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# The Commentator

Official Undergraduate Newspaper of  
YESHIVA COLLEGE

Published weekly  
throughout the College year at Yeshiva College  
Washington Heights, New York City

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REPRESENTED FOR NATIONAL ADVERTISING BY

National Advertising Service, Inc.

Published at the Bergen Press Corporation,  
18 South Dean Street, Englewood, N. J.

1936 Member 1937  
Associated College Press

Volume V. APRIL 7, 1937 No. 7

## A Jubilee of Torah

We wish to extend our welcome to the hundreds of students representing the Hebrew elementary schools who are making a mass pilgrimage to the Yeshiva this Sunday. This event, perhaps more than any other tribute paid to the Yeshiva, serves to illustrate the pivotal role which the Yeshiva must play in American Jewish life. In bringing to the Yeshiva the children of American Jewry this pilgrimage demonstrates most clearly the function of Yeshiva in preparing a new generation of American orthodox.

Time was when Yeshiva seemed an anomaly on the American scene. It served primarily as an institution for European born students who wished to continue the training which had been given them abroad. It appeared to be the temporary creation of a passing age rather than a permanent influence which might supply leadership for future generations.

Today we see a totally different scene. Though Torah may not yet be firmly entrenched in this country, it has become a permanent factor in our life here. The Yeshiva has long passed its pioneering stage. No longer does it sow the seeds of Torah on a barren soil.

Since the founding of the Yeshivath Etz Chaim fifty years ago, there have arisen Hebrew schools throughout the country and especially in New York in which the children of American Jewry may be reared in the spirit of Torah. Largely through the influence and precedent set by that institution, Jewish education has progressed from the stuffy Cheder so repugnant to a youth brought up in the New World, through the early Talmud Torahs which gave but a smattering of what should constitute a proper Hebrew education, to the small yeshiva of today in which our children receive a complete elementary training in Jewish and secular fields in an atmosphere permeated with Torah.

During the same period there developed from the union of the Yeshivath Etz Chaim and the organization of Talmudic students named after Rabbi Isaac Elchanan the Yeshiva of today uniting within its scope the traditions of the great European Yeshivah and of the institutions of secular learning. The vision of a broad secular life thoroughly infused with the tradition of Torah begins to assume the shape of something more than a distant hope.

This does not mean that either our element-

ary education or the Yeshiva have reached their proper standards. There is need for great expansion in our Hebrew education. There is an equal need for a general rise in the standards of our lower schools. The Yeshiva, itself, must go on to effect such improvements as would bring it closer to its goal. It would be no exaggeration to state that we are only beginning to realize the full significance of many problems which Yeshiva must set itself to solve not merely for itself but for the cause of Torah in America.

This demonstration of solidarity in the cause of Yeshiva should encourage us to advance further in our attempt to make Torah the vital force of the Jewish community. Its illustration of our goals in the past should lend new vigor to our push forward.

But the pilgrimage also brings into relief a fact whose recognition is of great importance for both the Yeshiva and the elementary schools—the mutual interdependence of the two.

The recognition of this bond must enter into the plans of both Yeshiva and the lower schools. The elementary schools must proceed in the planning of their development with full realization of the fact that they may not merely perform the functions of the "Hebrew school" in its traditional American sense, but must seek to conform with the standards set by the Yeshiva.

The Yeshiva at the same time could take active leadership in the general planning of Hebrew education. In planning its own development, it might be important for the Yeshiva to consider conditions prevailing in our lower school system. There is a gap between our elementary schools and the Yeshiva which requires bridging.

There is a long road ahead, let us take it without fear or hesitation.

## The Last Appeal

Due to the indifference of the students to the work of Student Council, we find ourselves at an impasse. There are neither sufficient funds nor literary material at present to assure the publication of the Masmid. The Dramatic Society has already decided not to continue with its plans. Student Council finds itself in need of extra funds in order to proceed with its work.

Within the next few days, the students must do something to mitigate this condition. The necessary ads must be procured for the Masmid. Yeshiva's literati must awake from their winter's hibernation and begin handing in their contributions.

Above all, it is essential that every student do his share to make the current raffle of Student Council a success. No student may consider himself exempt from supporting this undertaking of the Council. Unless it is successful, Student Council cannot go on with its work as it should.

If the necessary response does not come, the only path open to the Student Administration will be along the lines suggested at the recent meeting of the executive committee. If the students refuse to lend their support to the activities carried on by their organization, the only answer can be the immediate suspension of all activities by Council. Perhaps, by being forced to forego the advantages of the Co-op Store and of the loan fund for a while, the students will learn to appreciate the importance of giving their cooperation to their own activities.

We believe that such drastic action will be made unnecessary. It is our sincere hope that a realization of the emergency will suffice to make the student body rise up to the situation. We expect to hear an immediate response.

## MAYBE I'M WRONG

By ELIASER GOLDMAN

One important effect of this week's pilgrimage of the students of the elementary Hebrew schools might be a temporary respite to earth from the religious fanaticism where students of the "Theory of Yeshiva" are wont to be found. It should impress upon us the often overlooked fact that in the long run, Yeshiva will be neither more nor less than what its students make of it, and that in turn these students are products of our elementary Jewish education as well as of the general American environment.

These considerations should make us conscious of a significant aspect of the Yeshiva which has usually been neglected in the familiar, high-sounding, uniquely-vocabularyed discussions of the functions and purposes of the Yeshiva. I refer to the possibility of the Yeshiva's setting the tone and standards of elementary Jewish education in the United States or at least in the city of New York, a possibility which has, to my knowledge, never been sufficiently considered.

In bringing about such a situation, the infiltration of graduates of the Yeshiva into the schools would be an important, though not necessarily essential, part. It is rather the position of Yeshiva itself at the apex of the Jewish educational system in America which should accomplish this.

In the first place the formulation of definite and strict requirements for entrance into the Yeshiva would cause many lower schools to adjust their curricula so as to meet the Yeshiva's requirements. But the Yeshiva's influence could extend even further so that in effect it would be the governing agency of an orthodox Hebrew school system. A uniform system under the educational leadership of the Yeshiva could some day become a reality.

If at present this sounds almost fantastically absurd, it is because of the extreme anarchy reigning in Jewish communal life today which makes an integrated organization of education seem impossible. An increase of aggressive leadership on the part of the Yeshiva might make this condition seem realizable. Whatever the reasons for failure to accomplish this in the past, it would be well to consider this matter for the future.

That Yeshiva can become a centralizing influence in American Jewish education is clearly demonstrated by this week's pilgrimage.

## REVIEWS

By HAROLD POLIKOFF

A major disappointment of this season has been the fact that the Yiddish Art Theatre has failed to bring to us those of its masters who, for art, waited patiently while Maurice Schwartz traversed Europe with his company, picking up new plays as he went along. The reports that Mr. Schwartz had moved upstate where he could present finer works to more discriminating audiences was greeted enthusiastically by members of both the Yiddish and Gentile intelligentsia. It was expected that Mr. Schwartz and his group of artists would outdo themselves in presenting the very finest that the theatre has to offer.

But unfortunately, nothing of the sort was accomplished. As a matter of fact, the company fell far below its own mark of past seasons. Except for "Jacques Bergson", not one decent play was presented. Certainly there can be no excuse for such a work as "The Water Carrier". Although it was well staged, a la Schwartz, it was outstanding for its lack of good taste.

We can immediately perceive that the Art Theatre's current deficiencies can be charged to inferior plays. In view of this fact it is heartening to hear that Mr. Schwartz intends to produce I. J. Singer's superb novel "The Brothers Ashkenazi" next season. Here there is an opportunity for a tremendous production which would exact every ounce of ingenuity that Schwartz and Company have to offer.

When I read "The Brothers Ashkenazi" I decided that it was one of the finest novels that it had been my good fortune to come across. In its writing Mr. Singer has created an outstanding piece of literature. Those who have read the work certainly realize how unlimited its dramatic possibilities are. In good hands (and my faith in Mr. Schwartz is not done by a long shot) it should make history. No doubt Mr. Singer, the author of "Yoshe Kalb" can write a suitable dramatization of his own novel.

Here's hoping that the Yiddish Art Theatre's next season will be more satisfactory than this one has proven to be.

ated by this week's pilgrimage. If the pupils of the elementary schools can come on a pilgrimage to the Yeshiva, why should not Yeshiva, in turn, begin to permeate the elementary school.

## In The Editor's Mail Box

To the Editor of The Commentator:  
Dear Sir:

Next Sunday a very unusual event in the history of Yeshiva will occur. A group of two thousand pupils representing the various Hebrew schools in the vicinity of New York will make a mass pilgrimage to the Yeshiva.

The purpose of this occasion will be to acquaint the children of the small Yeshivah and of the Talmud Torahs with the significance and the work of the Yeshiva. The students will not only be addressed by the leaders of the Yeshiva but will be shown the building and all that goes on within.

In connection with this I think it only proper that the student body should participate, officially. One of the finest ways in which this could be done would be for the Commentator to devote special time to this event.

Sincerely,

H. A.

(Editor's Note: For getting persons it has been impossible to locate)

a complete issue to the Jubilee. We believe that the present issue will serve this purpose.)

To the Editor of The Commentator:  
Dear Sir:

As a member of The Commentator news staff I often have occasion to descend to the basement of the Yeshiva College in order to reach The Commentator room. During the last few days I have been obliged to feel my way through the corridors in order to reach my destination. There was not one burning bulb to illuminate the way from the staircase to the Commentator room.

Last night in approaching the Commentator room, I actually tripped on the small staircase leading from the main passageway towards the gymnasium. Fortunately I only sustained a few bruises.

I believe the Commentator should advise that people may approach the office with endangering their steps.

Respectfully,  
A Member of Your Staff.



## ON THE SIDELINES

By ABE NOVICK

By Emil

Every year about this time, reports begin to drift into this department concerning contemplated excursions into the field of varsity baseball. In the face of the loss of the field, we had expected that the perennial team organizers would be forced to admit the impracticality of the notion and abandon their efforts this year.

*But, as usual, with the regularity of the commencement of Florida exhibition games, the local enthusiasts have announced their intention of starting spring practice.*

Indeed, the tradition of indomitable resourcefulness in the face of difficulties is part of the heritage of Yeshiva students. Sports have steadily gained in spite of all sorts of obstacles, since the earliest days of Yeshiva life in crowded, cramped Montgomery Street.

*In those days, the germ manifested itself in much more modest fashion than at present. A narrow East Side street is not the ideal place for sports and as a consequence, the only pastime that was practical was the inevitable hand-ball, since brick walls were only too available.*

With the removal of the Yeshiva to larger quarters, as the exigencies of growth made first Henry Street and then East Broadway necessary, physical recreations gained correspondingly in variety and importance.

*With the establishment of inter-institutional base-ball games, played for the most part after hurriedly swallowed lunches, sports in Yeshiva had definitely made their place in the routine of academic existence.*

Recent history is one of even more rapid development. As late as two years ago, inter-collegiate games in the basketball schedule were a rarity. Small clubs and Young Israel branches were the more usual fare.

*And in the seasons since, with the score-book carrying the names of recognized college teams, playing to scores that speak well for the development of the varsity, it is good to reflect that the upward club has been a worthwhile one.*

What is of especial moment is not the per se value of an athletic program. It is the demonstration of the fact that there is no inherent quarrel between the cloistered academic life and collegiate sports. The fact that a Yeshiva is not necessarily an old-worldly anachronism withdrawn from reality is what counts.

*So, as the days get longer, and masks and bats begin to appear, maybe it's as well to forget impracticalities and think wishfully of a baseball varsity.*

# A Half Century Of Torah In America

By JACOB I. HARTSTEIN,  
M. A., M. S.  
Registrar of Yeshiva College

The golden jubilee, which we are now celebrating, and of which the pilgrimage of some 2,000 students representing the higher classes in junior yeshivah and Talmud Torahs of the eastern states and Maryland on Sunday, April 11, 1937, is but one feature, marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the first yeshiva on American soil, the Yeshiva Eitz Chaim.

The great exodus of Jewry from Russia in the 1880's, due to the pogroms there, brought to this country an element of Jewry which was determined to transplant its complete heritage to American soil, without any changes. It was this element which had incorporated in the City of New York the "Machzikei Hashem Eitz Chaim" on September 15, 1886, "to give free instruction to poor Hebrew children in the Hebrew language and the Hebrew Law—Talmud, Bible and Shulchon Aruch, during the whole day from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon."

From four in the afternoon two hours were to be devoted "to teach the native language, English, and one hour to teach Hebrew—Loshon Hakodesh and Jargon to read and write."

### Found Eitz

In 1886 the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan was founded as the first Yeshiva, in the European sense of the word; as a higher institution for the study of the Talmud, propagating in America the idea of "Torah Lishmoh," learning for the sake of learning. On March 20, 1897 this institution was incorporated as the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary.

The purpose and philosophy underlying the institution was, however, understood differently by the directors or organizers, on the one hand, and the students, on the other. The former following closely the European Yeshiva believed in it as a place for the study of the Talmud for its own sake, "Torah Lishmoh." Of course, Rabbis for the genuinely orthodox communities would also be drawn from among the Yeshiva graduates. The functions of the Rabbi were looked upon by the directors to be the same in America as they were in Russia or Lithuania. Hence the directors were equipping the students, in their opinion, with all that was necessary. They knew that they would be satisfied with such Rabbis.

### Students Request Change

The students, however, had a different outlook. They demanded a thorough training in Jewish and general knowledge, and in those qualities which would equip them for effective and able spiritual leadership of the type which would enable them, as Orthodox Rabbis, to compete with the modern Rabbis preaching reform and conservative doctrines. The directors, naturally could not see the students viewpoint. The students could not be expected to agree with the out-of-date philosophy, of what a Rabbi should be or know, of the directors. This misunderstanding led to some friction between the two elements concerned, and the Jewish press, to which the students appealed, agreed with the latter.

Finally on Thursday, May 14, 1903, a conference of Rabbis, after much discussion, agreed: (1) To issue a call for a conference of representatives from all congregations in New York, who should appeal to all Jewish communities in the country to help support the Yeshiva; (2) That the students were to receive stipends for the first weeks of classes during which they

the directors had refused them their stipends; and (3) That the students were to be permitted to attend general or secular schools until a complete secular department had been organized in the Yeshiva.

The reorganization of the Yeshiva in 1903, although undertaken with much enthusiasm, sound planning, and desirable recommendations, seems not to have borne much fruit, as we may judge from the following extract from an article friendly to the institution, and hailing the laying of the cornerstone of its own building when it combined with the Yeshiva Eitz Chaim in 1915. Discussing the accomplishments of the Yeshiva the author says: "She helped young men, sons of Torah, who came to this country ready scholars and wanted to become Rabbis. But she did not have the means to fit them appropriately to the environment here."

### Dr. Revel Appointed

As already alluded to above, in the early part of 1915 the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan and the Yeshiva Eitz Chaim, founded in 1886, between whom, previous to this time friction had occurred because of overlapping of their functions, merged and became the Rabbinical College of America. Rabbi Dr. Bernard Revel, who although a young man was already widely known in Jewish circles as an outstanding authority on Jewish learning, was called to the Presidency of the Faculty.

This marked the beginning of a new era—one of vigorous and progressive leadership—not only for this institution alone, but for all Jewish education in this country and particularly for Jewish parochial education.

The merger was also marked by the construction of a modest school building for the institution, on a double lot, at 9-11 Montgomery Street, New York. The cornerstone laying was celebrated with great ceremony on July 1st, 1915. The dedication began on Sunday, December 5th, and ended on Sunday, December 18th, 1915, at which time Dr. Revel was officially inaugurated President.

One of the first problems that the new President of the Faculty had to face was the need for extension of the Jewish studies. Up to this time boys who wanted to continue their Hebrew studies could either do this in the afternoon hours when they came home from high school, or not attend a high school at all, or attend an evening high school and study Hebrew during the morning hours.

Dr. Revel undertook to establish the first academic high school under Jewish auspices. The school was started without any official recognition or authorization from the Board of Regents, with Dr. Solomon T. H. Harwitz as its first principal.

In January, 1919, Dr. Harwitz passed away and Dr. Shlomo R. Safir, at the time instructor in Biology in the school, was appointed to succeed Dr. Harwitz. The administration, and routine were completely reorganized in conformity with the practice which prevailed in the modern up-to-date high schools and the equipment and facilities improved so as to meet the requirements of a modern school house. The results of the Regents examination proved that not over six, that the school was

doing exceptional work. This was further verified by representatives from the Board of Regents who came to inspect the work prior to chartering the school, first as a Junior, then as a Middle, and finally, on November 24, 1919, as a Senior High School, known as the Talmudical Academy. In the meantime the first class of five had been graduated in June 1919.

### High School Chartered

In addition to the introduction of the High School, the Yeshiva, was in 1915 organized into two divisions, each one of which enrolled fifty students; the lower or Junior division, known as the Yeshiva Eitz Chaim, and the upper, or Senior division, known as the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan; the whole institution, however, being known as the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, as chartered. The lower division was attended primarily by the elementary school pupils and the high school students, especially those in the lower classes. The upper division was attended by a number of foreign students, those who attended colleges in the evening or were high school graduates, and also by some students in the upper classes of the high school who were advanced in their Talmudic studies.

The wave of immigration which set in after the World War and continued up to the passing of the immigration laws of 1921 and 1924, which increased the potential parochial school population, and perhaps also the stimulation given American Jewry by the chartering of the first Jewish parochial High School, resulted in a marked increase in the student body of the institution. The building at Montgomery Street was outgrown and new quarters were provided in a renovated five story brick building on the southeast corner of East Broadway and Scammel Street, (301-303 East Broadway), New York City. This building was dedicated on Sunday, April 3, 1921, with appropriate ceremonies. These were continued during the evenings for the remainder of the week.

### Teacher's Institute

In 1921 the Misrachi Teachers Institute founded in 1917 by the Misrachi Organization of America to train teachers and supervisors for the Hebrew Schools of the United States and Canada; "Men who should be imbued with the genuine Jewish spirit, filled with love for our past, and idealism for the future, thoroughly trained in Hebrew, Talmud, the Bible and the commentaries, and Jewish History and at the same time possess a came an integral part of the Yeshiva with Dr. Pinchos Chargin as its principal. The Teachers Institute occupied part of the fourth floor of the new Yeshiva building.

The increased student body and activities of the institution as a whole soon, however, caused the building on East Broadway, in spite of renovations and changes made from time to time, to become insufficient for the adequate accommodations of the institution. At the same time the great number of Yeshiva students who were studying their advanced academic studies in the late afternoon and evening hours, under hardship and with scanty meals, at other institutions, "where inadequate social and economic factors, tend to create a divergence between the old and the modernly new," began to press home the importance of establishing, as part of the Yeshiva, a college of liberal arts and sciences where the students of the Yeshiva and ultimately other students

young men, which serves their academic work, as an "integrative harmonizing the modern quest for ideals of faith and culture with the fruits of modern knowledge." The dream of Dr. Revel and the dream of those he inspired made possible the conversion of a vision into a reality.

If the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, however, contemplated horizontal and vertical extension in its program—extension of the high school into a college and graduate school, and broadening out its curriculum, larger, and more suitable quarters were necessary. Thus on December 29, 1926, a small group of about 125 men attended a dinner at the Hotel Astor to organize themselves and begin fund raising for the Yeshiva College Building Fund. This meeting was a surprise; "almost \$1,000,000 was pledged in one evening when \$100,000 would have been considered a success."

"On May 26, 1925, at the Hotel Astor almost 1200 men and women sat down at a dinner, historic, but for the fact that each of them paid a cover charge of one thousand dollars for the privilege of attending." The second million for the proposed Yeshiva College was thus raised.

On Sunday, May 1, 1927, the cornerstone for Group A was laid "in the afternoon . . . in the presence of public officials, scholars and educators and a crowd of 10,000 persons who thronged Washington Heights to witness the ceremonies." On December 9, 1928, this group was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies, marked by a message from the then United States Vice-President elect Charles Curtis, and by addresses by the Mayor, James J. Walker, who called the opening of the institution "a landmark in the city's progress," Dr. Henry N. MacCracken, President of Vassar College and others.

### College Dedicated

On March 27th, 1924, the charter of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary was amended to empower it to grant the degree of Doctor of Hebrew Literature. On March 29, 1928, the charter was further amended creating, as an addition to the organization, Yeshiva College, the only college of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the world, under Jewish auspices, and authorizing it to offer courses leading to the degrees of B. A. and B. S., and to confer those degrees. During the comparatively short time of its existence Yeshiva College has established for itself, an enviable academic reputation. Its alumni have been admitted to leading universities for professional and post-graduate work, and some have also won scholarships and fellowships. On May 15, 1927, the Board of Regents approved another amendment to this charter; authorizing the institution to confer the Honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, Doctor of Laws. Also with awareness of this privilege Yeshiva College has reflected credit upon itself. It now counts among its honorary alumni such shining lights as reformer Albert Einstein, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court Benjamin N. Cardozo, and the Governor of the State of New York, the Hon. Herbert H. Lehman.

Thus is one-room parochial school has grown into one of the most prominent and expanding centers of Jewish learning in the United States, and the growth of it is only one indication of the vitality of the Jewish community in America.



## 2,000 CHILDREN ASSEMBLE HERE

(Continued from Page 1)  
together with instrumental and vocal selections will be interspersed throughout the program. Meiko Matthews, well known radio artist, will direct the national anthems together with the various other choral numbers.

Rabbi B. L. Levinthal, chief rabbi of Philadelphia, will deliver the invocation, with President Bernard Kovel giving the closing address and benediction.

The affair, which is expected to be run smoothly between Passover and Shavuoth, is designed to emphasize the importance of Yeshiva and Yeshiva College as a standard-raising agency in the field of Hebrew studies; it was pointed out by Jacob I. Hartstein, who is in general charge of arrangements.

It is by virtue of certain standard entrance regulations to the Teachers Institute and to the Yeshiva proper, that many smaller institutions of the elementary type have raised the levels and standards of attainment of their higher classes, he emphasized.

## ALUMNI TO LAUNCH JOURNALISM CLUB

(Continued from page 1)  
of the Alumni when Commentator issues are involved.

Organization of the association is now under way, and a definite program of activities is being planned for the rest of this term and September.

Best Wishes from  
**MR. AND MRS. B. BERNSTEIN**

Best Wishes from  
**RABBI EDIN**

Best Wishes from  
**MR. MINSKOFF**  
on the occasion of  
Yeshiva's Golden Jubilee

Best Wishes from  
**MR. AND MRS. HARRY ROGEN**

Best Wishes from  
**MENDEL GOTTSTEN**

Greeting and  
Best Wishes from  
**HIRSCH B. MANSCHEWITZ**

on the occasion of  
Yeshiva's Golden Jubilee

Best Wishes from  
**SAMUEL C. LAMPORT**

Best Wishes from  
**RABBI HERBERT S. GOLDSTEIN**

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Also

**"The Captain's Kid"**

**SUN., MON., TUES., APR. 11-13**

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Also

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