even recognizing these valid institutional considerations, many programs can do a better job of more fully informing their prospective participants of what to expect during their

forthcoming Israel summer experience.

### **The "Good Kids": Knowledgeable, Motivated, and Sociable**

When asked what makes a trip work, the director of one of the programs replied: "This may sound a bit simplistic, but honestly, I think that the good trips are the ones with the good kids." The same sentiment was echoed by a participant on another trip who, when asked what made his trip special, responded that "this program attracts better quality kids." Although these statements are overly sweeping, they do point to the initial quality of the participants as one essential ingredient for the successful Israel experience. In our view, "good kids" can be found (through excellent recruitment) or they can be made (through assiduous preparation).

What are "good kids?" They are those who stand out along three critical dimensions:

- 1) Cognitive background and skills;
- 2) Motivation; and
- 3) Sociability factors.

By cognitive background and skills, we refer to familiarity with the subject matter of the trip (e.g., Israel society, Jewish history, the Hebrew language, and so forth) and the ability to assimilate and process such information. By motivation, we refer to one's interest in learning and in grappling with the emotional challenge of the Israel experience. By sociability factors, we refer to all the issues that promote good relations between the individual and the group.

Very simply, we are saying that some individuals are more likely to benefit from the Israel experience and that groups with large numbers of these sorts of individuals are more likely to experience a successful summer program. Now, the truth of the matter is that some programs more readily draw upon youngsters who initially approximate the ideal model. But it is also the case that careful preparation can elevate the youngsters along those dimensions that make for success. Those who are ignorant can be taught. Those who are indifferent can be excited. And for those in groups with little familiarity with one another, they can start the process of building a cohesive, well-functioning group.

With respect to recruitment of ideally oriented youngsters, youth groups and movement camps are at a distinct advantage. They readily generate a large number of youngsters with the appropriate knowledge base, motivation, and group ties. Many build a summer program in Israel into their total program. "I've been involved in [XYZ Youth Movement] for what? nine years now? and this is something I've always looked forward to." Another teen-ager explained, "You hear in the youth group that this is the best summer of your life." They see a connection to what came before and to what will follow -- whether they will return to their homes as youth group leaders, counselors in the camp, and in other capacities.

Participants from these camps and youth movements put into practice skills they have learned over the years. After conversing in Hebrew with an older Israeli in a senior citizen center, one young woman turned to her friend with real pride and said "Well I guess all

that 'dikduk' (Hebrew grammar) finally paid off!" One staff member referred to the backgrounds of the participants as one of the features that made for a good trip. "They come to us with the [XYZ Movement] background," she remarked. "They have a sense of Jewish tradition that provides a point of entry into the subject matter we deal with".

Certainly, it appears that many camp and youth movement members come to their Israel program fully equipped in motivational and intellectual terms, or nearly so. When experts in the field speak among themselves about extraordinarily committed, attentive, and energetic youngsters, the trips sponsored by camps and youth movements often come to mind. In fact, those programs that cater to both movement youngsters and others readily observe that their "own" youngsters constitute far better groups. The same agency, with the same ethos, and the same staff, then, does a better job (and sometimes a far better job) with the youngster who has been prepared for the Israel trip through years of camp or youth group participation.

Camp and youth movement youngsters certainly enjoy many advantages. But, with help, others can acquire these advantages as well. With the appropriate effort before the trip, the groups of less affiliated teen-agers can also be primed to derive both more enjoyment and more learning from the Israel experience.

### **Preparing the Participants**

As we have seen, one element of goodness is to be able to recruit and select "good" youngsters, that is, those who are highly knowledgeable, highly motivated, and highly integrated with other participants. But whatever the level of motivation, integration, and familiarity with Israel, programs improve when they can successfully enhance these qualities prior to the trip. Good preparation for the trip, then, aims at three related objectives:

1) Intellectual orientation: familiarizing the participants with Israel generally, with their anticipated experiences, with the specific issues and sites they will encounter, and with the larger historical, textual, and social background to learn more from their educational activities.

2) Motivational orientation: peaking the interest of participants in learning, in opening themselves emotionally, and in preparing themselves for a learning experience.

3) Social orientation: strengthening individual's level of comfort and belongingness to the group and thereby enhancing group cohesiveness.

The Israel experience can be highly demanding on all three levels. Participants must be ready to absorb a great deal of cognitive material transmitted through sight, sound, and action, and then be able to place it in a larger historical, geographical, social and political context. They must be sufficiently interested to withstand the physical discomfort of long days of touring, to engage in educational activities that are not purely recreational in nature, and to endure the emotional turmoil occasioned by the frequently intense confrontation with their identities as Jews and as developing adults. And, not least, they should do all this while functioning well as a group.

To prepare participants for the Israel trip, good programs try to establish or advance a uniform knowledge base, be it in Hebrew vocabulary, dates in Jewish history, or other fundamental features of Israeli society. This task can be accomplished possibly by distributing materials well before the trip, or by holding pre-trip orientation sessions.

Materials to be Read Before the Trip: Several trips send out source books, readings or suggested reading lists to the participants. The lists are generally excellent and comprehensive. However, unless specifically required to do so, few teen-agers do any reading before coming to Israel. Many trip purveyors we interviewed believe it would be fruitless to demand that the young people read materials prior to the trip. Whether mandatory reading assignments are feasible remains, in our minds, an open question and worthy of some testing and experimentation.

Pre-Trip Orientation: Some programs gather the participants together for a weekend or longer prior to the Israel experience. Alternatively, groups that come from the same geographic area or school may have several meetings or classes spread over several weeks or months before the trip.

These orientation weekends are used for building group cohesiveness, orienting the young people to the program's philosophy, and building a common knowledge base. "I was insistent that they know fifteen basic dates/periods in Jewish history before we set foot on the plane," explained one teacher who accompanied her class to Israel. "How can one understand or even appreciate what you are seeing in Israel if you have no idea when the Temples stood, when Herod ruled, when the Crusades took place?"

Trip purveyors report uniformly that pre-trip orientations are useful for all programs and are especially crucial for groups where the youngsters are unfamiliar with one another. One senior professional who works with less Jewishly affiliated youngsters said that pre-trip orientation was among the most important predictors of successful groups. In some cases this agency works with youngsters who have met beforehand. In other cases it serves participants who meet for the first time at the airport (earning them the internal sobriquet, "JFK kids"). With essentially the same philosophy, staff, and itinerary, the former sort of group more often enjoys a far better summer than the latter.

Notwithstanding the obvious value of such orientations, the financial cost and staff effort required to plan and conduct them make such orientation sessions too rare an experience.

### **Group Composition: the Advantages of Homogeneity**

To make it possible to achieve educational objectives, the group must undergo preliminary planning by means of serious recruitment, screening and preparation procedures. The prevailing atmosphere in the group affects the touring experience, for better or worse. And

we have already seen homogeneous groups succeed despite the meager resources of the program, and heterogeneous groups undermine programs with ample means. [Ami Bouganim, "Short Term Programs: Tourism and Education," p. 23, emphasis ours.]

Most program directors with whom we spoke would tend to agree with the foregoing passage. They suggested that they found it easier to work with groups that are reasonably homogeneous with respect to Jewish background, familiarity with Israel, level of emotional and intellectual maturity. Nevertheless, they agreed that some diversity may be acceptable, if not desirable.

Certain sorts of diversity can do considerable harm to the impact on the trip. Commenting on one such experience in which a Judaically advanced group of about 20 youngsters was combined with a similar number lacking significant Judaic background, one trip director remarked, "It was an abysmal failure! We'll never do it again." One program director divides into two groups the pool of his summer participants by maturity and Judaic background. The director of this program also tries to assure that youngsters will find a reasonable size sub-group of peers with similar characteristics. The entire bus load of youngsters may be diverse, but sub-groups of 6-12 youngsters may be fairly homogeneous.

Why is homogeneity an asset? (Or more precisely, why do some directors see it as advantageous?) One reason is that the itinerary and curriculum can be adjusted to meet the particular and common needs, level of knowledge and interest of that specific group. The Israel experience can be made more challenging for those with a strong Judaic background and familiarity with Israel, or less rigorous for those with weaker backgrounds.

To focus on one issue, programs with religiously diverse participants that have no explicit denominational sponsorship face difficult challenges in providing religious experiences. If all pray together, does the entire group pray with the traditional barrier dividing men and women? Which prayer book does it use? But prayer can prove instructive and inspirational and abandoning prayer means foregoing certain opportunities. Praying as a group at the edge of the Machtesh Rimmon crater, or on a Friday afternoon in Safed, obviously provide opportunities for spiritual experiences to occur. That is not to say that spiritual experiences are absent from religiously diverse groups. However, the trip with a particular religious direction more easily finds more windows of opportunity.

We spent one morning in a seminar on the territories, planned by one of the programs whose participants come with significant formal Jewish educational background. It was obvious as the morning proceeded that these teen-agers had the necessary vocabulary and knowledge base to allow the staff to conduct the program on a high level. They knew the alternative politically charged terms that could refer to what some call the occupied territories and others the administered areas. They understood what the issues were. Questions and answers flowed easily.

One participant in a particular program where the Judaic knowledge base was very uneven, was frustrated that there were so many different levels, making discussion difficult. But here too, diversity could be overcome. She remarked that prior preparation of the group for an upcoming speaker sharply reduced many of the problems she experienced

where preparation was absent. This incident certainly suggests that careful attention to preparation may work to reduce the objectionable aspects of diversity by bringing all participants up to a fairly common level of interest and familiarity.

Another advantage of homogeneity is that it offers greater opportunity to build cohesive, well-functioning groups, itself an important objective of the Israel summer experience. One of the axiomatic principles of small group research is that people who share common backgrounds and characteristics can more easily forge strong bonds of intimacy. This is not to say that diverse groups inevitably fail to cohere. It is to say that the chances for the emergence of strong and enduring in-groups bonds increase when people share many characteristics in common.

In contrast with this general tendency to recruit or to shape fairly homogeneous groups, a few highly selective programs actually strive for diversity. Learning to cope with the diversity of the Jewish world and learning about oneself by interacting with those very different from oneself are at the heart of these programs' educational mission. For them, diversity is a tool rather than an obstacle. As the brochure of one program states:

Because the...(participants)...are of widely differing backgrounds, the educational component of our program permits us to address these issues (of Jewish identity and unity) not only as a theoretical matter but also as a personal reality, all within the context of the Israel experience.

But, we note, these groups are diverse in only some respects; they are, in fact, quite homogenous with respect to their elitist quality. One such program limits its participants to those who are highly intellectually capable and motivated. To compensate for their diversity, these programs place a strong emphasis on unifying activities to the point that some participants complained to us about the intense pressure to forge intimate ties with other group members.

Our more general point is that programs that bring together collections of youngsters who share little in common and know little about each other before the trip cannot succeed as well as those where several common features characterize most participants. Where elements of diversity exist, the challenge is magnified. The educational staff needs to anticipate, plan for, and address the difficulties that can often ensue. As a general rule, homogeneous groups stand a better chance of experiencing a successful summer.

## THE STAFF

The director projects a clearly articulated vision and translates that vision into reality.

The counselors exhibit excellence as informal Jewish educators of Jewish adolescents. They can interact well with teen-agers, they personally reflect the program's Judaic philosophy, they serve as positive and accessible role models, and they understand their role as functioning as educators rather than glorified chaperons.

The staff is well-trained as informal Jewish educators, in the specific objectives of the program, and in how to make use of Israel as a learning experience.

The program manages to retain veteran staff from one year to the next.

The counselors are numerous enough to attend to the needs of the participants.

An experienced educator is a continual and ongoing presence with the group.

The guides see themselves as informal Jewish educators.

Preliminary to understanding the importance of any staff on these trips as well as the qualities of good staff, we need to review the table of organization of the typical Israel summer program.

The basic social unit consist of the group or a bus load of participants, usually numbering between 30 and 40. Accompanying this group are generally three or four counselors, a tour guide (who may double as a counselor), a medic/security escort, and a bus driver. One of the counselors usually serves as the group leader with ultimate responsibility for decision-making.

Most programs run several bus loads of participants at once. If so, then one or two more senior professionals support and supervise several bus loads simultaneously. These may be the program directors themselves or middle-management personnel.

Situated at the top of the organizational pyramid are the program directors. These individuals' responsibilities include shaping the philosophy of the program; hiring, training, and supervising staff; planning the itinerary of the program; designing curricular materials; and managing recruitment and interactions with parents before and during the trip.

### **The Director: Energetic and Visionary**

The people most responsible for defining the school's vision and articulating the ideological stance are the principals and headmasters of these schools. They are the voice ... of the institution. ... The literature on effective schools tends to agree on at least one point -- that an essential ingredient of good schools is strong, consistent, and inspired leadership. The tone and culture of schools is said to be defined by the vision and purposeful action of the principal. [Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, The Good High School: Portraits of Character and

Culture, p. 323; emphasis ours]

With respect to the importance of leadership, Israel experience programs are much like schools (and corporations, too): They all require highly talented and dedicated leaders at the top.

The directors of good programs with whom we met impressed us in several ways. They could readily articulate their Judaic and educational philosophy. They had clear visions of the objectives of their programs. And, not least important, they define themselves professionally as educators and not simply as tour program administrators. Thus, their personal criteria for success revolved around the ultimate educational impact of their programs upon the young participants.

Moreover, all were in command of detailed information and ideas about running a successful Israel summer program. Directors spoke about how every detail is educationally important. They typically remarked that they are constantly tinkering with the details of itinerary, staff training, and staff supervision.

Programs with a reputation as unusually excellent are distinguished from the others by the regular presence and intervention of the director, or an educational supervisor. Directors report that they, or someone at nearly their level of seniority and expertise, are in constant contact and interaction with the counselors, guides, and participants. As Peters and Waterman write in In Search of Excellence: "Leaders implement their visions ... simply by being highly visible. Most of the leaders of the excellent companies ... believe, like an evangelist, in constantly preaching the 'truth,' not from their office but away from it -- in the field."

Accordingly, most directors with whom we met make it their business to personally go out with the groups, to participate in the activities, to lead selected program units, and to pepper the counselors, guides, and participants with questions to learn how the trip is progressing. In short, a hands-on presence of a senior, experienced, educationally oriented staff member (often the director him/herself) seems to distinguish good from not-so-good trips.

In sum, the qualities of seemingly successful program directors include the following:

- 1) Command of a comprehensive and detailed educational philosophy.
- 2) Ability to articulate and project that philosophy to staff and participants.
- 3) Attention to detail.
- 4) High level of energy.
- 5) Self-conception as an educator, and not an administrator concerned with logistics alone.
- 6) Readiness to engage in highly visible, hands-on contact with the staff and the groups in the field.

### **The Importance of Counselors**

Young participants on the Israel summer trip are in a strange and new environment.

Most often, this trip is their first trip abroad, let alone their first trip to Israel. For many participants, the counselor is the person with whom they spend all their waking hours, and is the principal mediator of the Israel experience.

Several quantitative studies have examined participant satisfaction. Almost uniformly, these studies demonstrate that, of all factors, the perceived quality of the counselors has the strongest impact upon the overall impression of the trip. In simple terms, those youngsters who were most enthusiastic about their counselors were most enthusiastic about their trip.

We saw direct evidence of the impact of counselor quality. When asked what they would change about their trip, all participants in one group we observed indicated that the staff had been problematic. When asked if they would recommend the trip to friends, they said they would -- assuming that the staff would be different. In contrast, most participants in the other groups we observed listed the staff as the number one factor in what was good about their trip.

The lesson for directors of programs and locally based organizers of trips is that they need to pay considerable attention to hiring the right counselors for their groups.

### **Ability to Interact Well with Teen-Agers**

Every year, Israel summer programs hire scores of Israeli and North American counselors to lead the trips of young Jews around the country. Since most of them are college students, the Israeli staff tend to be about three to four years older than their North American counterparts. Almost all Israeli counselors have served in the Israeli army. The counselors receive anywhere from \$400 to \$900 for several weeks of work in the field with the youngsters and a few days of pre-trip training and orientation. (It seems that programs with lower fees for participants pay less for staff than do the more expensive programs. Most programs pay more for veteran staff.)

These conditions are sufficient to attract a reasonable number of willing applicants. Nevertheless, the programs certainly are not flooded with applicants. (Whether expanded recruitment efforts can expand the pool of candidates and raise their quality is a policy issue worthy of consideration.)

What makes a strong candidate for such a position?

Regardless of training, some people seem to have a natural ability to interact well with teen-agers. That was immediately evident in viewing the groups. Some counselors were constantly interacting with the participants, joking, explaining, cajoling. The teen-agers in fact sought out these counselors to ask questions, to show them something they noticed, to share their insights. Over the course of several hot summer weeks, the attention of teen-agers understandably ebbs and wanes; certainly, the participants cannot always attend to the formal presentation. Often something will catch their fancy and they will stop and ask a question of the nearest staff member. It is quite likely that the difficult personal questions -- those that challenge the individual's previous conceptions -- will be asked in private of a staff member he/she trusts, rather than in front of the entire group. In such a situation, the availability of counselors who interact well with teen-agers, combining both

sensitivity and substance, is of paramount importance.

We also saw counselors who displayed relatively little enthusiasm for the youngsters or their activities. Some took every available opportunity to withdraw from interaction with the youngsters. Many acted more like chaperons than educators, attending solely to the logistical problems of getting their groups to the right place at the right time rather than to the entire educational challenge and opportunity offered by the Israel experience. Clearly, good counselors should enjoy spending time with Jewish teen-agers from North America and know how to communicate with them.

### **Counselors as Models of the Program's Judaic and Zionist Philosophy**

Counselors, as the instructional staff with whom the participants interact most frequently, are inevitable Judaic and Zionist role models. Thus, program directors try to hire counselors who can reflect and personally embody their program's particular Judaic and educational philosophy. They look for staff members whose personal philosophies and religious observance approximate those advanced by the program.

For example, we spoke with one trip purveyor who wants to expose the participants to considering the Zionist challenge of living in Israel. As a result, he tries to hire counselors who were raised in the United States and have made aliyah, or attractive and accessible Israelis. Several programs sponsored by religious youth movements often use the Israel experience as a way of educating youngsters in the religious philosophy of the sponsoring movements, that is to living as a particular kind of Jew in North America. These programs hire those counselors who embody the religious ideals of these movements, even if they are not personally committed to living in Israel.

One way to find staff who are compatible with the program's philosophy is to hire counselors who a few years earlier had been participants on that trip to Israel, or at least veterans of the sponsoring agency's camp or youth movement. By virtue of their own experience, these counselors could be relied upon to understand the overall philosophy of the trip.

### **The Staff as Positive Role Models**

The old adage, "Do what I say not what I do" clearly does not work, at least not with adolescents on an organized trip to Israel. Staff members are constantly being watched by the teen-agers and the counselors' behavior makes a strong statement. For example, when counselors approach the grace after meals with personal reverence, the message to the participants is clear.

Our observation of groups going through Yad Vashem provided some instructive insights. Most counselors, particularly those living in Israel, have been to Jerusalem's Holocaust museum many times. They certainly have no personal need to re-experience Yad Vashem, and, several counselors choose to send their groups into the building and

meet them at the exit. In contrast, we saw many counselors going through Yad Vashem with their groups. Their comments and demeanor clearly demonstrated the powerful impact of the museum's exhibits. They were not only physically available to the participants, who at times needed their emotional support. They were emotionally in tune with the group and were in a position to deal with the participants' reactions, both at the time and (we imagine) at later points in the trip. (The issue of counselors choosing to participate with their groups or stand aside is not limited to Yad Vashem. Organizers of special activity units that serve many programs told us that some programs' counselors consistently take part in the planned activities, and others are happy to find themselves with a few hours or more of free time.)

Another time we observed a group spending part of the day at a JNF forest, clearing away brush, rocks and weeds to prepare the area for planting trees. The work was hard and the weather was hot. While some of the counselors circulated urging the campers onward, a senior educator, another counselor, and the program director who happened to join this group that day went further, setting a personal example by themselves chopping down weeds, trimming bushes, and digging up heavy rocks. These senior staff members stretched their own physical limits and made sure to maintain a positive attitude throughout the experience.

The role model approach, important in any educational setting, is certainly one of the key attributes that makes for a good staff. Its importance was only highlighted for us by the contrast with those staff members who sat back, took little leadership role, and failed to set positive examples.

### **The Staff as Accessible Role Models**

The staff members should not only set positive role models, but if they are to capitalize on every educational opportunity, they need to be accessible as well. One director told us that he trains his staff to circulate on the bus rides, sitting next to different participants on each leg of the journey. He also demands that they seek out and publicly befriend the more introverted, less socially adept young people so as to help strengthen their confidence and buttress their standing within the group.

Although eating together, that is, apart from the group, does give the staff time to plan and relax, it also serves to segregate counselors from the participants. The staff should be accessible during the informal moments -- on the bus rides, at the table, during free time.

And yet, in order to be accessible the staff needs to avoid "burn out." Some of the trips provide a rotation system so that the staff members have a day off to replenish their energy. One staff member, when asked why he chose to be with that particular trip, responded that this particular group not only paid well, but gave adequate time off "to re-fuel."

### **The Staff as Educators**

Good trips are distinguished by educationally oriented staff. On these trips, even the most junior-level counselors see themselves not merely as chaperons or mini-administrators, but as teachers. Ideally, they are keenly aware of their responsibility for shaping the participants' understanding of Israel and for, more generally, achieving the educational objectives of the trip. The very best of them are sensitive to the emergence of teaching opportunities, the key moments in the young person's encounter with Israel when the dedicated educator can successfully intervene.

This point can be well illustrated with a counter-example that emerged in our observation of a group about to leave for a trip to Hebron. The counselor announced that the group should bring money for Kiryat Arba. "What's Kiryat Arba?" asked one of the teen-agers. "A place to buy food, coke, chips, ..." responded the counselor. And in fact, when they arrived, no further explanation of the controversial site of one of the earliest Gush Emunim settlements was given. "Guys this is Kiryat Arba. You have one half hour. Don't go far away."

## **Staff Training**

Counselors are trained in a variety of ways.

First, some programs require some training during the period immediately prior to the summer experience. This segment may entail a single block of time, such as an extended weekend, or it may encompass several afternoons or evenings over several months.

Second, some programs are utilizing graduates of the Melitz courses for beginning and advanced counselors. These courses meet weekly during the academic year.

Third, some programs provide their counselors with fairly extensive and detailed instructional materials that are coordinated with the itinerary. These materials provide information on administrative procedures, the educational philosophy of the program, and specific educational objectives and activities for each site the group will visit.

Finally, a small number of programs involve the staff directly in planning the itinerary or the accompanying educational activities. The intensive involvement of the counselors in pre-trip planning heightens their personal investment in the program and certainly makes them more familiar with the group's goals and how they are to be implemented.

However programs engage in staff training, the objectives of such training normally include (or should include) the following:

- 1) Skills in group dynamics and interpersonal communication.
- 2) Familiarity with and empathy for Jewish teen-agers from North America (qualities that do not come naturally to most Israelis).
- 3) Familiarity with the history and topography of the sites the group will visit.
- 4) The ability to utilize those sites to achieve the specific educational objectives of the program.
- 5) Commitment to the Judaic, Zionist, and educational philosophy of the program.
- 6) Familiarity with administrative procedures.
- 7) Establishing working relationships with the other staff members in the particular group and program.

Providing a complete manual to staff training is certainly well beyond the scope of this study. We can only very briefly outline the components of good training and to emphasize that a well-trained staff is essential to a successful Israel experience. In addition, the program directors we interviewed opined that better recruitment and training of staff was one of their highest priorities. We asked them how they would utilize a hypothetical grant of \$20,000. Many of them gave answers that resembled that of one director who simply wished to be able to raise the salaries sufficiently to be able to require staff members to spend more concentrated time in training.

## **Retaining Staff**

Few program directors expect that their counselors will return for more than two or

three rounds of duty. The advent of marriage, children, and work responsibilities makes serving as a counselor less attractive for older potential candidates. Some, who might otherwise be available, experience "burn-out." One intense and exhausting experience of spending several hot summer weeks from morning to night with North American teen-agers may be all that some staffers can handle. Although most counselors serve no more than three years or so, we did note that a number of groups have staff members who return year after year.

Almost all programs do try to look for experienced counselors. The veteran counselors are, obviously, very familiar with the trip's philosophy and goals. They command a superior grasp of the overall mission of the program. They know what to expect and can more easily prepare the teen-agers for what they are going to see that day. They are able to help newer staff get acclimated. During our observations, several first timers remarked that they felt they could be much more effective the next time round, given that they now have gone through the experience once.

However, at the same time, one program director speculated that counselors peak in their third year. He suggested that too many years in the field experience dulls the excitement and spontaneity that are important qualities to bring to the intense summer experience.

One way in which programs retain their better staff is by promoting from within. The few programs that are large enough manage to support several middle-management positions. Most of these supervisors of educational staff first started as front-line counselors.

But in the absence of possibilities for promotion, we are unsure of how best to address this issue. The presence of more such experienced staff could be encouraged by building in a salary scale which would pay more to those staffers returning. It could also be addressed by curtailing burn-out through regular days off for rest and recuperation. The specific ways by which to retain the more experienced counselors from year to year so remains an unresolved challenge to the field.

### **Staff-Participant Ratio: How Much is Ideal?**

Most outstanding trip purveyors reported that their ideal ratio would be one staff member for every 8-9 participants. In point of fact, most trips provide about one staff member for every 10-12 participants. Financial constraints limit the number of staff members.

One program director pointed out that whatever the ratio, each group should be assigned no less than four staff members. Invariably, one or another counselor is unavailable on any particular day. Some trips gave staff members days off. Often, a staff member needs to remain behind to stay with a sick teen-ager or to handle arrangements. The minimum critical mass of four staff members means that these unpredictable but anticipated demands will still leave three staff members with the group. In our observations, we saw no groups with fewer than four counselors assigned to a bus load, although at times only two were actually present.



## **The Ongoing Presence of a Trained Educator**

It stands to reason that Israel programs will function better as educational institutions if the groups benefit from the ongoing presence of qualified professional educators. Many groups, in fact, lack significant educational supervision. Although an educator may serve as the director of the program, other than administrative support staff, the counselors operate in a functionally autonomous fashion.

In contrast, several programs engage experienced educators as supervisors. They may be counselors with several years experience, or rabbis, or other senior personnel. In some cases, the person officially designated as educator accompanies the group throughout the trip. In other cases, possibly for budgetary reasons (educators cost more than counselors), the so-called official educator will move between two or more groups.

The augmentation of younger, less experienced counselors by trained educational staff certainly represents a step forward. The episodic appearance and disappearance of these senior educators constitutes something of a problem. If the entire Israel experience contains educational potential, and if these higher level educators appear at only certain activities or just their preparation, then what does that practice say to the participants and the counselors about the educational import of the other sites, activities, and experiences? Does it suggest that snorkeling in Eilat or camping in the Galilee lacks educational import and potential?

Another drawback relates to the sense of professional mission among the counselors. At least one program draws a sharp distinction between counselors and the educational faculty whose members accompany the participants on some, but not all, activities. Does the occasional presence of senior educators relieve the counselors of responsibility of functioning as educators, reducing them to chaperons and administrators rather than engaged instructors and role models?

These considerations suggest that programs need to give careful consideration to the timing and functioning of senior educators, be they supervisors or resource experts. In our view, the ideal approach would be to have the so-called official educator available at all activities and to make sure the less senior staff remains conscious of and committed to its educational mission.

## **The Guide as Educator and as a Constant Presence**

The role of tour guide in Israel demands a significant degree of training and expertise. Tour guides for the tourist industry must pass fairly rigorous licensing exams for specific regions of the country. Owing to this high level of expertise, it is not at all surprising that few candidates for counselors (even the Israelis) are initially equipped to function as competent tour guides for most of the sites that the trips tend to visit.

Accordingly, for many years, organized tours for Jewish teenagers have engaged the services of the specially trained tour guides. While theoretically one guide could accompany the group around the country, many groups link up with their guides at the

sites and thus encounter different tour guides as they work their way around the country.

Among the drawbacks of this arrangement is that the guides have little familiarity with the participants or with the educational philosophy of the program. Also, some say the use of outside experts subtly undermines the authority of the counselor. Last, tour guides see themselves as tour guides, not as informal Jewish educators. The distinction between the two professions is subtle but consequential. The tour guide tends to place emphasis on understanding the site, its background and its context. The educator tries to get the participants to grapple with what being at this site means to them as developing Jews.

In contrast with the model of using different tour guides, most trip directors with whom we spoke strongly advocated combining the roles of counselor or educator and tour guide. In their view, the guide should be continually associated with the group, rather than drop in as an informed outsider. Having a counselor serve as guide means that he/she knows the group well, can adjust to the group's needs, is able to connect different segments of the trip to one another, and can relate the sites and activities to the particular philosophy of the group. As one director said, "We used different tour guides early in the program, but we found they tended to focus on sites rather than on the themes, which was not in keeping with our philosophy."

To elaborate on a point made earlier, the directors see Israel as a text waiting to be interpreted by the reader-participant. How one interprets that text depends upon one's environment, background, needs, and Judaic approach. To illustrate, leaders of all three denominational movements' programs (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform) are quite convinced (and, in our view, quite rightly) that each of their programs interacts with the same sites and places (e.g., the Western Wall, Masada, or an absorption center) in a fashion distinctive to that denominational movement.

In exceptional circumstances, some directors endorse the use of specialists who have a distinctive and commanding approach to a particular topic or activity. But, obviously, these specialists do not accompany the group throughout the entire trip. Ideally, recognizing this shortcoming, the counselor/educators should participate along with the youngsters in the specialist's activity. The constant presence of the group's own educational staff allows for continuity in the educational experience that would otherwise be lost.

## THE PHILOSOPHY: JUDAIC AND EDUCATIONAL

The program has a clearly articulated Judaic and educational philosophy that the staff has "bought into" and that pervades the trip experience.

Thomas Watson, Jr., [past CEO of IBM] has said that "the basic philosophy of an organization has far more to do with its achievements than do technological or economic resources, organizational structure, innovation, and timing." ... Every excellent company we studied is clear on what it stands for, and takes the process of value shaping seriously. In fact, we wonder whether it is possible to be an excellent company without clarity on values and without having the right sorts of values. [Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies.]

A clear and pervasive philosophy, one that is understood by the entire staff from top to bottom, is a key element in a "good trip." In the better programs, not only is their Judaic and educational philosophy clearly articulated by the director, but the staff and participants are also well aware of this philosophy and have adopted it as their own. In contrast, we learned of several programs where those responsible for leadership failed to formulate, project, or put into action a comprehensive philosophy.

**JUDAIC PHILOSOPHY:** In our view, each program's philosophy must address the question of how one is to be a Jew in modern times. Thus, all programs cannot (and should not) hold up the same model of the good Jew. The good trips, consistent with their philosophy, choose to emphasize their own answer to the question of how one can be a Jew in the modern society. They may stress communal activity, feeling connected with the Jewish People, social action, politics, religious observance, God, study, prayer, Zionism, Jewish culture, Hebrew, or some combination of these elements. They may emphasize feelings (e.g., of belongingness and attachment), skills (e.g., text study), or knowledge (e.g., of Hebrew, Jewish history). But whatever they emphasize, they do single out certain elements of Jewish involvement as desirable, if not essential, to the good Jewish life.

Programs that operate within a denominational or movement framework have a distinct advantage here. Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform each offer a comprehensive model of the good Jew. In theory at least, each proposes answers to a broad range of questions, ranging from Jewish law to prayer to relating to Gentiles to social action, and so forth. In like fashion, the ideologically informed trips sponsored by Zionist movements also draw upon a clear set of Judaic values. For many of them, the model Jew is one who accepts the classic Zionist critique of Diaspora Jewish life and settles in Israel (or, for some movements, on a kibbutz). Another illustration is offered by an educationally oriented Israel-tour program for adults. The United Jewish Appeal's missions focus on a particular segment of the model Jew: one who feels a sense of responsibility to Jews worldwide and

participates in the rescue and relief of endangered or impoverished Jews.

In contrast, programs outside a denominational or ideological Zionist framework face a special challenge. They have no ready-made model Jew, no available philosophy of Jewish life that can inform their particular educational missions. These programs need to develop a clear sense of their purpose with respect to the Judaic message they want to deliver. One program emphasizes a feeling of belonging to the Jewish people generally and attachment to Israelis specifically. Another focuses on finding one's personal connection to Jews and Judaism. Yet another emphasizes intellectual growth, the political realm, and pluralism.

An inspection of programs' literature, itinerary, and activities convey their underlying Judaic philosophy, clearly stated or implied. Whether participants have extensive contact with Israelis (and which Israelis), debate current issues within Israeli society, or serve at an old age home, says a great deal about what the program stands for. Do they visit sites outside the Green Line? Do they spend time on kibbutz? How much time is devoted to Biblical Israel, and how much to exploring the natural wonders of the Negev?

Diverse examples of the Judaic objectives of various programs we observed include the following:

- 1) A personal encounter with the major challenges and conflicts within contemporary Israeli society; or
- 2) Studying the chronological history of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel from Biblical times to the present day; or
- 3) Exploring one's personal connections with other Jews and learning how to feel attached to other with widely different sorts of Jewish values and interests.

In good trips, the way in which day-to-day activities are planned also reflects the philosophy. For example, one trip has a clear goal that its young participants will remain in contact over the years and form a fellowship with a common language to interact on issues of Jewish import. We observed them when they saw a dramatic play in progress on the theme of the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians. When the play was over, they discussed their reactions in small groups, returned to ask questions, and shared some of these reactions with the entire group. Providing time for small-group discussion embodies the program's objective of building lasting ties among group members.

For another group it was clear that Jewish history was an important link to who they are as Jews. The Holocaust claimed an important place in that history. While almost every group goes to Yad Vashem as part of their summer experience in Israel, this visit was built as more of a key experience for this group. Their evening program the night before had focused on the Holocaust. The counselors asked the participants to dress with reverence, which they did. In addition to touring the museum, the participants took part in a service at the Hall of Remembrance and heard a Holocaust survivor tell her story for close to an hour.

We noted above that programs offer markedly varied approaches to Jewish life in the Diaspora. Another major axis of philosophical differentiation entails their approach to Israel and Zionism. To what extent does the program try to present the young participants with the Zionist imperative of living in Israel?

In our observations, we discerned a spectrum of stances. At one extreme are explicitly

Zionist programs that hold out the ideal of aliyah as the highest form of Jewish fulfillment. At the other extreme are programs that are explicitly neutral about commitment to Israel, let alone commitment to living in Israel. And between these two extremes are the many programs that clearly confront participants with the distinctions between Israeli and Diaspora Judaism, and seek to engage them in the personal search for where they belong as a Jew. It is safe to say that almost all Jews on their first trip to Israel are struck by Israel's extraordinary character and struggle with what this encounter with Israel means to them as a Jew living in the Diaspora. The good trips, in our view, are prepared to address the questions that inevitably arise. At bare minimum, they have a clear approach to the answers (Zionist or otherwise) they will offer.

**EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:** In addition to defining their Judaic objectives, the programs must grapple with deciding on their educational goals, methods and approaches. In short, they need to determine the educational philosophy of the trip.

The specific policy issues that fall under the rubric of educational philosophy are numerous, complex, and difficult to specify. They include such questions as:

- the proper balance between experiential learning and text study;
- the recognition of different cognitive and emotional styles or, more specifically, the different ways in which people learn;
- the extent to which the youngsters will be granted autonomy, responsibility, and independence (and in which areas);
- the appropriate level of attention to group-building; and
- the extent to which counselors are to challenge the personal space of impressionable adolescents.

Clearly, the foregoing list is illustrative rather than exhaustive. The point is, any program with any set of Judaic objectives can (and must) develop a particular educational style or approach. The choice of educational style is separate and distinct from the choice of Judaic philosophy.

Achieving pervasive Judaic and educational philosophies is easier in a small operation where those who create and develop the philosophy are in constant and in direct contact with the participants and the rest of the staff. It becomes more difficult, but still feasible, in the larger programs with many bus loads per summer. For these groups especially, the presence of veteran staff members, or staff members who themselves were products of the movement, youth group, or the program itself helps to re-enforce the centrality of the philosophy.

Once the Judaic and educational philosophies have been developed, good programs work to make those philosophies pervade every aspect of the trip. The philosophy should influence every step of planning and execution, from recruitment of participants, to selection and training of the staff, to the design of the itinerary and accompanying curricular materials, to the actual experience in the field. Ideally, the responsible staff needs to understand that there should be a reason for every decision, and the reason should be consistent with the basic philosophical underpinnings of the trip.

## **THE CURRICULUM: THE ITINERARY AND BEYOND**

The Jewish and educational philosophy strongly influence the choice of the sites to be visited and how they are utilized.

The trip is built around educational sub-themes; days are planned as educationally thematic units.

The program units are individually successful. Each such unit should stand on its own as an island of excellence.

The itinerary is planned with awareness of the sequence, flow, rhythm, and balance of experiences.

### **Elements of an Israel Experience Curriculum**

Each program utilizes its own distinctive curriculum. For the Israel experience, we are defining the curriculum as encompassing not only the itinerary, that is, the sites to be visited and the sequence in which they are visited. Rather the curriculum also embraces what the programs do with the sites once they get there.

Many groups visit many of the same sites in Israel: the Western Wall, Yad Vashem, Masada, the Diaspora museum, a kibbutz, and other conventional tourist destinations. Most also spend some time in certain regions of the country (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Galilee, and the Negev). But even when they view the same sites, different programs use the sites for different purposes and in different contexts.

Jerusalem, for example, may be "used" in a variety of ways. In no special order, these include:

- 1) To explore Jewish-Arab relations;
- 2) To emphasize the holiness of the Land of Israel;
- 3) To provide a window on three thousand years of Jewish history;
- 4) To illustrate the complexities of relations between religious and secular Jews (or between rich and poor, or between Ashkenazi and Sephardi).

The development of an Israel experience curriculum, then, entails expressing an educational mission that derives from the program's Judaic and educational philosophy. The curriculum ought to include a specific and detailed written plan as to how to use the itinerary to achieve specific educational objectives.

### **Thematic Integrity**

Most program directors we interviewed advocated the application of specific educational themes in the planning and execution of their trips. They spoke of themes operating on two levels. First, thematic lessons (perhaps half a dozen in number) should thread their way through parts of the entire program. Second, units of time (typically of a day's length) are devoted to specific themes.

Examples of each will serve to clarify these notions.

At a level of generality below the trip in its entirety, we find that trips emphasize several sub-themes appropriate to the larger thematic framework. These sub-themes may apply to a specific chunk of time on the trip or they may constantly emerge and re-emerge throughout the trip at different points. Examples here include:

- 1) The Zionist mission of gathering in the Exiles; aliyah and absorption.
- 2) The struggle for Jerusalem.
- 3) The challenge of Judaic diversity and pluralistic responses.
- 4) Minority-majority tensions within Israeli society.
- 5) Historic persecution and anti-Semitism.
- 6) The holiness of the Land of Israel.
- 7) The interplay of modernity and tradition.

**DAYS AS THEMATIC UNITS:** Most directors agreed that the day constitutes a fundamental educational period. The argument in favor of thematic integrity, at least on the level of the day, has to be seen in contrast with what may be called a tourist's approach to seeing the sites. Thus, a tourist may arrive in Tel Aviv and visit the Diaspora Museum, the picturesque parts of Jaffa, the beach, and the cafes on Dizengoff, without any sense of order or educational purpose. In contrast, most good trips try to build the entire day around a specific theme, rather than move from sight to sight in random order. For example, several of the trips go from Yad Vashem to a tree planting ceremony. The rationale is to take the emotional experience of Yad Vashem, the horror and the sadness, and to somehow participate in the physical rebuilding, the act of planting, continuity, redemption. Another group takes a day studying the battle for Jerusalem in 1967, visiting Latrun (on the road to Jerusalem), the Mandelbaum Gate (and museum), and then Ammunition Hill. By stopping along the way to see the city from the various perspectives, they gain an enriched and powerful understanding of the struggle for control of Jerusalem during the Six Days War.

The use of themes on various levels provides an instructive context for the participant as learner. The themes, in effect, are the lessons, large and small, that the program is trying to convey. They provide the connections between and among the experiences, both during the day and during the entire trip.

### **Program Units as Independent Islands of Excellence**

The desirability of a thematic approach to the day and to the entire trip notwithstanding, each program unit ought to stand alone as an individual island of excellence. We need to recall that the primary audience here are Jewish adolescents, 15-17 years old, who are traveling on an organized trip to Israel during their summer vacation months. It is certainly true that most are impressed by the noble ideals associated with a pilgrimage-like trip to Israel and by their participation in what is presented as a very special group of youngsters. However, these sentiments are, in themselves, not sufficient to

overcome the disappointment that would ensue from several poorly executed activities. The potential for carping and frustration is rather high and incipient. As a consequence, each program, each day, each 2-4 hour chunk of activity needs to perform up to high expectations.

### **Rhythm and Balance**

One veteran Jewish educator remarked to us, "Many trips have a beginning, middle, and end; but not necessarily in that order." The point he was making was that a good trip to Israel is not merely a collection of individual experiences -- even excellent experiences -- haphazardly thrown together. Rather, a successful curriculum involves experiences that build upon one another in a particular order.

When planning the itineraries and the curricula, educators need to take into account the ever-changing emotional and physical needs of the participants. One experienced program director told us he learned an important lesson in trip-planning the first time he took youngsters to Eastern Europe in a week devoted to the Holocaust. The first few days after their arrival in Israel, the participants (all of whom were selected for their strong Judaic background and motivation) were unusually unruly and inattentive. Their behavior was especially perplexing if only because they had been so transfixed by the European segment. After holding a specially called meeting to attend to the difficulties, he learned that he had made a mistake by plunging them directly into the standard Israel program without giving the youngsters some recreational time to unwind after the emotionally draining experience in Europe.

The director of another group says he makes sure to begin and end the trip with a week in Jerusalem so as to convey the message that Jerusalem is home. Still another trip intentionally places Jerusalem in the middle of its itinerary. Its program director believes that his trip's outdoor activities in the Negev or the Galilee are more inherently enjoyable and contribute to group-building. In contrast, his trip's Jerusalem activities, entailing visits to several museums and archaeological sites, require a more socially cohesive and educationally motivated group, one that will emerge only after some time into the trip.

Concerns about rhythm and balance extend from the overall level of the entire trip down to the level of the single day. On many programs, the rhythm of the well-planned day begins with preparation for an activity, the conduct of the activity, time to reflect on the meaning of the activity, and time to unwind and relax. Good trips build in periods to digest and assess the recent educational experiences. Group meetings may occur as frequently as once a day, or once every three days, or as little as once a week.

As with the other elements we have discussed, we can report no clear consensus on the precise rhythm and sequence of activities; but we can report that all good trip purveyors devote thoughtful attention to those issues. The scheduling of particular activities, be it in the context of the entire trip or of a single day, inevitably carries with it certain advantages and disadvantages. Good program directors are aware of those concerns and plan accordingly.

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## **THE TRIP EXPERIENCE: THE FUNDAMENTALS**

Participants enjoy the trip; they have fun. But recreational activities have educational import.

The logistics of the trip run smoothly and they facilitate a flexible itinerary, one that can change during the trip in accord with the changing needs of the group. But the staff is committed to an educationally intensive schedule of activities.

The trip has clear safety guidelines that are well-understood and observed.

The staff articulates and enforces consistently clear disciplinary guidelines regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

### **Recreation: Necessary, but not Sufficient**

A fundamental pre-requisite of any successful trip is that it be enjoyable. In providing reasons for why they might consider a trip to Israel, young people readily admit that their chief interest in going is to "have fun."

Failure to provide youngsters with a thoroughly enjoyable summer experience may well sour them on Israel. They will be less likely to return (almost a universal goal of Israel programs) and less likely to enthusiastically recommend the program or Israel travel to their friends. (Recommendations are a major source of recruitment.) On the other hand, the association of the Israel experience with an immensely enjoyable summer, which is, fortunately, a very frequent occurrence, may implant some very positive feelings about Israel for years to come. It figures to inspire return travel and to motivate favorable recommendations to others.

The very nature of the organized summer trip provides many of the key ingredients for a fun-filled experience. Youngsters are traveling abroad, perhaps for the first time, in the company of others their age, often including close friends. They are away from the responsibilities of school and the close supervision of parents. They are spending time outdoors in a very attractive environment, and are being treated to new and different experiences, sometimes several times a day.

Despite all these advantages, participants' post-trip evaluations often complain about impediments to having a good time. These include, most prominently, poor quality of food and uncomfortable accommodations.

Clearly, those planning trips need to strike a balance between competing objectives, and the balance should be struck differently for different groups. One critical choice is to decide how much time to devote to the more explicit educational activities, and how much to allow for heavily recreational experiences such as shopping, swimming, sunning, and free time. Trip directors are well aware that participants regularly complain that they wished for more "free time," that they feel the program is too jam-packed, even as they also typically state that they had a fabulous summer. Nevertheless, some directors were

interviewed advocated maximizing the time devoted to more explicitly educationally oriented activities, and allowing for just enough recreational time to, in effect, "keep the troops happy." Moreover, one suggested that, as far as possible, recreational activities should draw upon the uniqueness of Israel. They should expose the participants to Israelis and to the ways in which Israelis enjoy themselves. To illustrate, an evening at an Israeli discotheque is preferable to a party for the group alone. An afternoon at a beach populated by Israeli families or swimming at Sachne are preferable to taking over a kibbutz swimming pool for an equivalent time.

Most directors believe that their programs must provide enough recreational time and experiences so as to facilitate the achievement of higher educational objectives. In other words, having fun is in part a means to other goals, rather than an end in itself.

### **Good Logistics and Some Flexibility**

Even a trip that is brilliantly planned can fail if plagued by poor logistical performance. Every trip has its occasional mishaps -- late-arriving buses, or speakers who cancel at the last minute; but the good trips attend well to administrative detail and provide back-up systems to address the unanticipated foul-ups. Often they designate a special staff member who has the bulk of the responsibility for overseeing this area.

The test of a good logistical system comes not only in its ability to recover from occasional glitches, but in providing room for mid-course adjustment. The good trips seem to be administratively flexible enough to allow for an occasional early- to-bed or morning sleep-in when the staff feels the participants are just too exhausted to stick with the pre-arranged schedule. One group we observed started their morning program an hour later than usual because the teen-agers had just returned from a three-day camping trip. The staff decided that to push on without enough sleep would result in a wasted day.

This point about flexible logistics relates to a larger issue. Good trip planners strive to subordinate their logistical environment to their educational objectives, rather than the other way around. In other words, the availability of accommodations and transportation during the peak summer period can certainly constrain the itinerary. The problem is especially acute for programs that field several bus loads simultaneously. Better programs manage to develop the administrative skills, contacts, and relationships necessary to assure priority in scheduling itineraries so as to suit the educational design of the trip, rather than having the availability of accommodations dictate the itinerary.

But the lesson of flexibility should not be over-drawn. We sense that the better programs are driven by a commitment to their educational agenda. The staff -- from the director to the bus group counselor -- are committed to following the daily lesson plan, to sticking to schedule, to getting the most out of each educational activity. In contrast, we observed some groups that exhibited a lackadaisical ethos, where activities started late and where counselors routinely tolerated stragglers and late-comers. Group leaders certainly need enough autonomy and flexibility to make appropriate adjustments. But the supervisory staff needs to be in a position to check the frequent tendency of the generally less experienced (and less committed) counselor staff to advocate a slower pace and a less

intense schedule than the group can tolerate.

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### **Safety**

Few teen-age participants are themselves concerned with safety issues. The possibility that they may break a limb on a hike or that, even worse, suffer from a terrorist attack is generally remote from their minds. However, these issues certainly concern parents, community supporters, and the trip purveyors themselves.

The directors hold diverse views as to what promotes safety, as is reflected in the diversity of their guidelines. Some insist that an armed guard always accompany the group, and others require one only on excursions to certain areas. Some trips stay within the Green Line, while other programs spend considerable time in West Bank Jewish communities. Some trips allow teen-agers to take the bus to downtown Jerusalem by themselves, while others do not.

We find it noteworthy that the severity of the restrictions is inconsistent. One program that bars its teen-agers from going by bus to the city, allows them to swim at beaches with no lifeguards, while, on other trips, the regulations are the reverse.

We have no specific substantive suggestions to offer here, except to note the diversity of guidelines and practices. That very diversity suggests that a consultation among the relevant senior staff from several programs may be warranted.

## **Adolescent Behavior and Adult Supervision: The Issue of Discipline**

All groups establish guidelines governing such issues as lateness, drinking, sexual activity, drugs, smoking, and responsibility to the group. The young participants are very sensitive to maintaining their issue of independence. While most groups we observed seemed satisfied with their level of regulation, many members of one group complained that there wasn't enough independence. The curfew, for example, was too early. "If our parents trusted us to come so far on our own, we should have a little more room to maneuver".

The better programs are clear about articulating which behaviors are discouraged and which are absolutely forbidden. All prohibit any use of illicit drugs. Some very strictly forbid alcohol consumption, while others are, in practice, more lenient. Some ban any "PDA" (Public Display of [romantic] Affection) as an inhibition to building a cohesive group. In contrast, one director remarked that he views the emergence of romantic relationships between Jewish youngsters as an important side-benefit of his program's Israel experience. Clearly, programs need to select which elements of adolescent behavior they will tolerate, and which they will discourage, if not prohibit outright.

All programs struggle to achieve the proper balance between supervision and independence. Observations from a study of good high schools also apply to good programs for Jewish teen-age visitors to Israel:

Good high schools provide safe and regulated environments. ... A strong sense of authority is reinforced by an explicit ideological vision, a clear articulation of the purposes and goals of education. Ideology, authority, and order combine to produce a coherent institution that supports human interaction and growth. These institutional frameworks and structures are critical for adolescents, whose uncertainty and vulnerability call for external boundary setting. In their abrupt shifts from childishness to maturity, they need settings that are rooted in tradition, that will give them clear signals of certainty and continuity. [Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, The Good High School, p. 350.]

In like fashion, good Israel programs not only need to establish guidelines governing several areas of deportment; the staff also need to consistently enforce them as well.

## **THE TRIP EXPERIENCE: THE ELEMENTS OF DISTINCTION**

The program manages to successfully engage the participants in conventional educational activities: e.g., classes, lectures, and readings.

The trip experience early on establishes group cohesiveness.

The participants develop pride in themselves and in their program as distinctive. The trip conveys and reinforces a shared sense of purpose or mission.

The participants are actively involved learners, rather than passive onlookers.

The program capitalizes on the adolescent life stage. It provides intellectual, physical, social, and emotional challenges that allow the young adult participants to grow and mature within the context of an Israel experience.

The staff regularly monitors and evaluates the individual participants' and the group's experience as the trip proceeds and responds accordingly.

### **Formal Learning in the Informal Program: Classes, Lectures and Reading Material**

All organized youth trips engage in some sort of informal education. The better, more educationally oriented trips make significant use of more conventional pedagogic techniques as well. Somehow, they manage to overcome the reluctance of youngsters on a summer vacation to engage in school-like activities.

To be clear, when we speak of "formal" learning in this informal context, we are not referring to grades, homework, written assignments and all the trappings of school. So-called formal classes are conducted in a very informal manner; gum-chewing, feet up on the chairs, and youngsters sprawled on the floor typify these lectures. Nevertheless, program directors who incorporate formal learning are convinced their participants benefit from the experience.

Good trips supplement the experience of touring and guiding at the sites with preceding preparatory classes and/or lectures. All would agree that while learning takes place at the site itself, it may be counter-productive to give participants all they need to know while standing in the hot sun, or while crowding the entrance to a museum. The educational sessions prior to visiting sites to provide the essential background for the upcoming experiences. One group we saw met the evening before the trip to Yad Vashem to review factual information about the Holocaust and to set the emotional tone for the visit by reading poems, and excerpts from Holocaust diaries. Another group participated in a program from the Jewish National Fund about the importance of trees to Israel as a prelude to a tree-planting experience the next morning. A third group held a seminar on the disputed territories a few hours before they physically explored those areas.

Aside from scheduling classes and lecture, several programs distribute source books to the participants once they arrive. They often include maps and background information on the sites they will visit. Counselors and guides hold the key to whether the source books are utilized. Sometimes they encourage participants to bring the source books with

them on the tour and frequently refer to them during the trip. However, without the encouragement of counselors (as is generally the case), few participants seem to actually make use of the source books on the trip itself. Some trip purveyors claim that their primary usefulness comes after the trip when some participants may scan the source books to recall their summer experiences.

### **Promoting Group Cohesiveness**

By cohesive groups, we mean those where adolescents enjoy one another's company, care for each other, and share a common set of symbols, myths, and memorable experiences. Participants in such well-functioning groups help each other appreciate the Israel encounter. These are groups where it is reasonable to assume that the educational impact will be that much more powerful and long-lasting. Group cohesiveness relates directly to several of the objectives enunciated by many trip providers. Cohesive groups engender a sense of belongingness to other Jewishly committed youngsters. They also forge an association of what may be the first Israel experience with a very positive and distinctive social experience. And, not least, informal educators claim that, as a general rule, more cohesive groups simply learn more readily. As Ami Bouganim writes:

The tour guide must examine the cohesiveness of his group in order to know which hadracha tools to use. ... A cohesive, disciplined group is likely to be more responsive to its guide's initiatives than a fragmented group. The tour guide must be sensitive to the internal dynamics of the group, knowing when and how to consolidate it, thereby creating the conditions for successful and enjoyable educational activities. [Sites and Sources, Jewish Education Committee of the Jewish Agency, p. 13.]

Recognizing these advantages, the better programs use a variety of approaches to try to foster cohesiveness prior to the trip, as noted earlier, or certainly very early in the trip experience. One program starts with rigorous outdoors activities. Its organizers claim that the experience of helping one another overcome physical obstacles and fatigue builds familiarity, trust, and intimacy among the participants. Other programs specifically schedule break-the-ice activities to help introduce participants and staff to one another. A few (perhaps many) encourage participants to share with the group their highly personal reactions to sites and activities. Other group-building techniques focus on the formation of a common knowledge base, of making sure each participant is familiar with the same themes, concepts, and vocabulary. Whatever the specific technique, good programs are keenly aware that they need to build ties of group members to one another and to the counselors as well.

### **Pride, Spirit, and Ethos**

In our observations of trips in the field, we learned that many groups that were having unusually good Israel experiences were also those where the participants readily felt that they were special and that their trips were engaged in very distinctive activities. They were

proud to claim that their group was different from or better than others.

"Other trips are known as million star hotel trips. We do more than just see a lot of the sites," bragged one teen-ager on a trip noted for an unusual amount of hiking and outdoors activities. A young woman in another group favorably compared her group's tree-planting activity with that of another group she had been part of. "Here we really did something. With the other group the hole was dug for you and everything. It almost felt when you left that they took the tree out and gave it to the next person."

Others saw their trip as the one with "the Zionist viewpoint," or the "traditional approach." "This program makes us part of Israeli society like no other program", or, "On this program we make friendships that last for a lifetime." On programs which emphasize intellectual freedom, the participants spoke of how the other more conventional programs are "full of propaganda. This was the only program I could have gone on."

In these comments we find a sense of elitism combined with a sense of mission. Often, the very names of the program impart a sense of distinctiveness. Their title include such educationally challenging terms as "seminar," "fellowship," and "pilgrimage."

Many staff members are quite conscious of creating this sense of group pride. "We build their motivation to experience more by telling them explicitly 'This isn't a trip, it's a program'. They know they are doing things that other trips don't do."

On many trips, the very language the directors use to describe their programs seeps down to the front-line staff to the participants. Our interview notes find the youthful participants were unwittingly mimicking the code words of the program directors. Clearly, group ethos and group pride start at the top.

### **Active Learning and Involvement**

Educational literature stresses the importance of active participation. As a rule of thumb, active discussants and participants learn more than passive listeners. Good educational programs consciously attempt to provide for active involvement.

For example, many tour guides lecture without interruption, but the better engage the participants by repeatedly throwing out provocative questions. Rather than intoning, "We are entering the valley of Ayalon where David slew Goliath," a more educationally oriented guide might start with: "We are now entering the Valley of Ayalon. Does anyone remember from studying the book of Samuel what famous interaction took place here?"

We saw the two contrasting approaches used at Yad Vashem. One guide stopped to lecture for about ten minutes in front of the mural at the entrance to the museum. He pointed out various symbols and interpreted what the artist wanted to express through them. As he spoke, other groups of tourists walked by and diverted the attention of many of the individuals in his group.

A guide with another group spoke for a moment about the mural as a statement by the artist of the world of the Holocaust. She then asked the youngsters to explain the symbols themselves. Their answers were so imaginative that they saw things that the guide admitted she had never noticed before. These young people were actively engaged in the discovery and interpretation of the symbols. In contrast with the former group, they were

so attentive that they hardly noticed the stream of tour groups heading into the museum.

The Middle East simulation game, a widely used free-standing program unit, puts the participants in the roles as leaders of conflicting regional powers. Working with a team of fellow government leaders, the participants enact diplomatic and military maneuvers. The game allows the participants to directly experience the intractable difficulties of reaching some sort of international compromise that also serves their adopted countries' national interests.

The Neighborhood Game, where participants are sent in teams searching for clues and symbols in one of Jerusalem's oldest and most historic neighborhoods, also serves to bring learning to life. Here participants actively undergo lessons on Jerusalem's past and present in a compelling game.

These, of course, are just a few examples of active learning at work. Some programs have devised their own activities which actively engage participants as they go through the Israel Museum, the Museum of the Land of Israel, David's Tower, and the Diaspora Museum. For example, one program has the young people divide up and each group goes into a different room of David's Tower. They are then asked to write a newspaper article as though they lived during that period. Another program asks the participants to spend some time on Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall conducting man-in-the-street interviews of a random assortment of Israelis.

All of the foregoing is not to suggest that groups are abandoning the more standard lecture format, nor that they should do so. Games and other specially designed activities have their drawbacks as well. They are time-consuming (both in their planning and execution) and sometimes distracting from the central educational objective. Moreover, if so-called creative activities are used excessively, groups can become inured to them and their educational impact. Nevertheless, we see programs struggling to achieve what for them is the proper balance of traditional with less conventional styles of instruction, making sure to include active learning.

### **Making Choices, Taking Initiative, Assuming Responsibility**

When given the freedom to choose, or even the mere semblance of choice, people become far more invested in the object of their choice. Owners of particular brands of personal computers report very high levels of satisfaction (with almost all brands) in part because their satisfaction confirms the wisdom of their prior act of consumer choice. In like fashion, the psychological literature speaks of the need for all individuals, youngsters as well as adults, to establish a locus of control, some domain where they can exercise influence. The experience of autonomy itself is satisfying and, on some level, necessary for psychological well-being.

The same lessons apply to education generally, and to youth trips to Israel in particular. Insofar as programs can allow participants to exercise genuine choices, to take initiative, and to assume responsibility, participants will respond with greater personal investment and satisfaction. Ultimately, they will benefit educationally as well.

Trips we observed allow for choice in a variety of ways. One program schedules a week during the course of the summer where the teen-agers could choose one of three activities, to wit, a sea-to-sea hike, an archaeology and agriculture program in the Negev, or para-military training in a Gadna camp. Another program offers alternative classes ranging in subject matter from basic Judaism, to conversational Hebrew, to Spinoza. Still another program requires participants to express their experience in an individually designed art project. But the choice of medium (to say nothing of the project itself) is left to the participant. Alternatives include poetry, sculpture, drama, prose, dance, and graphic arts. Programs also offer choices of different Shabbat experiences, or simply different activities for an evening or afternoon.

Related to the issue of choice is the broader concern with providing for a sense of autonomy and independence, issues that are particularly important for developing adolescents.

One way to allow for independence is to give the participants some decision-making power not only over their own activities but over matters affecting the entire group. One program has participants volunteer to serve on committees to undertake such functions as planning prayer services or special evening activities. Good programs try to respond to the initiative of the teen-agers. For example, in one case, several participants had gone on their free time to the Diplomat Hotel in Jerusalem shortly after the massive rescue of the Ethiopian Jews. They had made some acquaintances with the new arrivals. The group was scheduled to visit the Absorption Center in M'vasseret Tzion, a town outside Jerusalem, the next day, but due to the initiative of these participants, the program arranged to take the entire group to the Diplomat Hotel instead.

### **Levels of Challenge**

A good program capitalizes on the adolescent life stage. For adolescents experiencing growth and maturation, the Israel summer experience can offer highly rewarding intellectual, emotional, physical, and social challenges. In providing opportunities for the participants to meet those challenges, the program can help to create a sense of self-worth and personal accomplishment. In theory, the young adults will associate Israel with their positive sense of growth, maturity, independence, and coming of age.

The intellectual challenge can emerge out of the formal classes, lectures, debates, discussion groups, source books, preparatory literature, sites, to say nothing of the numerous informal conversations with Israelis, staff, and fellow participants. For the first time many of these young people are seriously confronting Jewish history, the Arab-Israeli conflict, what it means to be a Jew, the issue of religious coercion versus denominational pluralism, Israeli politics, and religious texts, to name just a few possibilities.

A good trip also offers powerful emotional challenges. For example, many participants have studied about the Holocaust in school, but going through Yad Vashem is a totally different, often wrenching experience. They may have some familiarity with the Zionist concept of "In-gathering the Exiles," and Israel as a refuge for oppressed Jews; but it is when they visit an absorption center and meet families from Ethiopia or the Soviet Union

that the young participants speak readily about their intense feelings of finally understanding the oneness of the Jewish people.

The emotional challenges embrace the spiritual realm as well. Young Jews react as much as their elders to first encountering the Western Wall. In one case, a proclaimed atheist spoke of the experience of watching his comrades' faces when they prayed facing the sunrise from atop of Masada and questioning his own beliefs. Few can escape the haunting spirituality in the desert, the awe and majesty of creation. Some guides help participants picture Abraham and Sarah (or other biblical characters) on a particular landscape. Certainly, these experiences offer sharp contrasts both in character and potency with their sense of Jewishness that is expressed in classrooms back home or even in abstract discussions at youth group or camp programs.

Learning to function in a strange society provides another source of emotional fulfillment. One girl related to us her story of finding herself alone in an Israeli city and needing to return to Jerusalem by bus. Not knowing Hebrew and never having been to Israel before, she reported a great sense of achievement in having successfully managed to find the bus station and the right bus, buy the ticket, and work her way back to her base in Jerusalem -- a minor achievement to be sure, but representative of many other such experiences these North American adolescents encounter during their trips to Israel.

Most programs provide some physical challenge as well. To the extent that the trips include hiking, climbing, and outdoorsmanship, participants come to learn how far can they push their bodies. Generally, teen-agers are quite pleased to discover how well they can endure rigorous physical challenges. One young man told us of how he learned to overcome his fear of heights during one of these hikes. The outdoors activities also provide for a real physical attachment to the land of Israel, an experience that is common to young Israelis, but rare for Diaspora youngsters. They gain a sense of connection to Israel that only comes with walking and hiking the land.

While every camp experience certainly provides opportunities for social growth, these Israel trips offer an even more intense social experience. As noted, many programs provide the group with decision-making authority and the opportunity to regulate their own conduct. No counselors sleep in the participants' rooms, and no adult supervisor is on hand to oversee many of these informal moments. They are experiencing a great deal of freedom and responsibility, not unlike the experience they will encounter only a year or two later as college freshmen. And they are undergoing these new social adventures far away from home, from the familiar matrix of parental rules and regulations. More than in any other circumstance prior to this trip, the young participants need to learn to function as a supportive community.

For all these reasons, the trips provide a genuine feeling of independence that many of these young people have never previously experienced. Whether it is immersing themselves in the intense Jewish society of Israel, hiking for several days in a row, taking buses alone for the first time, confronting a foreign culture, being totally away from family, or making new friends quickly, these 15-17 year olds must learn to cope with new intellectual, physical and social challenges; and most do so, to their own immense satisfaction.

The better programs curriculum planners attend to the issue of providing challenges and capitalizing on the feelings attached to meeting them. They make sure their curriculum provides opportunities for intellectual, social, physical, and emotional experiences. Moreover, the staff on these programs is prepared to utilize the sense of fulfillment and accomplishment that meeting these challenges engenders. Ultimately, whether the youngsters actually derive a sense of achievement from meeting these challenges rests with the participants themselves.

## Ongoing Evaluation and Feedback

The same well-founded principles of evaluation, feedback, and adjustment that apply to any organized endeavor apply to the Israel summer trip as well. Ideally, programs should collect information from the staff and participants, learn of problems as they arise, and attend to them in short order.

Almost all programs manage to field some sort of formal evaluation process at the end of the trip. Typically, participants and staff rate different aspects of the summer and provide critical comments and recommendations. Program directors claim to make use of these evaluations in planning for future groups.

But aside from end-of-summer evaluations, good programs manage to utilize feedback from the group during the trip itself. Programs vary in the extent to which this ongoing evaluative process actually takes place. Some programs engage in regular monitoring where counselors hold regular meetings with the participants to digest the last few days of activities, and educational supervisors regularly meet with both counselors and participants. These and other techniques assure that all members of the program, from top directors to supervisors to line staff to participants, feel that channels of communication are open, that their views are desired and valuable.

Of course, even accurate information is useless unless someone is willing and able to respond accordingly. Again, the better programs claim to adjust and to intervene in response to emerging issues, but, frankly, not every program has the ability in terms of personnel and administrative support to be as responsive and as flexible as others.

In the ideal world, programs would assess their progress and difficulties both in the short term and at the end of the trip as well.

## POST-TRIP FOLLOW-UP

The program or sponsoring agency at home provides follow-up for the individual, a way of internalizing what they have experienced after they return.

The broader community (parents, synagogues, communities, etc.) is involved in some way with the experience of the participants.

Educational theory suggests that follow-up programs with the participants after they return from their exciting trips to Israel could be extremely valuable; but hardly anyone does anything about it. Previous CRBF-sponsored research (Cohen, 1991) demonstrated that enthusiasm about Israel is both high and widespread in the few months after returning from Israel, but then begins to decay. Those who last visited Israel just over a year ago are considerably less enthusiastic than those whose memories are less than a half year old. Thus, one concrete goal of a concerted follow-up effort would be to increase the rate of return to Israel and, more specifically, to market trips suitable for those who have already participated on an organized program.

For this, if not for other reasons, programs would do well to maintain contact with their participants, if only to stimulate a high rate of return to Israel in the following years. The few programs that have the staff and resources to maintain contact with the former participants report considerable success in maintaining interest in Israel and ties among the group members. Generally, the teen-agers are keen on maintaining friendships with the North Americans and the Israelis whom they met on their summer trips. Moreover, many (if not most) are willing and able to become active advocates of Israel travel generally and their programs in particular, if given the opportunity to do so.

A few programs, with considerable investment of staff time, manage to keep their "alumni" in constant touch with one another through reunions, a newsletter, or other activities. Other programs ask their participants to share written reflections on the significance of their experience. Still others publish a periodic newsletter keeping participants abreast of one another.

Some directors with whom we spoke were skeptical about the value of what they might call "artificial" rather than "organic" follow-up. They argue that re-inforcing the Israel experience can best take place when the youngster is involved in a youth group, synagogue, camp movement, or other context that values and makes use of his or her experience in Israel.

We have no compelling evidence that follow-up efforts result in any noticeable educational payoff. However, it stands to reason that maintaining connections among the participants and re-inforcing the lessons of the Israel experience should serve to make the impact of the Israel trip more enduring, if not more powerful as well.

## CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The foregoing discussions have touched upon a wide variety of elements of excellence currently found, to a greater or lesser extent, among the large number of organized Israel educational programs for North American Jewish adolescents. Implicit in our discussion of what works is a recommendation to all programs to consider those elements that are currently lacking in their programs.

Any policy-maker, faced with numerous alternatives and limited resources, needs to strike a balance between the effort required to embark upon innovation and the likely benefits of that innovation. So it is with program directors or potential trip organizers considering the implications of this report.

We believe that most of the items we addressed require very little in the way of out-of-pocket expense to programs; rather they simply require the studious and careful attention of the program director or other key educational leader. Included here are three areas: recruitment of participants; planning the curriculum; and developing and applying a comprehensive Judaic and educational philosophy. This point is especially pertinent to the local Jewish educator in the North American community who is organizing a trip of area teen-agers. There is no reason for these otherwise fully competent educators to abdicate their professional craft and responsibilities when designing the trip.

Among the more costly elements we identified were: pre-trip preparation; post-trip follow-up; and staff training. When asked how they would spend several thousand dollars in new discretionary funds, almost all trip purveyors pointed to some aspect of staff training. While the CRBF-funded Melitz counselor training program is certainly helping to raise the number and level of trained staff, programs still need to more fully train their counselors in their particular approach to the Israel trip. The program directors believe they currently are unable to pay enough to demand that high quality staff devote several days to intensive and extensive training.

As we have stated throughout this report, no accomplished professional associated with Israel education for young people would claim that there is a precise recipe for producing high quality trips. So many variations characterize these trips. Programs vary widely in terms of the participants they serve, the Judaic and educational objectives they adopt, and, consequently, the way they utilize the rich text that is the Land and People of Israel. Nevertheless, as we have also maintained throughout this study, certain educational principles and operational guidelines, if followed, should enhance the quality of the Israel experience and magnify its positive impact upon the participants. At least, we hope to have advanced our collective understanding of those principles and guidelines.

## APPENDIX

### List of Sponsors of Trips Observed, Summer 1991

Alexander Muss High School in Israel  
Am Echad, Montreal  
Bronfman Fellows  
Camp Ramah  
Ezra Academy (spring, 1991)  
National Conference of Synagogue Youth  
National Federation of Temple Youth  
Nesiya  
Shorashim  
United Synagogue Youth  
Young Judea  
Youth and Hechalutz Department, WZO, Short Term Programs Division

### List of Formal Interviews with Program Directors and Professional Staff

Etan Cooper (Young Judea)  
Ross Culiner (Jerusalem Neighborhood Game)  
Rabbi Lee Diamond (NFTY)  
Rabbi David Forman (NFTY)  
Dr. Joe Friedman (Ramah)  
Jules Gutin (USY)  
Charles Herman (Nesiya)  
Annette Hochstein  
Avraham Infeld (Melitz)  
Alec Meir  
Nurit Orchan (Youth & Hechalutz)  
David Katz (NCSY)  
Hanan Naveh (Middle East Conflict Resolution Game)  
Rabbi Michael Paley (Bronfman Fellows)  
Dan Paller (Nesiya)  
Leah Praver (Middle East Conflict Resolution Game)  
Arna Poupko (Am Echad)  
Rabbi Benjamin Segal (Ramah)  
Shai Solomon (NCSY)

Ina Strauss (American Zionist Youth Foundation)  
Moshe Toledano (Young Judea)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Richard Juran observed and provided analyses of nine groups on our behalf. In addition, Peretz Rodman observed one such group. Both conducted informal interviews with professional staff and participants in these programs. We are grateful to both for their precise, insightful, and comprehensive observations.

Several people read earlier drafts of this report and we thank them for their valuable comments. They include: Janet Aviad, Barry Chazan, Aryeh Davidson, Richard Juran, and Benjamin Segal.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

STEVEN M. COHEN is Professor of Sociology at Queens College, CUNY. Among his works are Two Worlds of Judaism: The Israeli and American Experiences (with Charles Liebman), and American Assimilation or Jewish Revival? He has conducted numerous studies of American Jewish public opinion toward Israel, and several studies on Israel travel and its impact. He has served as a Visiting Professor at Brandeis University, The Hebrew University, Yale University, and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

SUSAN WALL is a member of the Jerusalem Fellows, an international fellowship of senior Jewish educators. From 1985 to 1991 she served as Principal of Ezra Academy, the Solomon Schechter school in Woodbridge, Connecticut (near New Haven). Prior to that she served for several years as Educational and Youth Director of the supplementary religious school of Congregation Beth Hillel-Beth El near Philadelphia. Her previous publications include work on Jewish family education, on senior Jewish educators, and magazine articles for Jewish children.

**The Nesiya Institute**

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Mr. Barry Holtz  
Co-Director of Melton Research Center  
Jewish Theological Seminary  
3080 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

February 21, 1992

Dear Barry:

On Wednesday March 4, at the offices of the UJA-New York Federation, there will be a special consultation with a select group of lay and professional leaders, to focus on the challenges of providing quality Jewish programming for American Jewish youth. In particular, the consultation will focus on the role of Israel experiences and related programs in this critical area of Jewish life.

We are pleased to invite you to this event, which will be developed through two sessions, in the late morning and early afternoon. You are encouraged to attend either one or both of these meetings, and are invited to lunch as well.

The first session, from 10:45 AM to 12:30 PM, will focus on the obstacles and potential for involving greater numbers of Jewish teenagers in Israel experiences and related programming in North America. An assessment of the environment of Israel experiences for teens will be followed by generation of program ideas which express what kinds of opportunities should exist for Jewish teenagers.

The second session, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM, will focus on the work of the Nesiya Institute and the JCC of Cleveland in this area. Specific proposals will be discussed which illustrate how our year-round work in Israel and North America can serve as a cost-effective model and resource for other communities and agencies.

Enclosed are a schedule with additional details and background materials on the relevant work of Nesiya and the JCC of Cleveland in this area. Please call Ami Kann or Mark Davidson (at 216-831-0700, ext. 359 or 385) to let us know if you are able to attend one or both of these sessions, and whether you will be joining us for lunch. We would also be most pleased to answer any additional questions you may have, and to share with you the list of other attendees.

Sincerely,

Charles Herman  
Director and Founder  
The Nesiya Institute  
Cleveland

David P. Kleinman  
Executive Vice-President  
JCC of Cleveland

Bernard Steinberg  
Director of Judaica  
JCC of Cleveland

**Consultation On:**

**Youth Programming and Israel Experiences  
with Nesiya and JCC of Cleveland**

**Wednesday, March 4, 1992**

**UJA - Federation  
130 E. 59th Street, #606  
New York, NY 10022**

**Room 6 - 103**

(Please check with the security desk on arrival,  
as there may be a room change)

*The schedule:*

**10:30 AM: Welcome and Refreshments**

**10:45 - 12:30 AM: Session I**

***"Effective Jewish Programming for Teens" -  
The problem and ideal solutions***

This session will review the challenges to providing effective Jewish programming for teens, focusing in particular on the obstacles to and potential for involving greater numbers of Jewish teenagers in Israel experiences and related programming here in America.

An assessment of the environment of Israel experiences for teens will be followed by generation of program ideas which express what opportunities "should" exist for Jewish teenagers.

Concerns to be addressed in this session include:

- How important is quality Jewish programming for teenagers?
- What kinds of programs should exist for what kinds of teenagers?
- How can the power and impact of an Israel experience be maximized? Are there essential elements to an effective program?
- How can the impact of an Israel experience be enhanced and sustained by anticipatory and follow-up experiences in North America?
- What kinds of work and service experiences should exist for teens which would engage them in applying their experiences in Israel to Jewish life in North America?
- What is needed to increase the numbers of young people participating in Israel experiences, and the quality of programs.
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of community-based groups versus national groups (eg., having young people travel to Israel with peers and staff from their own communities and local agencies versus travel with peers from throughout the country?)

**12:30 - 1:00 PM: Lunch**

**1:00 - 3:00 PM: Session II**

***Nesiya and the JCC of Cleveland: A year-round approach***

This session will feature a review of how the Nesiya project and the Cleveland JCC Department of Judaica have been developing year-round Israel-related programming for teens, and some of the ways that we are now interested in working with other agencies in communities.

This discussion will include:

- Introduction to the Nesiya model of an Israel experience, including brief excerpt of a video documentary on the Nesiya Summer Seminar for High School Students;
- Review of year-round Israel programming for teens in Cleveland, including: Visiting Artists and Educators programs focused on Israeli culture, promotion of different Israel trips through "Journeys to Israel" programs, first high school-aged AIPAC group, and six-day winter retreat for Nesiya alumni and other young people; and,
- Discussion of possible future projects, including proposals and fiscal approaches for how Nesiya can be applied to needs and interests of other communities and agencies.

*To RSVP:*

Please call Mark Davidson or Ami Kann at 216-831-0700, ext. 359 or 385, to let us know whether you are able to attend one or both sessions, and whether you will be joining us for lunch.

For any additional information, call Charles Herman at 216-831-0700, ext. 357.

*Background:*

### Nesiya and The JCC of Cleveland

Nesiya began in 1985 as an experiment in Israel with 18 American High School students. In 1986 the Nesiya Institute was incorporated to "involve Jews with differing religious, social, and ideological backgrounds in the development of Jewish culture."

The project's most important accomplishment has been the development of a unique interdisciplinary, cross-cultural model of Jewish education. The model is unique because it combines different ways of exploring Jewish and Israeli culture, including: arts and cultural experiences, study of Jewish texts, group living, service and work experiences, and encounters with diverse physical landscapes.

This model has been most fully applied in the development and implementation of a seven week summer program in Israel. During the past seven summers over 200 American and Israeli High School students have participated in the Nesiya Summer Seminar for High School students. A background in the arts is not necessary to participate in Nesiya.

Now in its eighth year, Nesiya is widely considered an exceptional opportunity for young people to explore the relevance of Jewish life to their personal growth and self-expression. Nesiya develops an intimate group with young people and staff from diverse backgrounds, including Israeli participants. In Hebrew, "nesiya" means "a journey."

In 1987 the Charles R. Bronfman Foundation of Montreal provided a major grant, calling Nesiya "one of the most successful and innovative models of programming for youth in Israel." A 1990 study by Perry London and other researchers at Harvard wrote that this experience for High School students "had a profound effect on their level of self-confidence, their Judaism, and their art work....this process of personal growth was enhanced by the relationships formed among peers and with staff members...all of the high schools students were able to describe ways in which they had been personally influenced and challenged throughout the summer....all spoke highly of the unique mix of backgrounds in the group which had given them the opportunity to learn about other perspectives without feeling coerced..."

During the summer of 1988, Nesiya produced arts and culture seminars in Israel for high school, college, and adult participants. In addition, the Nesiya Institute developed a publication program of source books and video documentaries and special cultural events in North America. Also in 1988, a one-hour video documentary on the Nesiya Seminar, "A Leaf in This Stream," was given an award by the National Educational Film and Video Festival.

In 1989, a search was conducted for a major North American Jewish organization and community which would be interested in drawing on Nesiya as a model for enriching Jewish continuity and creativity throughout an extended community.

In the fall of 1989, Nesiya joined forces with The Jewish Community Center of Cleveland, which had recently established a new Department of Judaica, and received major grants from the Cleveland Jewish Federation to establish a Retreat Institute and Community Youth Resource Office. The goal of these combined enterprises has been to expand the quality and quantity of experiential Jewish education throughout the Cleveland Jewish Community.

During the past two years, drawing upon Nesiya as both a model of Jewish education and a network of artists and educators from North America and Israel, the Cleveland JCC produced over 115 events, with 30 different synagogues, schools, youth groups and other community organizations, involving 6,000 young people and adults. These programs have included: an on-going Visiting Artists and Educators program; a conference on experiential Jewish education called "Reaching Inside through the Outside - Art and Nature in Jewish Learning;" a six day retreat for American, Israeli, and Soviet teenagers called "Netivot" (which means "pathways" in Hebrew); community-wide programs for youth and adults on diverse aspects and trends in Israeli culture; and, a series of retreats for children and families developed in partnership with reform, conservative, and orthodox synagogues and day-schools.

Year-round programming for teenagers includes: A "Back to Israel" series for alumni of different Israel trips; the six-day winter retreat called "Netivot"; a series of "Journeys to Israel" programs which combine exploration of Israeli and Jewish culture with promotion of diverse Israel trips; development of a "Student Forum on Israel," the first High School aged AIPAC group in the country; and, an outreach program to Soviet Jewish youth.

Over the next several years, the relationship between Nesiya and the JCC of Cleveland is expected to continue to result in the growth of year-round educational and cultural programs for young people in both North America and Israel.

A "Nesiya Fellows Program" was instituted this past summer to strengthen the link between an enrichment experience in Israel and service within an American Jewish community. At the present time, 19 alumni of the Nesiya Summer Seminar, from ten different communities, are fulfilling their "fellowship obligations" through a variety of work, study, and service activities in their home communities. Another idea is to link participation in Nesiya with subsequent summer opportunities for American and Israeli youth to work together in an American Jewish summer camps and an Israeli development town.

Nesiya and the JCC of Cleveland are interested in working with other communities and agencies on a year-round basis to enhance and expand the role of Israel experiences and related programming for teenagers. Possible areas of collaboration include: presentations and consultations to lay and professional groups; networking of visiting artists and educators programs; and, design and staff training services to enrich and expand existing Israel trips and develop new ones.

Does the LC run its own trip

Not purveyors alone  
Need for community organization alone  
In communities

Arjen - my course

Atlanta  
Baltimore  
Milwaukee

CRB

250k → 4JA → total  
100k per community over 3 yrs.  
sup. scholarships  
sup. outreach

What's happening?

In LC's?

2% number?

Buy Lernerberg marketing to each comm.  
video for lay people } marketing  
video for kids }

The good trip to Israel - help for LC's?

Scholarships? (Baltimore experience \$ = recruitment)  
What is being done for purveyors?

CRB will refer communities to "appropriate" purveyors

New Tips

staff training w/ unlitiz

staff training model →

Broad-Truth Fellows

Grants to Natl. Purveyors for marketing  
Israeli staff

Develop New Program modules in Israel

Compilation of what everyone is doing

Bar/Bat mitzvah Registry  
Incentive

Is it the issue why people don't go?

Maybe for 40-50%

Bunk Lerner → incentive savings plan -  
Nationally

## Appendix:

### Recommendations of the Israel Experience Marketing Project

1. Segment target markets and tailor marketing strategies to appeal to the goals of and potential benefits to each group ( e.g., parents, teenagers, etc. ).
2. Develop an ongoing publicity campaign involving recurring stories about the positive benefits of youth travel to Israel.
3. Build anticipation of a trip to Israel among youngsters long before they are age eligible.
4. Encourage groups of cohorts ( e.g., common interests like Boy/Girl Scouts, common bonds like classmates, etc. ) to plan and participate in group trips to Israel.
5. Apply very specific benefits like friendship, building confidence, developing independence, etc. to theme ad campaigns and promotional literature.
6. Include the use of advertising and publicity in children's media ( e.g., children and teen magazines, school newspapers and magazines, radio stations, brochures written for youth, camp brochures, etc. ).
7. Develop local, regional and/or national centralized information sources for Israel programs.
8. Increase training of trip recruiters in the proper implementation of new marketing techniques.
9. Develop co-operative marketing and sales approaches between agencies, perhaps by regions, thereby increasing the possibility of a trip "sale" with every call.
10. Develop formalized and consistent approaches for program providers to mobilize the support of key community leaders.