

Theories of Americanization and the Jewish Educational Experience in the United States

(From the turn of the 20th Century to the late 1930s)

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Abstract

In a recent treatise on the "Historiography of American Jewish Education" the author (Krasner, 2011a, p. 117) quoted Sarna's critique on "the death of high caliber scholarship on the history of American Jewish Education" (Sarna, 1998, p. 8). Indeed, the aim of this study is an historical-analytical exposition of "Theories of Americanization" referring to Jewish education at one of the major crossroads in the United States of America, the latter years of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century.

These interpretations were developed and applied by three eminent leaders in American Jewish education. The three educationists whose interpretations are analyzed in this study are: Alexander M. Dushkin (1890-1976) and his major work, *Jewish Education in New York City* (1918); Isaac B. Berkson (1891-1975) and his book, *Theories of Americanization* (1920), and Emanuel Gamoran (1895-1962) and his volume, *Changing Conceptions in Jewish Education* (1924). These three scholars were part of a group of young educators called the "Benderly Boys" (Goren, 1970; Iram, 1977; Krasner, 2011b), who were actively involved in positions of educational leadership in Jewish education. Their interpretations of the American theories of "Americanization" and of "cultural pluralism" contained implications for Jewish education in the United States.

Background

In 1880 most of the approximately 250,000 Jews in America were immigrants or descendants of immigrants from central Europe (primarily Germany; this is known as the "Germanic period"), and most of them were affiliated with Reform Temples (Marcus, 1993). The year 1881 marks the beginning of large-scale mass immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe, in the wake of pogroms and new anti-Jewish decrees in Russia. By 1900 some half million Eastern European Jews entered America, and by 1914 another million and a quarter arrived in the country. Thus, about 10 percent of the thirteen million immigrants to the United States were Jews from Russia, Poland, and other areas of Southeast Europe and Austria-Hungary (Glazer, 1957; 1988). Mass immigration continued until the restrictive laws of the 1920s. The Johnson Act imposing quotas on immigration became law in 1921, and a more stringent system of quotas imposed in 1924 brought mass immigration to an end that year (Glazer, 1957). From the 1880s immigration became the main dilemma of the American Jewish community. The new immigrants represented a different type of Judaism (Orthodoxy), culture, trade, and social and political convictions. Throughout this period most of the immigrants were impoverished traders, artisans, or factory workers. Upon arrival they settled in large Eastern cities and became factory workers. Ideologically they were either extremely religious, or modern secular socialists or nationalists.

The Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe came from a milieu in which they constituted a substantial part of the population and in some villages and towns even comprised a majority. This enabled them to create a Jewish culture and live in a way almost unaffected by the cultures of the people around them. Those of them who moved to the cities in the wake of the industrial revolution in Western Russia and became factory workers came under the influence of Socialism, Anarchism, Zionism, and other radical-secular political movements (Glazer, 1988). Indeed, both traits, religiosity and secularism, became evident among Jewish immigrants to America in the flourishing of Orthodox synagogues and in the formation of radical political organizations and labor unions. Hebrew and Yiddish literature, newspapers, and other cultural manifestations flourished among Jewish immigrants who settled in major American cities.

The established Jewish community was worried by both the Orthodoxy and the social and national radicalism of the Eastern European Jews, and initially viewed this immigration with mixed feelings. However, by the 1890s these fears had been largely overcome, at

least by the leadership of the Jewish community, which initiated material and cultural aid to set up schools and courses to "Americanize" the new immigrants. This was done both out of motives of self-interest, as they were worried about the negative effect of "crude" religion and social radicalism of the Jewish immigrants on their own middle-class status, and of disinterested, philanthropic concern for fellow Jews (Marcus, 1993). Americanization of immigrants—political, cultural, and philanthropic—was carried out in major Jewish communities through Jewish hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes, YMHA/YWHAs, settlement houses, and social agencies for the poor.

In 1917 it was estimated that there were about 3,400,000 Jews in America, forming about 3.3 percent of the American population. By 1927 the Jewish population had reached about 4,200,000 as a result of immigration and a high birth rate, reaching a peak of about 3.6 percent of the American population. After that year the proportion of Jews remained fixed or decreased because of declining birth rates and low immigration. It is also estimated that by 1927 80 percent of the Jews of America were of East European origin, and in the big cities this proportion was even higher (Glazer, 1988).

Americanization

At the turn of the century there was a considerable fear among established "Anglo-Saxon" Americans that Southern and Eastern European immigrants would undermine American culture, institutions, and the "American race" as they conceived of it. Elwood P. Cubberley, "the father of American Educational History" (Bailyn, 1960; Cremin, 1965, 1988) and a leading educationist, looked upon the new immigrants as "illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order, and government" (Cubberley, 1909, 15; cf. 1919). He was afraid that "their coming had served to dilute tremendously our national stock and to corrupt our civic life" (*ibid.*). Cubberley lamented that the new immigrants "tend to settle in groups or settlements and to set up here their national manners, customs, and observances." Therefore, America's task, according to Cubberley, is "to break up their groups or settlements, to assimilate and amalgamate these people as part of our American race" (*ibid.*). He assigns the public school the task "to implant in their [immigrants'] children, as far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government, and to awaken in them a reverence for our democratic institutions and

for those in our national life which we as people hold to be of abiding worth" (*ibid.*, p. 16). Cubberley reflected the widespread fears among Americans which lead them to advocate extreme "Americanization" policies on the one hand and restrictions on immigration on the other hand (Winter, 1966; Brumberg, 1986).

Americanization education came to be idealized as the process of fusing outsiders and natives into a new type of human being containing the strength of both (Dushkin, 1918). From the 1880s to the early 1920s Americanization was associated with the attempted indoctrination of Eastern and Southern European immigrants by their employers, YMCAs, and adult education establishments, under the disguise of "citizenship education," in Anglo-Saxon and protestant values. Even the most kindly form of Americanization as was done by settlement house residents of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Jane Addams, although not demanding immediate disavowal by the immigrants of their unique values, expected that the immigrants would eventually accept the prevailing American ideology and patterns of life (Berkson, 1920; Carlson, 1981, p. 8).

Americanization was viewed by some as a humanitarian means of creating a harmonious society, while critics contended that Americanization "has sought to stamp the individual American into group norms in order to advance a U.S. mission of serving as the world's finest example of liberty" (Carlson, 1981, p. 12). Still others argued that Americanization was a device in the hand of "bigoted Americans whose fear and intolerance of ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities led them to devise ways of Americanizing children and adults of alien cultures" (Stevens, 1989, page 33). Even free public schooling was mobilized to Americanize immigrants and their children by promising what they thought to be the ultimate fulfillment of American citizens — the opportunity to join the nation's middle class.

The schools thus served as indoctrination centers for the prevailing norms in America. In 1919 the National Education Association (NEA) recommended that Congress require a year of "compulsory civic, physical, and vocational training" for all young people in the U.S. For anyone, young or old, who could not read and write English, the NEA requested "legal provision for compulsory classes in Americanization" (quoted in Carlson, p. 96). In 1921 the NEA organized a Department of Immigrant Education, charging it with the responsibility for Americanization education.

Jewish "settlement houses" developed in many cities to encourage

Jewish immigrant children to learn American ways, to attend public schools, and to preserve their identity within American parameters. Indeed, Mrs. Simon Kander, a Jewish leader of Milwaukee, admitted the self-interest of Jewish community leaders: "It is a selfish motive that spurs us on... It is to protect ourselves, our own reputation in the community that we must work...to better the home conditions of our people" (quoted in Carlson, p. 69). The demand for homogeneity was rationalized by the argument that it leads to national unity and that the national interest required adherence to a common set of values. Diversity was synonymous, according to the Americanizers, with divisiveness. Americanization reflected a fear of diversity and a desire to maintain homogeneity of behavior and belief. Critics of Americanization claimed that it was intellectually inconsistent with the American ideal of a free democratic society and unnecessary for national unity (Brumberg, 1986).

An alternative to Americanization termed Cultural Pluralism called for permitting distinct groups of immigrants to maintain their cultural identities. One of its most articulate proponents both in the Jewish community and in America as a whole was the philosopher Horace M. Kallen (1882-1974). Kallen claimed that "the ideal of liberty is no longer rooted in the like mindedness of a group... in essence, democracy involves, not the elimination of differences, but the perfection and conservation of differences. It aims through union, not at uniformity, but at variety" (Kallen, 1924 [1997], p. 53).

After World War I, resentment among immigrants to forced Americanization surfaced. By then the Americanization movement had reached its zenith. Liberals criticized Americanization as chauvinistic, but economic depression and the rise of Communism, the "red scare" of 1919-20, had increased pressures for conformity. Since proponents of Americanization saw their efforts failing, they moved away from attempts to absorb new ethnic groups toward efforts to restrict immigration. These efforts resulted in the imposition of quotas, which dramatically affected immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe, the introduction of a literacy test for immigrants in 1917, and the emergency quota on immigration in 1921. President Coolidge's message to Congress that "America must be kept American" was met by Congress with the passage of a stringent National Origins Act in 1924 that limited immigration to 164,000 per year until 1929, and to 150,000 per year after that. Thus the failure of "100 percent Americanization" education to make Anglo-Saxons out of newcomers played a vital role in both the adoption of a policy of immigration restriction, the "Melting Pot" concept, and

even the cultural pluralism idea (Higham, 1974; Hartmann, 1948). The cultural pluralism theory, whose chief exponent was Kallen, sought to legitimate ethnic identity in general and Jewish identity in particular as an alternative to the other acculturation models then prevalent (Kallen, 1924 [1997]; Eisen, 1983 p. 44-48).

Americanization and Jewish education

Mass Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe transformed the American Jewish community from predominantly German-born Jews and their descendants to those from Eastern Europe. This transformation raised issues of acculturation and caused conflict within the Jewish community itself. German Jews were often uncomfortable with the new arrivals from Eastern Europe, perceiving them as uncultured and ill-mannered. They feared that gentile resentment of the Jewish newcomers would threaten their own admittance into American society. Class differences also played a role in dividing the two groups. German Jews had generally done well since their earlier immigration in the mid-nineteenth century, and now in many cases employed their East European brethren (Marcus, 1993). They felt socially insecure because of the continuous efforts to Americanize all immigrants as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. Following the outbreak of World War I "one hundred percent Americanization" had become an absolute demand upon newcomers. The immigrants were stampeded into citizenship, adoption of the English language, and reverence for existing American institutions (Higham, 1955 p. 247-53; Eisen, 1983 p. 27-28). Strife for social mobility, pressures of acculturation, and the existence of discrimination and anti-Semitism accounted for considerable insecurity among Jews.

Like all immigrants, Jews brought to America, the New World, their old traditions, customs, and institutions, including schools which reflected the importance that Judaism accorded to learning as an ideal and a religious duty. Study and learning were held in high esteem. In Eastern Europe the traditional forms of Jewish education, both in structure and in its religious content, persisted through the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, although the Enlightenment and later movements of Socialism and Nationalism had intruded upon the Jewish communities and their schools. Thus the heder, a private one-room school, the publicly supported Talmud Torah for the poor, and the yeshiva, a higher level Talmudic academy, were transplanted by the Eastern European Jewish immigrants to the American soil.

Together with these traditional forms of Jewish religious education the modernized national Hebrew school and the secular Yiddish school were brought (Dushkin, 1918; Fishman, 2009). However, the willingness of the newcomers to adjust to the American way of life became evident in their adoption of the public school. In the competition between the public schools and both the congregational communal and private Jewish schools, public schools easily won out for the following reasons: (1) Immigrants could not afford the cost of an extensive day school system; (2) Americanization and the ideology of the "Melting Pot" were against the establishment of a separate school system; and (3) The prospect that education might open a way out of the life of labor in the shop or store was both exciting and disturbing (Handlin, 1954; Ben-Horin in Pilch, 1969, p. 55).

Among the concerns that led to the establishment of the New York Kehillah was, notably, the charge by New York's Police commissioner, Theodore A. Bingham (September, 1908), that 50 percent of New York's (Juvenile) criminal offenses were committed by Jews. This deplorable situation of Jewish youth was supported by the first survey of Jewish education in New York City, which was presented on 27 February 1910 to the first annual convention of the New York Kehillah. Its authors, Professor Mordechai M. Kaplan of the Jewish Theological seminary of America and Dr. Bernard Cronson, a public school principal, reported that: (1) the demand for Jewish education is "comparatively small"; (2) the means to meet even this small demand "are far too inadequate" and (3) "wherever the demand is met, there is lack either of system or of content" (Kaplan and Cronson, 1910, in Gartner, 1969, p. 123). No wonder Jewish education became a main concern of the Kehillah, which activated the Bureau of Education of the Jewish community (Kehillah) of New York City on October 1, 1910 (Winter, 1966; Goren, 1970).

Taking into account these realities, Dr. Samson Benderly, who was called to organize Jewish education under the auspices of the Jewish community (Kehilla) of New York City in 1910, advised: "as the great public school system is the rock bottom upon which this country is rearing its institutions, so we Jews must evolve here a system of Jewish education that shall be complementary to and harmonious with the public school system" (*ibid.*).

Thus, the establishment of the Bureau of Jewish Education marks a turning point in American Jewish education because of its emphasis on comprehensive planning and coordination replacing improvisation, whether in discriminatory transplantation of traditional East European

educational institutions or direct imitation of American Christian Sunday schools, without appraising their suitability to the Jewish situation in America. For the first time a major Jewish community in America officially recognized its responsibility for Jewish education and thereby set a new pattern for other Jewish communities. One of the Bureau's major achievements was its success in attracting a group of able and dedicated American university-trained young men and women—Isaac B. Berkson, Alexander M. Dushkin, Emanuel Gamoran, and others—to Jewish education. These academics were later called to important leading positions in Jewish education in various parts of the country, and even in Israel (Dushkin and Berkson), and they exerted a powerful influence on Jewish education throughout the land (Ben-Horin, 1969, p. 75).

Three Leaders in the process of the Americanization of Jewish Education

We turn now to examine the impact of these three leaders in American Jewish education on the formulation of the role of Jewish education in "Americanization" in terms of the adjustment process of Jews to life in America (Brumberg, 1986).

1. Isaac B. Berkson

It is proper to start with Berkson, who although not being the first to treat the issue of modernizing Jewish education in America was nevertheless the most systematic classifier and analyst of "Theories of Americanization with special reference to the Jewish group" (1920).

Isaac B. Berkson (1891-1975) was born in New York and graduated from Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1920. He was involved with the New York Bureau of Jewish Education, and taught at the Central Jewish Institute in New York and in the Jewish Institute of Religion. He served also as the director of the Jewish school system in Palestine (1928-1935). From 1938 he taught philosophy of education at the City College of New York and Dropsie College in Philadelphia.

Berkson developed the "community theory" in Jewish education. The Jewish community, according to Berkson, is the all-inclusive unit of the Jewish social organism. The Jewish communities in the world constitute the "Knesset Yisrael," which has a "heritage of cultural, social and spiritual values" (Pilch and Ben Horin, 1966, p.42). Hence the cultivation of the individual Jewish personality must result in loyalty to his own Jewish community and also sharing with his fellow-man in the "realm of universal ideals" (Pilch and Ben Horin, 1966, p.42) The school has a

decisive role in transforming the individual born as a Jew into a person who remains a Jew and who becomes an active participant in the Jewish community. Jewish education must ensure that the young generation will realize the values inherent in Jewish life and thought and accept their responsibility as members of the Jewish community. In his book, "Theories of Americanization," published in 1920, Berkson criticized three major theories prevailing in his days: "Americanization," the "Melting Pot," and the "Federation of Nationalities." He rejected all of them and suggested a theory which he called the "Community" theory.

On the "Americanization" theory Berkson wrote in his book:

According to this position America is pictured as already populated with a fairly homogeneous type, which both in race and culture has Anglo-Saxon affiliations...all newcomers from foreign lands must as quickly as possible divest themselves of their old characteristics, and through intermarriage and complete taking over of the language customs, hopes, aspirations of the American type obliterate all ethnic distinctions. They must utterly forget the land of their birth and completely lose from their memory all recollection of its traditions in a single-minded adherence of American life in all its aspects. The kind of life proper for America is regarded as a matter to be decided altogether by the Anglo—Saxon and by those who have become assimilated. The foreigners must mould themselves into the ready-made form. They must do all the changing; the situation is not to be changed by them.

This point of view is often illustrated in the attitude toward what is called the "new" immigration. In the "old" immigration from 1820 to 1880, the North Europeans predominated. It was made up mainly of Swedes, Norwegians, English, Irish, Scotch, and Germans. This immigration is in current text-books regarded as superior because the immigrants approximate in physical type the early American pioneers and show in language and culture a close kinship. On the other hand, the new immigration since 1880, of Southern and Eastern Europeans, is regarded as inferior and even dangerous, on account of the divergence from the stocks of the older immigrants... Virtue and the good are seen to be in direct relation to the type represented by the original pioneers and difference from this fixed standard is conceived of as inferiority. (Berkson, p. 55-56)

To illustrate the absurdity of this theory in action, Berkson brings the work of the Jewish "Educational Alliance," which was founded in

1889 with the "expressed purpose...to Americanize the children of the ghetto" (Brumberg, 1986 p. 65).

He argues that the work of the Educational Alliance, situated in the heart of New York's East Side, in the midst of a district densely populated with immigrant Jews, is conceived as a task to the complete de-orientalization of the Russian Jew, the ironing out of all those characteristics which stamped him a foreigner.

Although the neighborhood in which it is situated is the centre of the 'intelligentsia' of the ghetto, and represents in many ways a high status of literary culture, the Alliance has remained completely oblivious to the possibilities of cultural and spiritual contribution inherent in the life of the people. A great deal of valuable work has undoubtedly been done, in the teaching of English and civics, in the industrial classes, and in the provision for recreation. But to Jewish things, the attitude has been negative... Whatever was most vital and spontaneous in the neighborhood received no support, and often as far as lay in its power was suppressed in the single effort to make "good Americans" out of the Russian Jew. (Berkson, p. 56-57).

Berkson believes that the Americanization theory which rejects the immigrants' heritage "acts like anti-Semitism toward the Jew," and concludes:

The more the immigrant is permitted to retain and to develop his own type of life, when these are not detrimental to the general good, the more likely will he be drawn to feel that this really is his country... [Loyalty to America] are the result of no "Americanization" program, but of living under institutions which by their very nature permitted economic advance, educational opportunities, and individual freedom in a degree unknown to them in the lands of their birth." (p. 70)

After his rejection of the "Americanization" theory, Berkson turns to the analysis of the "Melting Pot" theory, arguing that it agrees with the "Americanization" theory in that "both look forward to a disappearance of divergent ethnic strains and cultures within the unity of American life." Both would sever the loyalty to the past lived on a foreign soil." But while the first theory [Americanization] tends to look upon Americanism as essentially bound up with Anglo-Saxonism and would give the recent immigrant no part in the development of American culture, the second theory [melting pot] welcomes the contributions that the new racial strains make to American life and looks with favor upon the addition

of new cultural elements... Out of the present heterogeneity of races a new superior race is to be formed; out of the present medley of cultures a new, richer, more humane civilization is to be created (Berkson, p. 73).

Berkson rejected the Americanization and Melting Pot theories because to him they were both impractical and incommensurate with a liberal democracy. He then concludes: "For those ethnic groups which wish to maintain their cultural identity neither the 'Americanization' theory nor the 'Melting Pot' theory can be offered as a solution. Both these theories deprive the immigrant groups of the right to perpetuate the group heritage. In accordance with them the immigrant groups buy their freedom at a cost of suppressing what many may consider of highest worth, their distinct cultural and spiritual life" (p. 78).

Berkson also rejects the "Federation of Nationalities" theory attributed to Horace M. Kallen, quoting from Kallen's article "Democracy versus the Melting Pot" (1915):

The point of view underlying the "Federation of Nationalities" idea would make the ethnic group paramount and permanent in its influence on American life. The purpose of the political organization is to promote and in no way hinder their distinctive integrity... Government performs its function of freeing human capacities only when it exists for the purpose of freeing ethnic expression. (p. 79)

The proper form of government for America, in accordance with the underlying concept in Kallen's words, is a "Federal republic; its substance a democracy of nationalities, cooperating voluntarily and autonomously in the enterprise of self-realization through the perfection of men according to their kind" (Kallen, 1924 [1997]). Although the form of government is not given by Kallen, it is inferred by Berkson

that the unity of America should be of a politico-economic nature. English, too, is to be a common language, in the sense of a lingua franca necessitated by the politico-economic unity. For the expression of its cultural and spiritual life, however, each group will depend upon the ethnic language, literature, social life and religion...education should be controlled by the ethnic group. (p. 80)

Berkson points out that this is the idea tacitly held by some of the Yiddishist protagonists of the national-culture idea. Throughout Kallen's proposed scheme prevails, the analogy is to a federation such as is found in Switzerland, where three nationalities with distinct languages and cultures are joined harmoniously under one government.

In Kallen's words: "American Civilization is to be conceived of as the unified resultant of the separate cultures existing side by side as distinct entities... Thus 'American Civilization' may come to mean the perfection of the cooperative harmonies of 'European Civilization'... a multiplicity in a unity, an orchestration of mankind" (p. 80).

After a lengthy analysis of Kallen's theory, showing that it is a European concept which is not relevant to America, Berkson concludes:

Both the 'Americanization' and the 'Federation of Nationalities' theories assume too much... The 'Americanization' theory regards the life of the country to be fairly well determined and insists that the individual must bring himself within the limits of the evolved and dominant type... The 'Federation of Nationalities' theory would predispose, but in the opposite direction, that the individual's race predetermines his end. Since the term 'race' here really signifies the traditions of his ethnos, it in the end amounts to giving the past of the tribe a vested right to determine the future of the individual. In both cases the cloth is to be cut in measure with some preconceived pattern. (p. 93)

Following the rejection of the three previous theories, Berkson offers his own ideas on immigrant adjustment in his "Community Theory." He infers that his theory draws from the ideas and writings of both American theorists such as John Dewey and Jane Adams, as well as from Ahad Ha'Am and his American disciple Israel Friedlaender (1876-1920).

Like the 'Federation of Nationalities' theory, Berkson's position insists on the value of the ethnic group as a permanent asset in American life. But unlike the 'Americanization' and 'Melting Pot' theories, the 'Community' theory refuses to set up the fusion that will lead to the obliteration of all ethnic distinctions as an ideal. Furthermore, it regards a rich social life as necessary for the development and expression of the type of culture represented by the foreign ethnic groups. However, Berkson stresses that there is

a fundamental difference in what is conceived to be the ultimate sanction of maintaining the identity of the foreign ethnic group. In the 'Federation of Nationalities' theory the assumed identity of race is pivotal; the argument is made to rest primarily upon the proposition that 'we cannot change our grandfathers' The 'Community' theory, on the other hand, would make the history of the ethnic group its, aesthetic, cultural, and religious inheritance, its national self-consciousness the basic factor. This change of emphasis from race to culture brings with

it a whole series of implications rising from the fact that culture is psychical, must be acquired through some educational process, and is not inherited in the natural event of being born. The 'Community' theory is to be understood as an analysis of what is implied for the theory of adjustment by considering culture as central in the life of the ethnos. Community of culture possible of demonstration becomes the ground for perpetuation of the group, rather than an identity of race, questionable in fact and dubious in significance. (p. 98)

Turning to the central role of education according to the "community" theory, Berkson concludes that the 'Community' theory of adjustment makes culture the *raison d'être* of the preservation of the life of the group.

"Thus, the school becomes the central agency around which the ethnic group builds its life." Because, in accordance with our theory, the Jews are conceived of as living in no one isolated locality but scattered throughout the country and living amongst other nationalities. Together with other nationalities, they engage in commerce, in political, and social life; they take advantage of all opportunities for educational and cultural development offered by the state, they fulfill whatever responsibilities citizenship implies even as understood by those who have no other loyalty than to the American ethnos, and they contribute in whatever way they can to the development of America, in all phases, economic, political, and cultural. Over and above this participation in the common life of the country, wherever Jews live in sufficient numbers to make communal life possible, the Jews are conceived of having their own communal life organized with a view to the preservation of that which is essential in the life of the Jewish people — the Torah. (p. 102)

Thus, according to Berkson, the "Talmud Torah," the communal Jewish school in America, becomes the central agency of the community. The role of the communal school is "to transmit the culture of the ethnic group and thus to enrich the life of the individual Jew and through him that of the total group" (p. 103).

According to Berkson's "community theory," the Jewish community is an all-inclusive unit of Jewish socio-cultural and religious organism. Together the Jewish communities in the world constitute the Knesset Yisrael. Hence the end result of the educational process of the cultivism of the Jewish individual must be loyalty to his immediate Jewish community and the world Jewish community, as well as in sharing universal ideals. It is therefore the aim and responsibility of Jewish education in America (and worldwide) to ensure that its graduates

realize the values inherent in Jewish life and thought and join actively the Jew's community (Cf. Berkson, 1937; 1958).

2. Emanuel Gamoran

We turn now to another leader in Jewish education in America during the early 20th century.

Emanuel Gamoran (1895-1962) was born in Russia and arrived in the United States in 1907. He was a graduate of Teachers College, Columbia University. Gamoran also was associated with the New York Bureau of Jewish Education, and in 1923 became the educational director of the Commission of Jewish Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations for almost forty years, until his death. He has been called the chief architect of Reform Jewish Education in America (*Jewish Education* 34, winter 1964). Gamoran's major vision for Jewish Education in America was outlined in his work is *Changing Conceptions in Jewish Education* in 2 volumes, published in 1924, based on his doctoral dissertation at the Teacher College of Columbia University.

Gamoran's conception of Jewish education was influenced mainly by the definition of "socialization and education as life" of Dewey and Kilpatrick and the "Community Theory of Americanization" of Berkson. Gamoran argues that Americanization implies "that the adequate adjustment of the immigrant in a democracy must reckon with his antecedents." Therefore, "from the point of view of democracy the immigrant must also be considered 'an end in himself'... He is entitled to live his own life and not to be compelled to give up his individuality or merely accept conditions for the creation of which he is not responsible" (p. 44).

Referring to the narrow conception of Americanization, Gamoran states:

Nor is it true to fact to assume the existence of an American type which the immigrant must strive to approach... Shall the Anglo-Saxon type then be the sole American character? By asking the immigrant to conform to a predetermined American type we not only fail to recognize the uniqueness of individuality, which is an essential of democracy, but we are also asking him to become like a being that does not as yet exist. Such an attitude calls for destroying all old values without proving that there is any harm in maintaining them, when very often preserving these values would result in good to America. (p. 44)

Gamoran argues that "...loyalty to America is not developed merely through the negative virtue of disloyalty to one's ethnic group. America does not desire a dull uniformity... Instead of a provincial conception of Americanization which would limit instead of liberate, the free spirits of America would prefer a view consistent with one of the fundamental aims of a democratic society—the liberation of the powers and capacities of the individual for his self-realization (p. 44-45).

Gamoran also rejects the "Melting Pot" ideology. He argues that a democracy cannot demand that those groups who want to continue to "annihilate themselves in order to become a new American type" (p. 45). More so, a democratic society must allow a free interaction between individuals and groups, thus it must permit the existence and preservation of distinctive group values to contribute to meaningful interaction.

Thus, on the basis of democratic values Gamoran justifies the pluralistic nature of the American society permitting distinct ethnic coexistence. He accepted Berkson's formulation of the proper ways for immigrants' adjustment to America. In accord with the "community theory of Americanization" every immigrant group is entitled and should even be encouraged to develop itself culturally, and through such cultural development to contribute its share to American life. Finally, Gamoran concludes that: "Jewish education in America is not only necessary from the point of view of the ethnic group but also from the point of view of a democratic society interested in the enrichment of life" (p. 46). Jewish education could and should play a central role in contributing also to the socialization process which is considered the aim of education. The socialization process starts with the family—the Jewish home, it proceeds with the religious group (local at first), and the third step of socialization is "the Jewish group... the people" (p. 51). Summarizing his arguments he concludes: "if the aim of general education is gradually to socialize the child up to and including the world community, the aim of Jewish education is to socialize the child into the largest Jewish community" (p. 52). This way, Gamoran concludes, Jewish education becomes an integral part of the socialization process of Jewish students to the American way of life, and such an education contributes to all Americans.

3. Alexander Mordechai Dushkin

Turning to one of the most influential figures in American Jewish Education at the time, we turn to Alexander Mordechai Dushkin (1890-

1976), who was born in Suwalki, Poland and taken to the United States in 1901. He was the first to earn a doctorate on Jewish education at Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1917 (Dushkin, 1975). His dissertation on Jewish Education in New York (1918) was the first comprehensive scholarly study and history of Jewish education in New York, with implications beyond New York for Jewish education in the United States in general. This study has served an example for later studies of Jewish education in the United States (Dushkin, 1980; Krasner 2011, a & b). Dushkin's educational career alternated between the United States and Palestine-Israel. In the United States he worked at the Board of Jewish Education in New York City from 1910-18 and headed its department of research. He became the first director of the Board of Jewish Education in Chicago from 1923-34, and founder of Chicago's College of Jewish Studies in 1924. Dushkin was also the first executive director of the Jewish Education Committee in New York City from 1939-49. In Palestine-Israel Dushkin was the first inspector of Jewish schools (1919-21), and founder and director of the Department of Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem from 1934-39. He established and served as first director of undergraduate studies at the Hebrew University in 1949, and later headed its School of Education until his retirement in 1959, when he headed the Hebrew University's Department of Jewish Education in the Diaspora (Dushkin, 1975; Iram, 1977).

As a student of Dewey and Kilpatrick and a disciple of progressive education, he based his education theories and work not only on science and experience but also on a positive attitude to Jewish tradition, stressing its central role in the preservation of the Jewish people. Dushkin was a strong advocate of pluralism in the American society in general and in the American Jewish community in particular. From this point of view he formulated the "common elements and values" for Jewish education, which include: Hebrew, Torah, the American Jewish community, Israel, democracy, and religion. To impart these values, Dushkin advocated community responsibility for Jewish education and set the pattern for the American Bureau of Jewish Education as a community service agency (Dushkin, 1918; Pilch and Ben-Horin, 1966).

In his major work, *Jewish Education in New York City* (1918), Dushkin classified American Jews according to their different attitudes towards their adjustment in America, and the degree and manner of their affiliation with the Jewish group. He found that the most fundamental difference is between "fusionists," namely "those who wish to amalgamate or fuse with non-Jews in the country," whether through "Anglo-Saxon

Americanization" or through "fusion in the "Melting Pot," and those of the conservationists or preservationists "whose aim is to preserve Jewish group life" (p. 3). The latter "believe that the continued conservation of those values which are worthwhile in Jewish life can but work for the enrichment of the character of the American Jew, and must therefore redound to the benefit of America" (p. 5). Dushkin believes that this view is in line with the thinking of many of the modern American social philosophers and cites the writings of John Dewey and Horace Kallen (p. 5). However, he points out that the "preservationists" also differ among themselves as to what elements should be preserved of Jewish life in America, the religious or the national elements. While those who stress the primacy of religion "emphasize the expressions of life which are connected with the synagogue and with religious customs of the family and the home... the nationalists tend to stress... the cultural elements of Jewish life: language, literature, historic consciousness, and common group life outside the synagogue" (p. 5). Both of these groups differ in the intensity and methods for religious preservation (Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative) and the problem of how and where Jewish nationality can be best preserved.

The variety in religious and national attitudes among American Jews gave rise to a multiplicity of educational institution ranging from the Orthodox Heder and Yeshiva through the conservative Talmud Torah, or supplementary weekday school, up to the Reform Sunday School. The differences among the nationalists became evident also in a variety of schools extending from the National Hebrew Schools that made the Modern Hebrew language and literature the center of their curriculum to the National Radical Schools or "Yiddishe Volk-Schulen," where the main subject of study was the Yiddish language and literature, and many of them stressed in their curriculum the secular, non-religious elements in Jewish history and culture. Between these two types of schools emerged the "Jewish School Center," which evolved from the conservative Supplementary Talmud Torah. These schools included in their curriculum elements from the Jewish heritage in its totality without confining themselves to any particular phase of the Jewish heritage (Dushkin, p.5-10).

As for the attitude toward "Americanization," the Jewish schools in America represented the variety of methods that the Jews have adopted to adjust to America. Although Dushkin's classification and analysis of the modes of adjustment are similar to Berkson's "Theories of Americanization," it is important to note the differences in phrasing

and interpretation. Following his classification of Jewish educational institutions in America Dushkin turns to analyze the variety of attitudes to immigrants' adjustment to America through two sets of poles on a continuum ranging from "Amalgamation" to "Cooperation" and from "Concentration" to "Individuation."

In his analysis of the "amalgamation vs. cooperation" alternatives, Dushkin asserts:

...Each of these two methods of assimilation has been variously interpreted, giving rise to four theories of American life. One view of amalgamation, as a method of assimilation, is the "Americanization" theory. This theory assumes that there is a definite American type, of the Anglo-Saxon variety, to which all incoming peoples should be made to conform as closely as possible. Another interpretation of amalgamation is the theory of the "Melting Pot." This much-used phrase expresses the view that American life is a huge social cauldron, into which various national and religious metals are being poured, so that a new, and totally distinct, alloy may emerge. (p. 16-17)

Rejecting the "amalgamation" theory, Dushkin turns to the analysis of the "cooperation" alternative which also has been interpreted in two ways. The first view is that of a Federation of Nationalities [Kallen, 1915], similar to Switzerland or Austria-Hungary. It is assumed that the various nationalities which are living on American soil tend to congregate within certain areas. These should be given national rights, to shape their laws and their schools in accordance with what is supposed to be their national or hereditary genius.

Dushkin rejects Kallen's "Federation of Nationalities" solution, since a division on territorial, residential lines seems neither possible nor wise, because it is artificial and unduly segregating" (16-17). The theory which Dushkin accepts in principle is similar to Berkson's "community theory" discussed above. According to Dushkin: "In this theory, the various ethnic and religious groups are considered as organic parts of the American commonwealth. Belonging to one body polity, the members of all groups live together and strive together for the common good". But they seek in the particular ethnic or religious community with which they are affiliated, that which the general Commonwealth cannot give them, namely, certain cultural and spiritual aspects of life which they share in common only with those citizens of the commonwealth to whom they are related by means of a common past.

"This past is based upon a sharing of historic experiences, institutions

and interests, and has a special function to both perform for the good of the individual citizen, supplementary to the American commonwealth." In this conception the individual citizen, and not the state, is the ultimate consideration and the *raison d'etre* for any community or grouping. "In education the community theory of adjustment lays stress upon a system of education which shall not supplant but rather supplement the training which the American child receives in the public schools" (p. 17-18).

In applying the above four theories to American Jews, Dushkin claims that the Jews may hold to any one of these theories. Those who wish immediate fusion may follow the Americanization theory, and "Anglo-Saxonize" themselves as rapidly as possible. The "Melting-Pot" theory is to be shared by the gradual fusionists and by the indigenous nationalists, who believe that outside of Palestine the Jews will assimilate with other ethnic groups in America and lose their particularistic identity.

The other two theories are shared by Jewish nationalists. However, they too differ as to the form and place where these national aspirations might be fulfilled. Thus, Dushkin claims that "the decentralized nationalists," perhaps more than any of the others, lean towards the theory of the Federation of Nationalities. They look forward to the "concentration" of Jewish life in America, so as to preserve a distinct Jewish language, literature, and customs. The tendency toward "concentration" is also true in the case of some of the Orthodox Jews. "The centralized nationalists," and practically the entire religious group, more or less consciously, hold to the community view of American life. They all tend to believe in partial separation as their method of adjustment in America. They claim that whereas in most phases of life the Jew should mix freely with all the members of the American commonwealth, he should, at the same time, have special opportunity to come into close contact with the members of his own Jewish group. The difference between Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews is merely a difference in the extent and degree of this separation. Practically none of them desire complete separation, but all of them would consider a certain amount of it necessary for forming Jewish individuality. "The relationships, which the Jew wishes to share particularly with Jewish members of the American commonwealth, are those which are connected with the synagogue, the life of the family, and some of the cultural interests" (p. 18-19).

As for the justification of Jews and other ethnic groups to adjust to American life without giving up their identity, this is based, according to Dushkin, on two fundamental ideas:

first, that as individuals they have a right, in a democracy, to preserve that culture and those ideals which they consider of great worth to themselves and to their children, unless these values are prone to be detrimental to the interests of the majority; second, that they can be of greater service to America by making their adjustment not as individuals, but as socii of a highly conscious group, rich in historic memories. (p. 19).

However, for a group to exercise its right to preserve its culture in the process of adjustment, it must "contribute to the common good." According to Dushkin, the contribution of Jewish group life and Jewish education to American education are in four areas: (1) Better citizenship by enriching the child's personality and by imbuing in him the duties and privileges of democratic life. Here Dushkin refers to John Dewey's thinking in his works: "School and Society" (1892) and "The Curriculum and Child" (1902); (2) Jewish education might contribute also to the problem of religious education in America by testing the supplementary system of weekday religious education as an alternative to both the Catholic parochial school and to the Protestant Sunday school; (3) Jewish schools might make the process of Americanization by children and their parents more conscious and gradual, thus avoiding the generational conflicts that are common among immigrants; (4) "Internationalization," namely educating not only for national interests but also an education for humanity. This could be achieved by adding the immigrant's religious and cultural heritage as an international dimension to his national education in the public school.

Dushkin concludes that his interpretation is based on the assumption that Jewish religious education is "not apart from, but a part of the American educational system, just as public and private education are only parts of this system" (p. 25).

Conclusion

The aim of this study is an analytical exposition of a major crossroad that the Jewish community and Jewish education in the United States encountered at the late part of the nineteenth century affecting also Jewish life and education up to the mid-20th century. The interpretations given by the three prominent Jewish-American educationists, Dushkin, Berkson, and Gamoran, to the American theory of cultural pluralism, provided the theoretical foundations as well as practical guidelines for the development of Jewish education in the United States, from their time up to the mid-20th century and beyond.

Dushkin's concept of Jewish education was a synthesis of religion and nationalism. He was an advocate of community responsibility for Jewish education and set the pattern for the American Bureau of Jewish Education while heading two major Bureaus, those of New York City and Chicago, as community service agencies both in theory and practice.

Berkson has advanced the "community theory" in American Jewish education. The Jewish community is the all-inclusive unit of the Jewish social organism, which constitutes a heritage of cultural, social, and spiritual values. Education must cultivate loyalty in the individual to his own community, the world Jewish community ("Knesset Yisrael"), and also to his fellow men and women in the realm of "Universal Ideals."

Gamoran has been called the "chief architect of Reform Jewish education in America" (Pilch and Ben Horin, 1966, page 42). He charged Jewish education with the task of "preparing Jewish children to live in America." Therefore, it seemed important to him to define "the nature of Jewishness from our modern point of view, within the framework of the American Society" (Pilch and Ben Horin, 1966, p. 77).

Although Dushkin, Berkson, and Gamoran gave similar interpretations to the concept of "Americanization" and its social, cultural, and pedagogical implications, they differed in their stress on the national component (Dushkin), the communal phase (Berkson), and the religious foundation (Gamoran). Nevertheless, they shared the view that American Jews are part of a world-wide national, religious, and cultural community. They also shared the conviction that Jewish education should be Communal-Hebraic and Progressive. An analysis of the three leaders in Jewish education and their interpretations of the foundations of Jewish education in the early part of the 20th century represents the state of Jewish education not only in their times in the United States, but also at least until the middle of the 20th century. They continue to refer and react to the aftermath of the two world wars, the Holocaust, and the establishment of the State of Israel and the massive Aliyot. Their initial formulations to some extent bear wider implication also up until the 1990s, during the massive immigration from the former Soviet Union to Israel, and to the U.S. on issues and ongoing debates with regard to socio-cultural integration of immigrants in education and in society.

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