

Drop in Jewish Child Population Here

Since 1924, each year (with one exception) continues to reveal a drop in the number of Jewish school children in Pittsburgh, according to an analysis of the Yom Kippur public school census just announced for 1945 by Israel A. Abrams, educational director of the Hebrew Institute of Pittsburgh. This census is made each year by the Institute with the co-operation of the Board of Public Education.

In 1945, there were 5,962 Jewish boys and girls attending elementary and high schools in Pittsburgh, of which 1901 went to the high schools. In 1944, there were 6,200, of which 1972 attended the high schools, showing a drop of 238 children. From 1943 to 1944, the decrease was 244 boys and girls. In 1924 the Institute census showed there were 9,205 Jewish boys and girls in the Pittsburgh schools, of which 2,304 were in high school. The downward trend began the following year, when the total dropped to 8,923. The only exception in this downward trend was in 1932 when there was a small increase.

It is therefore indicated that from 1924 to 1945, a 32% drop occurred in the Jewish child population of the city. An analysis shows that this percentage is several per cent higher than the general drop in child population for all groups from 1924 to 1945.

Mr. Abrams, who has made a careful study of the statistics, expressed the opinion, however, that beginning next year the census will show a substantial increase due to the rising birth rate beginning with 1941.

Greatest significance in the census figures comes from a study of the neighborhood trends. These statistics

are invaluable, according to Mr. Abrams, should Jewish leaders undertake a community planning program.

Out of 5,962 high and elementary school children all over the city 3,216 go to school in Squirrel Hill, therefore, 55% of the Jewish children of the city live in that neighborhood. This rise in Squirrel Hill is plainly at the expense of the Jewish settlements in Homewood, North Side and Lawrenceville and, possibly, some nearby small towns. In Homewood the census shows that there are only 26 Jewish boys and girls enrolled this year, as compared to 39 in 1944. Lawrenceville dropped over 50% from 1944 to 1945. The North Side showed a decrease from 63 to 41.

The Greenfield, West End, South Side, South Hills and Shadyside sections had modest increases.

It is interesting to note that the Jewish child population on the North Side dropped enormously since 1924 when it totalled 206, with 1945 showing only 41.

The Hill district represents a subject for serious contemplation. In 1924 the child population there, according to the Hebrew Institute census, was 4119. Then the decline set in and was regularly reported every year. The downward trend took on the aspects of an avalanche, yet haphazard, short-sighted building of synagogues and institutions continued. Now in 1945 the child population in the Hill district is revealed at only 245 boys and girls, whereas in 1944 it was 380, a drop in one year of 33%. Up until 1930 Jewry continued to erect costly structures in a section that was being rapidly depleted, as clearly stated in the Hebrew Institute census. Mr. Abrams' study would plainly indicate that the

time has come for comprehensive community building planning based on factual thinking and foresight, even though now it is too late, of course, to remedy the situation in the Hill section where there are enough expensive edifices to serve the needs of families represented by 4,119 children, yet with just the families representing only 245 boys and girls residing there now. No general increase in Jewish child population because of the higher 1941-1945 birth rate could possibly affect, except in the slightest degree, the trend toward moving away from the Hill district. As a Jewish neighborhood it is plainly doomed.

The Hill district lesson learned on community planning with regard to new communal and religious buildings should be heeded where two other city neighborhoods are concerned. Mr. Abrams pointed out.

The Jewish population, based on the school census, has been stationary in the East End and Oakland. Today, that is in 1945, the East End has 858 boys and girls enrolled in the public schools. Last year it was 882. In Oakland the figures for 1945 are 584 and last year 594. These are approximately the same as in 1928, although during that time the Squirrel Hill child population leaped in excess of 66%, despite the all-over decrease throughout the city of approximately 33%.

The conclusion is that a stationary neighborhood does not represent a wise choice for the investment of building funds and that under scientific community building planning

such waste of capital funds would not be recommended. It is the judgment of Mr. Abrams that all groups, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform could develop co-operatively a central agency that would base its recommendations for all contemplated buildings, regardless of purpose, on the acknowledged findings such as revealed in the Hebrew Institute Yom Kippur census as to actual neighborhood shifting trends.

Dr. Freehof Opens Twelfth Modern Literature Class At Rodef Shalom Temple

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The second source of Caesarism, slothfulness, is something else. That is found here and is a potential source of unrest. The American people are not vigilant enough. We have not enough sense of responsibility. But, fortunately, there is not enough misery to combine with it. "Ministers, teachers and authors have not done their part to make us aware of a living responsibility, our ethical responsibility. We know it exists in us because it comes out in times of crises. It came out in our young men fighting overseas. They managed to take their responsibility. They had individual self-reliance. That was their ethical responsibility."

"It is our American voice," said Dr. Freehof. "That voice is the voice of God and has to be clearer yet, but it already speaks in us so we may say that while the author, quite properly thinking of the slothful in the Book of Proverbs, says 'The slothful man saith, there is a lion in the way,' we know that the divine voice