

tive glance in its direction. Rusty barbed wire lines strangled all about, no one knowing the strange and terrible and heart-rending meaning of it . . .

We gazed about us in silence. We breathed the breath of the past—and again smelled the odours and heard the sound of that horrible battle.

Twenty-two—
Let's go down!

From out of the damp sacks we extricated twenty-two small pine saplings and we took the saplings and some hoes and some cans of water to the top. Thereafter we went about cleaning up the site of the battle, clearing barbed wire, filling up the shell holes and such like.

Someone gathered lots of stones together and set up a sort of rough heap, a monument. And then we planted the twenty-two trees, twenty-two pines. Yashke stood up straight, bent his head and opened his mouth as though he wanted to speak, for was it not the custom to say something? But a bitter smile broke out on his face and he looked at us apologetically. Yashke, the big, cynical, bold fighter was as soft and ineffectual as a babe.

We went over to the opposite slope, the one where we had started from, where we had still been thirty in number. A number of delicate purple flowers grew there, those humble, bowed cyclamen of the rocky hills. They seemed symbolic of the pain and the sad memorial.

Suddenly one of us flung his hand in the air and cried out, "Hey, Chevrach. It's here! It's here! He . . . !

We rushed to him. He was standing precisely on the spot where we had lain sheltered behind the rocks before we rose to the attack. And behind one of the rocks at the bottom of a shallow foxhole was the skeleton of a man. Ribs, hip bones, skull, all intact. Underneath lay a half-rotten grenade pouch, a

steel helmet, and a green rusty weapon—a Finnish tommy-gun. Good God! That was Saul's! That pile of bones was the lieutenant, he whom we had cursed and whose memory we had hated and killed! Yashke tried to light a cigarette

with trembling fingers, but he couldn't. Hoarsely, with a voice not his own, he said, "He rose up to give the order . . . We attacked . . . And he got the very first burst. We didn't even notice. We never even saw him get struck down . . ."

Damned war!" We returned to the other hill where the trees were. And Yashke went back to the truck to bring up another sapling. We were going to plant the twenty-third tree. (Translated by Yehuda Hanegbi)

Assimilation, Mixed Marriage Problem

By PHIL SLOMOWITZ
in The Jewish News (Detroit)

SYDNEY NELSON, the Joint Distribution Committee's director for Latin America, reporting on a 12-month tour of his area on behalf of the JDC and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, stated that while cultural and spiritual activities among Jews in Latin America are declining, there is a rise of assimilation and mixed marriages.

This investigator's studies in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, San Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Brazil and Uruguay led him to the conclusions that there is virtually no Jewish education, and that these communities suffer from a lack of educators and teachers; that there are few Jewish publications and libraries; that the Jewries in these countries do not confer on Jewish themes; that there is a lack of rabbis and synagogues; that the youth are not provided with social and athletic centres.

Mr. Nelson maintains that there is no "Jewish spirit" to counteract the increase in mixed marriages and assimilation which is "progressing rapidly." While he pointed to major exceptions in Uruguay, Brazil and Mexico, he reported that there are no coordinated activities in Latin American countries, that the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities are in competition organizationally, that fund-raising campaigns are successful only erratically because of a lack of unity, that Jews are economically successful and take care of the indigent, that there is a flight of Jews from smaller to larger countries, that there is no

Zionist youth work and that there is immigration only into Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela.

While the JDC director's report sounds ominous, Latin American Jewish communities are not an exception to the rule, but part of a worldwide pattern. Only last May the Canadian Jewish Congress reported that the rate of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews in all of Canada has tripled in 30 years. The research bureau of the Canadian Jewish Congress reported that while inter-marriages only doubled in the provinces of Alberta and Quebec and fell off in New Brunswick, they tripled in the provinces of Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and increased by 50 per cent in Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

This is only part of the story. A short time ago, two French Jewish leaders who were visitors in this country—Roland Nusnik, deputy director of Centre Educatif, central French Jewish educational agency, and Tito Cohen, executive director of Ronds Social Juif Unifié—said that half of the Jews in France are marrying Christians, and that a majority of the French Jewish women are ignorant of Jewish customs and are not observing them. They reported that of the 250,000 Jews in France, only about 15,000 adults are affiliated with Jewish community activities. This includes about 2,500 synagogue members, 7,000 contributors to Jewish philanthropy, and members of all ideological and other groups. For French Jewry, the only contact with Jewish life is, at most, synagogue attendance on Yom Kippur, they said. About 12 per cent of young children, however, and five per cent of adolescents have some contact with Jewish life.

There is another area to account for: England. Writing recently in the Manchester Guardian, Dr. I. W. Slotki, an emigrant demographer, stated that 10 to 12½ per cent of British Jews are marrying non-Jews. He based his opinion, that inter-marriage is on the increase in Great Britain, on data he gathered from marriage licenses and discussions with rabbinical authorities. Thus the trend toward increases in intermarriage appears to be universal. The danger of assimilation is great and Jewish communities everywhere must study the problem thoroughly in order to solve it before the inroads made by mixed marriages seriously threaten

Jewry's survival.

An encouraging factor in the studies we have just outlined is the frankness with which the issue is approached. The mere fact that the rise in intermarriage is taken seriously is an indication that it is a pressing issue. Accompanying each study is an assertion by community leaders that they are striving to conduct a systematic fight against disintegration, that they are striving to intensify Jewish educational activities and that there is a "serious movement afoot in Jewish communities throughout the world to train able teachers and to increase school facilities.

At the same time, there is an awareness that the problem is not easily soluble, as long as the youth is not thoroughly integrated into communal life. Of special interest is the study that was made by the Inter-University Jewish Federation of Great Britain and Ireland.

Such is the danger facing world Jewry today. It is traceable to a lack of understanding of Jewish values among our youth, and therefore to a lack of desire to perpetuate our values.

In his annual report to the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, the retiring Hillel director, Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, declared that "the average American college student comes today to the campus with scarcely any background for appreciating a program which stresses religious and cultural values." He characterized our contemporary American college youth as "rich, valuable human material which has not been awakened, and which cannot be reached by the mass approach of today's educational system."

How, then, is the problem to be solved? How are our young people to be reached by Jewish appeals? This is the grave responsibility of our educational agencies, on the local as well as the national fronts. Thus far, we are certain of the problem, but are uncertain of the solution.

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