

# Hebrew Institute Completes Census of Jewish Students

By H. NORMAN SHOOP

Curious conclusions arrived at during a study of the statistics of the latest census of Jewish school children in Pittsburgh are puzzling the census-takers.

The Hebrew Institute of Pittsburgh has just completed the task of establishing the exact number of Jewish boys and girls attending public schools in Pittsburgh. A similar census was taken in 1924 and it was a comparison and study of the figures obtained in 1924 with the figures gathered this year that uncovered the interesting facts.

The purpose of this census is to determine the growth or decline of the various Jewish districts in Pittsburgh so that the men planning the future or Jewish educational work in this city may be intelligently guided. While interested mainly, of course, in the educational aspects of the population analysis, the Hebrew Institute officials naturally could not ignore those other conditions indisputably brought to light by the figures.

The statistics show a condition that may have a significance not to be lightly cast aside.

First, there is the fact that within the last two years the Jewish child population of Pittsburgh not only has failed to show the normal increase, BUT THAT THERE HAS BEEN A DECREASE OF MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED CHILDREN!

Here are the figures:  
1924—9,460 Jewish boys and girls in the public schools, both elementary and high.

1926—9,251 Jewish boys and girls in the public schools of Pittsburgh, both elementary and high.

That may be a serious discovery, and then again it may be accounted for by the restricted immigration of the past few years, and also by the fact that a large number of Jewish families have moved away from Pittsburgh to California, Florida and elsewhere. As Pittsburgh is the first city that has taken a Jewish census in the last few years, there is as yet, no way in which to determine whether this decline is nation-wide in scope. With figures from other cities, authorities would be able to establish whether this condition is peculiarly Pittsburgh's.

Though the new immigration laws particularly are advanced as the cause of the decrease in the number of school children in Pittsburgh, it is logically argued that regardless of this there should be a normal 10 per cent. increase, leaving alone the noted decrease. There is a disposition on the part of some students of this latest census to strike an alarmist note—to declare outright that the modern, general disinclination of Jewish who have bettered themselves to raise large families has resulted in the serious falling off in the Jewish birth rate.

One man pointed out:  
"Now for the first time we are discovering how serious this trend toward smaller families among the American wealthy 'modernized' has become. While large Jewish immigrant families were pouring into Pittsburgh and the entire country, there was, of course, an increase in the number of Jewish school children. The number of new arrivals was so great that the comparatively decreasing birth rate among the already established Jews was hardly discernible. With the arrival of immigrant families cut down to a minimum in the last few years, we are at last awakening to the danger."

Unless the immigration bars are lifted, the Jewish people are warned that within five and ten years, as the number of newer and larger Jewish families decrease, and the customs of the "modernized" American (particu-

larly that of small families) finds new converts among the Jews, figures will show that the Jewish population of Pittsburgh and throughout the country has undergone a very serious drop.

Out of the bewildering maze of statistics of the census, which was taken by Prof. Israel A. Abrams, of the Hebrew Institute, with the co-operation of Dr. William M. Davidson, superintendent of public schools, comes another, even more perplexing discovery.

A preliminary report of the recent census of the Jewish children registered in the elementary and high schools of the city of Pittsburgh, taken September 9th, 1926, by the Hebrew Institute of Pittsburgh.

This census was taken in the same way as the previous one in 1924, with one exception, however, that being that the one in 1924 was taken on Yom Kippur. Due to the fact that Yom Kippur this year was on Saturday it was taken on Rosh Hashonah. Through the assistance of Dr. William Davidson, superintendent of schools, the principals and teachers in the different schools of the city were requested to prepare lists of the Jewish boys and girls who were absent on Rosh Hashonah. These lists were then checked and sent to the Hebrew Institute. The schools were then classified according to districts and the figures tabulated and compared with the census taken in 1924. The results of the census are very interesting.

The purpose of the census was: First to ascertain how fast the Jewish population was shifting from one neighborhood to another; secondly, to indicate the growing neighborhoods and those on the decline; and also to determine the natural growth of the Jewish community.

The Board of Trustees felt that in order to plan the Jewish educational work for the future, intelligently, a census of this kind would act as a guide. Several facts were revealed during the study of the census. First, the Jewish population is not growing, nor is it stationary, but slightly decreasing. The aim of the Hebrew Institute is to make a comprehensive study to find out where the decrease is, whether it is in the kindergarten, intermediate, or high school groups. It is certain, however, that a general decrease prevails along the whole line. In the high schools the decrease is small and in the elementary schools it is much larger.

There may be many factors responsible for this decrease. The curtailment of immigration, Jewish families moving out of the city to settle in the suburbs, some families moving out to Florida, California, and other states, and the fact that the American Jewish family of today is much smaller than the Jewish family that came from across the seas.

The Jewish population may have been on the decline for some time, even two years ago, but the fact could not be revealed until the present census.

The census establishes the fact that the Jewish population in the Oakland district is not decreasing, but is slightly increasing; that the older Jewish families are moving to the East Liberty district, which is therefore responsible for the 75 per cent increase; and that those recently married are moving to Squirrel Hill. While the Jewish population is in-

Where are the children of the hundreds and hundreds of Jewish families that have been literally pouring into the Squirrel Hill section of Pittsburgh in recent years?

Almost miraculous has been the growth as a Jewish community of Squirrel Hill. Murray Avenue is now a market thoroughfare, almost filled with meat markets, poultry markets, fish markets, groceries, restaurants and fruit markets—a veritable Logan Street, because the demand of the

overwhelming Jewish population of that district has made it necessary.

But where are the children of this great Jewish community? They can't be found in the public schools. Note these figures:

1924—1,065 Jewish boys and girls in the elementary schools of Squirrel Hill.

1926—1,200 Jewish boys and girls in the elementary schools of Squirrel Hill.

An increase of 135 boys and girls in two years in one of the two largest Jewish communities of Pittsburgh! Oakland, with its generally known decreasing Jewish population, comparatively showed that increase!

In 1924—511 Jewish children of the Oakland district attending school. This year the number increased to 580.

Though Squirrel Hill's Jewish population undoubtedly increased greatly, the number of Jewish school children increased but 135!

Here again these figures are pointed out to substantiate the opinion that Squirrel Hill is attracting the newly married young Jewish couples, the Jewish father and mother who are "modernizing" themselves to the extent that they are not interested in large families, or, in fact, in any family responsibilities at all!

Evidence to prove this to be true is brought forth in the figures showing the increase in the Jewish school in the East End district.

In contrast to the Squirrel Hill district, the East Liberty section, where it is known there is a majority of the older and larger Jewish families, has had the comparatively startling increase of 458 to 741 in the number of Jewish elementary school children in the last two years.

The figures are produced to indicate the difference in opinion regarding the size of families as between the younger and more "modern" Jew as compared with the older, less "modern" Jew, as seemingly substantiated by the negligible increase in the Jewish school population in one district, and the comparatively remarkably large increase in another.

On the other hand, students insist that because Squirrel Hill is a younger Jewish community, the real increase of children has not yet been recorded in the school population.

The number of Jewish children attending elementary and high schools in the Hill district has dropped about 20 per cent. in the last two years.

Of course, the new immigration restrictions immediately affected the Hill district Jewish population, which has been steadily on the decline, too, by reason of the removal of the Jewish families to other sections of the city, particularly, Squirrel Hill. There are now 3,286 Jewish children attending public schools in the Hill district. In Beechview and Mt. Washington the number of Jewish children increased from 130 to 194 in the last two years. In Homewood there was a decline from 177 to 151 from 1924 to 1926. The North Side community dropped from 238 to 192 in the same period of time.

There are now four outstanding Jewish communities in Pittsburgh: Hill district, with 3,286 children; the Squirrel Hill district, with 1,200 children; East End, with 800 children, and Oakland, with 580 children.

The total number of Jewish elementary school children is 6,658 and 2,293 attend high schools.

## Census of Jewish School Children Taken

creasing rapidly in Squirrel Hill, still the public schools may not show it for a few years yet. It also indicates that the Hill district, although on the steady decline, it is not decreasing more than 80 per cent per annum.

The principals of the different schools of the Hill district were asked to give an estimate of Jewish children in their schools in addition to the list of absentees on September 9th, and we are giving the figures of the previous census, present census and estimate of Jewish children of the Hill district.

Hill District			
	1924	Board of Education 1926	Principal Estimate 1926
Forbes	361	288	329
Franklin	507	311	328
Hancock	21	12	10
Letsche	163	156	139
McKelvey	803	659	680
Madison	206	273	274
Miller	647	545	558
Minersville	251	264	308
Moorhead	551	382	422
Rose	229	170	230
Soho	56	24	24
Somers	129	76	146
Watt	195	136	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>4119</b>	<b>3286</b>	<b>3584</b>

High Schools			
Fifth Avenue	898	759	781
Business	114	130	130
Schenley	750	821	767
Peabody	313	333	333
South Hills	44	45	45
Allegheny	65	19	19
David B. Oliver	57	57	57
South High	53	42	42
Westinghouse	48	68	68
Langley	19	19	19
Perry	45	.....	.....
<b>Total</b>	<b>2349</b>	<b>2293</b>	<b>2261</b>

Other Districts			
North Side	238	.....	192
East End Shadyside	458	.....	741
South Side	77	.....	54
Hazelwood	46	.....	51
Homewood, Frankstown	177	.....	151
Beechview, South Hills	130	.....	174
Mt. Washington	.....	.....	.....
Bloomfield	143	.....	116
Lawrenceville	113	.....	85
West End	34	.....	28
Oakland	511	.....	580
Squirrel Hill	1065	.....	1200
<b>Total</b>	<b>2992</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>3372</b>

Total Enrollment			
	1924	1926	1926 Estimate
Hill district	4119	3286	3584
High Schools	2349	2293	2261
Other districts	2992	3372	3372
<b>Total</b>	<b>9460</b>	<b>8951</b>	<b>9217</b>

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