

Look to the rock from which you were born  
הביטו אל-צור הצבתם



chicago jewish historical society

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# society news

VOLUME VI - NUMBER 3

MARCH, 1983

## OPEN MEETING

March 20, 1983

Sunday Afternoon

### PROGRAM

#### CHICAGO JEWRY:

#### FROM MAXWELL STREET TO HIGHLAND PARK

A Lecture and Slide Presentation

presented by

DR. IRVING CUTLER

Professor and Chairman, Department of Geography  
Chicago State University

ADMISSION FREE

PUBLIC IS WELCOME

EMANUEL CONGREGATION  
5959 N. Sheridan Road  
Free Parking Available

1:30 P.M. - Refreshments

2:30 P.M. - Program

President's MessageHOW YOU CAN HELP US PRESERVE  
CHICAGO'S JEWISH HISTORY

Springtime is when we humans of the north begin to emerge from a winter hibernation that is often more psychological than physical. The first signs of the new season signal reawakened brain cells and spurts of actual enthusiasm. Let's get out and do something new, different, exciting! What shall that be? Where shall we go?

Why not become more involved in Chicago Jewish history--and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society? Here are some ideas.

Perhaps you already have some expertise in some area of local Jewish history that you have not as yet shared with us.

Suggest a presentation that could be in the form of a lecture or an article written for the Society News or an exhibit.

Help develop, prepare, lead a bus tour of your old neighborhood.

Research and write-up the history of your congregation for the Society News.

Organize your congregation's archives for eventual presentation to the Society for permanent placement in the Chicago Jewish Archives.

Join the new photography group that is developing a broad photo-taking endeavor of historic Jewish Chicago.

When did Jews first arrive in your community area or suburb? Find out and write an article for us. See if you can locate descendants of the first settlers in your area and get copies of photos of the old-timers.

Survey items of local Jewish history in the libraries and archives of the Chicago area. The Chicago Public Library (branch libraries often have local historical collections), suburban libraries, the Chicago Historical Society, Newberry Library are some examples. You can do the same for the college and university libraries--including theses on topics of local Jewish interest. Then submit those lists for publication in our Society News.

Need guidance? We have experts in many of these areas to offer advice. Also, we can refer you to specialists in genealogy, urban studies, history of the landsmanshaften verein, labor history, synagogue history.

Would you like to help with Society pub-

President

Rachel Heimovics



licity? or sorting archives already presented to the Society? or the oral history committee?

Do you have any other ideas that you would like to bring to our attention? What would you like to do? What activities would you like us to sponsor?

Drop us a line at the Society office. Better yet, call me (between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.) at 831-2548 or Doris Minsky at 498-4714. Do it now, while you are thinking about it. We'll be waiting to hear from you.

--Rachel B. Heimovics

CLASS REUNIONS AND ANNIVERSARIES  
OF INTEREST TO CJHS MEMBERS

The following reunions and anniversaries may be of interest to CJHS members:

Lake View High School classes of 1943 are planning a fortieth reunion. Contact: Roz Castle Pearlman at 394-4141.

Roosevelt High School class of January, 1958 will hold its twenty-fifth year reunion April 30 at Como Inn. Contact: Stuart Jacobsen at 965-7790 Monday through Friday, 8 AM-6 PM.

Hyde Park High School class of June, 1958 will hold its twenty-fifth year reunion May 14 at the Chicago Marriott Hotel. Contact: Ann Shlensky Hoenig at 835-5233 and Jon Will at 793-7086.

Information concerning reunions and anniversaries should be sent to Dr. Irwin Suloway, Editor, Society News, 3500 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago 60657.

**society news**

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Editorial inquiries should be directed to (312)348-2800.

### IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT? IF NOT, RENEW TODAY

Members who have not paid their CJHS dues for 1983 are reminded that non-current members will be removed from the Society's mailing list at the end of April. The high costs of printing and postage make it impossible to carry any longer the names of those who do not contribute the modest annual assessment.

If you are in doubt about your status, check your membership card for its expiration date or drop a note of inquiry to the CJHS office at 618 S. Michigan (60605). We'll be happy to let you know what your status is. A renewal coupon is printed on page eleven of Society News.

Make sure you can continue to share in the many activities of the Society. With a \$15.00 basic annual membership fee (only \$10.00 for seniors and students) it's one of the best bargains around.

### MEMENTOS OF ROOSEVELT HALL ADDED TO JEWISH ARCHIVES

Memorabilia concerning Roosevelt Hall, a private rental hall and catering service well known to westside Jews of the years following World War I, have been donated to the Chicago Jewish Archives by the family of its founder. Located on Roosevelt Road near Kedzie in the heart of Lawndale, the hall was for decades a center of Jewish social life including family celebrations, organization meetings, and even political rallies.

Among the memorabilia presented to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society is a large photograph of the hall's interior filled with tables at which are seated visiting labor union officials. The year is 1923 and the event is recorded as a banquet tendered by a Local of the United Hebrew Waiters Union to delegates to the convention of the H.&R.E.I.A. and B.I.L. of America. Standing in the rear of the large hall, supervising the affair, is Sam Duke, originally Ducavich, founder of the hall.

The photographs, along with others pertaining to the Duke family, were donated to the archives by Albert Duke, son of the founder and member of the Society.

### CJHS MEMBERS TO BE INVITED TO OPENING RECEPTION OF PHOTO EXHIBIT

Current members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society will receive in the mail individual invitations to attend the opening reception of a new photo exhibit of old shynagogue buildings which begins at Spertus College next month.

The exhibit will feature photos taken by Sarah Hultmark, a professional photographer formerly of Chicago who now lives in Grand Junction, Michigan. It is being presented by the Chicago Jewish Archives.

The reception, at which refreshments will be served, will be held from 5:00 to 7:30 P.M. on Tuesday, April 26, in the Spertus building at 618 South Michigan Avenue. The reception is made possible by the Society and the Asher Library Guild of Spertus College.

CJHS members in good standing should watch their mail for the invitations, which must be presented at the reception.

### RARE MEITES BOOK BECOMES AVAILABLE

A friend of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society has a copy of History of the Jews of Chicago edited by Hyman Meites that she is offering for sale to the highest bidder. This rare book, published in 1924 in an edition reportedly limited to 500 copies, contains history, biographies, and photos about Chicago Jewry. Interested persons should mail their bids to Mrs. Phyllis Helford at 9416 Bay Colony Rd., DesPlaines 60016. Be sure to include a telephone number with bids.

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The family business, founded in 1919 as Ducavich and Son, later became the Roosevelt Chair Company, in which form the business still exists as an equipment rental company. As the Jewish community left Lawndale, the hall was closed; and the company moved to its present northside location.

Items thought suitable for the Chicago Jewish Archives should be called to the attention of Elsie Orlinsky, CJHS archives chairman. Call her at 643-9666 and help preserve our past history.

## CHICAGO-FOUNDED NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN COMPLETES NINETY YEARS OF HUMANITARIAN SERVICE

### GROUP IS AN OUTGROWTH OF 1893 COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

By Dianne Gettings

The first major Jewish women's organization in the world is celebrating its ninetieth anniversary. It is the National Council of Jewish Women, a volunteer organization whose program is inspired by the tenets of the Jewish faith and by the history of our people.

Today NCJW is over 100,000 members strong in the United States. It is the largest of over 25 affiliages of the International Council of Jewish Women, established in 1912, which encompasses more than 23 countries. And it all began in Chicago.

#### American Jewish Women in the 1890's

But it was not always so. In the early 1890's, although the Jewish population of America had already increased dramatically and was soon to total one million individuals, no group represented Jewish women on a national basis. Many recent immigrant women doubtless had no time to devote to such things; they were desperately trying to make ends meet and hold families together as the process of adjustment to a new land took place.

There were however a sizable number of Jewish women, descendants of earlier immigrants, who had the time and the will to work toward the creation of a national organization to express the concerns and interests of Jewish women in the United States. Chief among these was Hannah Greenebaum Solomon (1858-1942), a Chicago Jew of German descent, to whom the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) owes its existence. In subsequent years, of course, these later immigrants and their descendants were to add significantly to its strength.

#### An Outgrowth of the World's Fair

Under the leadership of religious luminaries a Parliament of Religions was created and scheduled to meet at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Mrs. Solomon, whose family were prominent

Chicago Jews, was given the task of enlisting women to represent her faith at the parliament. After great effort she painstakingly assembled what was called "The Jewish Women's Congress." Ninety Jewish women from throughout the United States attended.

With this informal "convention of American Jewish women" as a nucleus, she was to found the "Council of Jewish Women," which we know today as the NCJW. The Chicago Section was the founding section. Today there are scores of sections grouped into five geographic districts. Seven of these sections serve Chicago's suburbs.

From its founding the NCJW has stood for sensitivity to human needs and democratic values, for leadership in pioneering needed services, for training of volunteers and for cooperation with other groups.

#### Women's Rights and Needs

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, demands matured for social reform, including political equality for women. Born in this creative ferment, Council immediately launched activities so sound and advanced in concept that they created a firm base for the organization's outlook even today.

Among early projects were service in settlement houses, remedial work in connection with juvenile and other local courts, adult study circles, vocational training for young girls, free health dispensaries, school health dispensaries, school health inspection programs, day nurseries and assistance to poverty-stricken immigrant families.

In 1903, the United States Government asked Council's assistance in preventing the white slavery exploitation and sweatshop labor that were the lot of many girls and women arriving alone and penniless in America. Council responded immediately. Girls on all incoming boats were met and cared for by Council's Port-and-Dock Department; relatives were located; technical details of immigration were adjusted and many women and families were assisted. In 1904 a permanent station for Immigrant Aid was established by Council on Ellis Island.



### Develops Social Legislation Program

Several Sections established correctional institutions, employment bureaus and dispensaries.

In 1909 Council participated in the White House Conference on Child Welfare where the need for social legislation was driven home. Council's program for social legislation called for federal regulation of child labor, the provision of adequate housing for low-income groups, food and drug regulation, extension of civil service, uniform marriage and divorce laws, and federal anti-lynching laws.

### War and Refugees

During World War I, NCJW served in the Council of National Defense and other war-service agencies. Two units of social service experts were sent abroad by Council after the war to establish services for Jewish refugees.

At home Council joined with other organizations to promote America's entrance into the League of Nations and the World Court, and to urge the development of international agreements to prevent war.

The Hannah G. Solomon scholarship fund was created to enable girls to receive graduate training in social service. The Farm and Rural Work Program was launched; nearly 3,000 farm families were assisted through community projects and religious study groups. Council turned over this program to the Jewish Agricultural Society when it was formed.

In Chicago, NCJW operated the local Immigrant Aid office, a summer camp in Wauconda that served 500 women and children on two-week vacations each summer, and Americanization classes in nearly 30 city schools. The Chicago Section also created the first public playground in the city and was the prime mover in the establishment of the Central Bureau of the Associated Jewish Charities.

### The Depression Years

With the deepening of the depression after 1929, Council Sections were engaged in job placement, the creation of employment, financial relief, lunches for undernourished children and a number of special activities to insure the continuance of children in



Hannah Greenebaum Solomon pictured shortly before she founded the National Council of Jewish Women.

school. NCJW also sponsored special free classes for the unemployed.

In World War II, Council again bent its energies to the war effort. German-Jewish children were rescued and placed in private American homes through German-Jewish Children's Aid, which Council helped form in 1938. In 1939, NCJW Port-and-Dock workers served 16,225 refugees.

After the war, the professional Service to the Foreign Born Department of NCJW, engaged in casework on a large scale, was merged with the National Refugee Service in 1946 to become the United Service for New Americans. Council continued and expanded its port-and-dock, resettlement, and Americanization and naturalization services. In 1946 Council opened the Athens Home for girls who were victims of Nazi persecution, and in 1947 opened a similar home in Paris.

### Postwar Activities Hectic

The postwar period was probably the most hectic in Council's history, and the most creative since its first decade. Among the new programs launched were: Ship-A-Box (1945); Overseas Scholarships (1946); Golden Age Clubs (1946); Support of Israel Education (1948). Section services to children developed rapidly, and mental health education began.

In 1959, the Chicago Section founded Thresholds, a unique center for the rehabilitation of the mentally ill. Council

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A rare photograph (ca 1923) of Midwest Yiddish writers gathered in honor of the visit from New York of writer H. Leivick. Standing (l. to r.) Ben Sholem, Itzhok Elchonen Ronch, H. Leivick, Moishe Bogdansky, Mattes Deitch, L. Gorelick. Seated (l. to r.) Boruch Goldhart, Pessie Hershfield (Pomerantz).

## ARCHIVES ACQUIRES RARE OLD PHOTO OF LOCAL YIDDISH WRITERS

A rare and interesting photograph from Chicago's Jewish past, previously donated to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, has been fully identified by Clare P. Greenberg and placed in the Chicago Jewish Archives. It shows a group of prominent Midwest Yiddish writers of the early years of the century who were active in a literary group known as "Yung Chicago" (Young Chicago).

The occasion for the photograph seemed to have been the visit of the Yiddish writer H. Leivick from New York, who is in the center of the picture.

### All But One Now Gone

The one woman in the picture, Pessie Hershfield Pomerantz was Mrs. Greenberg's mother. The only one of the nine still alive is I. E. Ronich, who is about ninety-four years old and lives in California.

All identifications are certain except possibly that of Isaac Plotner. Any member who can corroborate or dispute this identification should contact CJHS to insure the accuracy of archives information.

### Adding to the Archives

Elsie Orlinsky, CJHS archives chairman, expresses her appreciation to Mrs. Greenberg for her valuable work in identifying all persons in the picture so completely. If you think you might have material suitable for the Chicago Jewish Archives, call Mrs. Orlinsky at 643-9666.

The biographical information below for

each writer was provided by Mrs. Greenberg.

Ben Sholem (Shimon Schneider, 1890-?) first published in Chicago Journal in 1918, active in literary publications of Chicago writers' group. Wrote poetry and free verse influenced by the In Zich (introspective movement).

Itzhok Elchonen Ronch (1889-), one of the original Yung Chicago group. He wrote prolifically and was translated into English. Presently lives in Los Angeles and published his last book of poetry in 1970.

H. Leivick (Leivick Halpern, 1888-1962) was considered the greatest poet and dramatist of his generation, perhaps best known for his play "Der Golem." His poetry was filled with anguish for his people and a messianic motif of redemption. Lectured throughout the U.S., Europe and Israel and lived and worked in New York.

Moishe Bogdansky (1889-1938), educator, founder of the Peretz Yiddish School in Chicago, active Zionist, author, and editor of many of the anthologies issued by the Midwest writers group.

Mattes Deitch (1894-1966), poet, co-founder of Yung Chicago. Published in all major Yiddish publications all over the world. In the 1940's he moved to Los Angeles where his last book of collected poems was published in 1959. Deitch wrote a great many essays as well as poetry.

L. Gorelick (1889-1941), poet, representative of Yung Chicago. Was part of the In Zich (introspective) movement and wrote poet-

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Participants at a December  
CJHS Roundtable Session  
(Photo by John G. Heimovics)



## SECOND CJHS ROUNDTABLE FOCUSES ON PHOTOGRAPHY AND ORAL HISTORY

by Mark Mandle

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society held its second roundtable on Chicago Jewish history on December 19, 1982. It was an exciting day in Chicago Jewish history that saw the birth of a committee interested in the photodocumentation of the Chicago Jewish community and renewed interest in oral history.

The photography session was chaired by Gary Kahn and dealt with collecting and maintaining a photographic record of Jewish Chicago. The committee has met twice since the roundtable to discuss its goals and priorities. For more information on the committee, please contact Gary Kahn at 975-0817.

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society has done oral histories since its inception in 1977. (See separate article in this issue.) The roundtable session reviewed techniques for taking oral histories, and discussed things to do and not to do. A meeting will be held soon to train a new group in how to take oral histories. If you are interested in this training, contact Sidney Sorkin at 221-4096.

The afternoon session consisted of people talking about the research they are doing. Alice Rosenberg talked about her research on the history of Beth Tikvah Congregation. Professor Stanley Rosen talked about the Jewish labor movement and a scholarship for high school students on a Jewish

## YIDDISH WRITERS

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ry expressing despair and sorrow at the lot of the Jews in Europe. Later poems dealt with themes of workers and labor.

Boruch Goldhart (1897-1950), poet and writer in all leading Yiddish newspapers and journals, one of the founders of Yung Chicago and co-editor of its publications. First poem published in 1916 in Philadelphia, moved to Chicago in 1922 and continued his writing there.

Isaac Plotner (1895-1961), writer, actor, teacher. Lived in U.S. from 1921-1932 when he returned to Russia where he continued to write and translate. He was arrested with other Jewish writers and sent to Siberian prison camp 1948-1956. Continued to write children's poetry and novels until his death.

Pessie Hershfield Pomerantz (1900-1978) began publishing poetry in 1918 in a variety of journals and in anthologies of Yung Chicago group, of which she was an active member, one of a handful of women. Wrote poetry dealing with traditional roots, nationalistic yearnings as well as personal love and family themes, all delicate and sensitive in style and content.

labor topic. Sidney Sorkin talked about his research on Jewish landsmanschaften. Gary Kahn talked about the photodocumentation he had done of the Chicago Jewish community.

The roundtable was well attended. The people who attended the meeting were enthusiastic and enjoyed the workshop. Mark Mandle planned and coordinated roundtable activities.



## CONGREGATION SOLEL MARKS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF "CLEARING THE PATH AND REMOVING STUMBLING BLOCKS"

### TRACE HISTORY OF UNUSUAL HIGHLAND PARK SYNAGOGUE

By Ellen Gussin

The twenty-five-year-long path of Congregation Solel, located in the North Shore suburb of Highland Park, has been one of liberal innovation, often identified as the avant-garde experiment in suburbia. Today its membership of 525 families is re-examining its roots and exploring the path ahead. Yet it is also a good time to look back at a very unusual past twenty-five years.

Characterized by a congregant's words written many years ago but still relevant today, "Solel is a fluid congregation; and because dissonance and questioning are encouraged, there is room for those who are skeptical or confused, those who have their own kind of faith and those who struggle to find it. It is a congregation with great potential...there exists an opportunity to develop a true "kehilath" of intellectualism, an honest searching, a coming together to explore the prophetic commandments--to argue and discuss and study what is past and what is eternal--an opportunity to experiment with substance, not form.

#### Began As KAM Discussion Group

It all began as an adult discussion group comprised of admirers of the late Rabbi Jacob Weinstein of KAM Temple, in Chicago, to which many had belonged before moving to the suburbs. As a branch of KAM, adult study groups and religious education for children became the main priorities.

On August 12, 1957, a charter meeting established an independent congregation. Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf was selected as Rabbi of the newly named Solel, and Herman Edwards was elected to serve as its first president. A small office was maintained at the Glencoe National Bank building, but meetings, classes, and worship services were conducted in various locations across the North Shore, including the Highland Park Women's Club, Ravinia School, Winnetka Post Office, Moraine Hotel, and Highland

Park High School.

#### How Name Was Chosen

The Hebrew name "Solel" (clear the path) is taken from Second Isaiah's command to "lift up, clear the path, take up the stumbling blocks out of the way of My people," which is in the Yom Kippur Haftarah. The small group of would-be "pathfinders" sought to build roads where none was before. They attracted additional families and together they combined the spirit of their Jewish heritage with contemporary aspiration.

The founders wanted a type of congregation different from those available to them. In the words of Rabbi Wolf, "They sought to be inclusive rather than exclusive, tentative rather than stereotyped, experimental in all but their faith in Jewish values." His vision for Solel meant "search, authenticity, instruction...offering American Jewry a second chance."

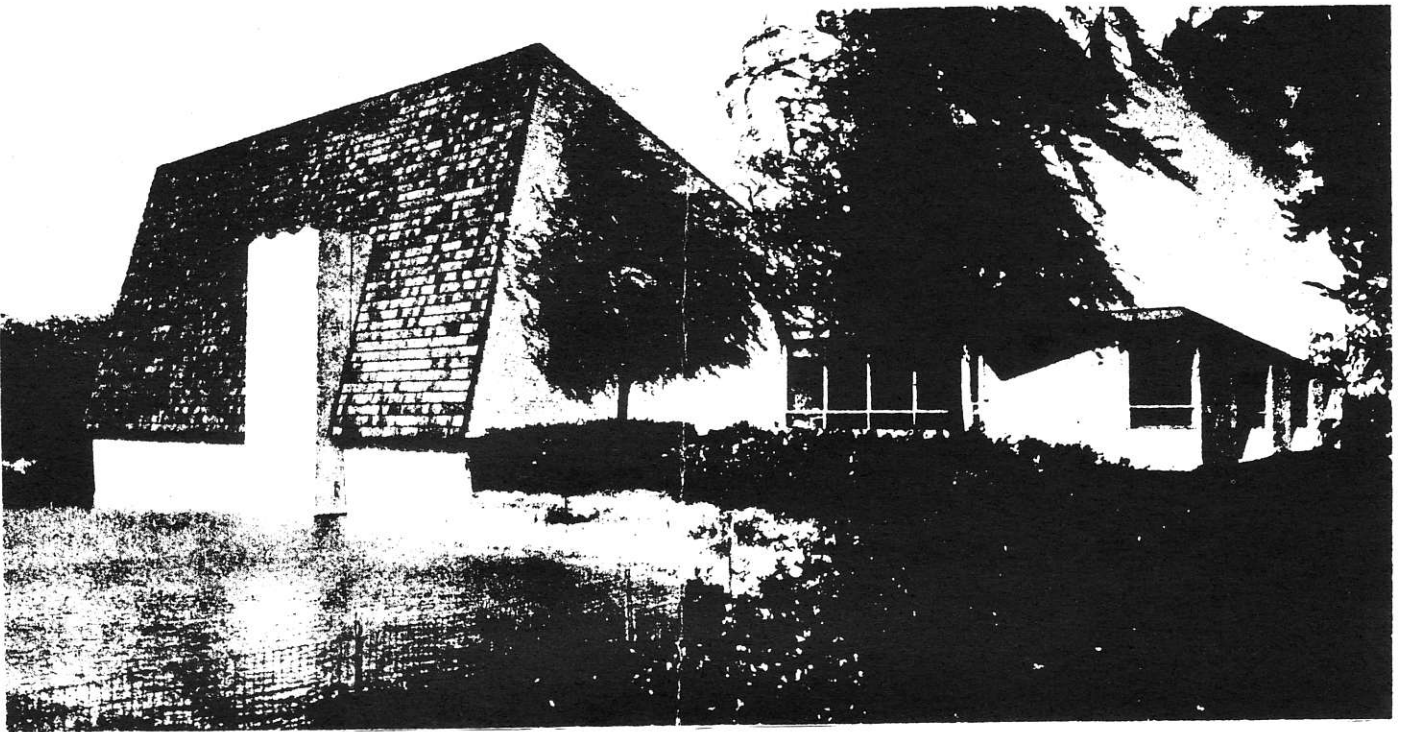
The experiments have been many. They have included new prayers, music, and art designs for Sabbath prayer books. The worship service draws upon traditional elements adding creative innovations. Each week a member prepares a personal prayer, and another selects a haftarah reading from the Bible or an excerpt from a variety of philosophical sources.

#### No Sisterhood or Men's Club

The experiments also led to the elimination of several customary temple practices such as sisterhoods and men's clubs, and for many years bar and bat mitzvahs were optional private ceremonies. No energy is diverted for fundraising, as all income is derived from the collection of annual dues. The walls of the synagogue bear no donor's plaques or inscriptions, and even the leadership received little "kovod."

In 1962, ground was broken for the present location at 1301 Clavey Road. Designed to make an architectural statement about Reform Judaism and reflect a certain spiritual feeling, the building has received several awards. Almost all of the space in the synagogue is used for Religious and Hebrew School classes, and removable walls





The home of Congregation Solel is distinguished by its wooded site and its natural pool as well as by its award-winning building.

allow the entire congregation to worship together on High Holy Days.

#### Library Extensive and Impressive

The building also houses an impressive library of more than 10,000 volumes of Jewish interest. Operated by a volunteer staff and stocked continually with new material, it is a valued resource not only for its own schools and adult classes, but also for the entire area. In addition to its general resources, Solel's library has one of the finest collections of Holocaust books in the Midwest.

In 1972, Rabbi Wolf left Solel for Yale University and was succeeded by the current Rabbi, Robert J. Marx. Rabbi Marx has founded, directed, and served as president of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, dedicated to bringing the commitment of Judaism to the problems of the inner city. He is the leader of two support groups which meet special needs not often addressed; one is for parents who have suffered the loss of a child, and the "Hakafah" group is for intermarried or about-to-be-intermarried couples.

Many congregants list their key religious activity as study, and the adult education programs are as well-planned and stressed as the Religious School. More than

200 members study in graduate-school quality courses which include Bible, Hebrew, history, and current events. The Religious School of some 500 students is run by the Director of Education and a Council of devoted parents.

In addition, a Shabbat afternoon Torah School fulfills the need of those families who choose to study together. It is not unusual to see a "child" of seven or fifty-seven with his thirty-two- or seventy-two-year-old "parent" coming together to share a few hours of learning, singing, snacking, and visiting.

#### Solel: THE Social Action Shul

The Social Action Committee at Solel is rivaled by none for its history of dedicated advocacy. In 1965, Solel sent a large contingent to Selma, Alabama, to participate in the civil rights marches. In 1967 and again in 1969, Solel lobbied in Washington, D.C. for de-escalation of the Vietnam War. Later, a Draft Counseling Service was established for the community.

Pioneers of the Urban Gateways Program, Solel hosted a day camp where inner-city and suburban children came together for five consecutive summers. In 1970, a Head Start Day Care Center was established at Solel, and it remains there. The list of notable,

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## COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN

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organized it and funded it. It was the first in Chicago and in the Midwest. It has become a community resource to all Chicago and has its own community-wide board.

NCJW services to youth, the aging, and the handicapped and its coordinated service and social action activities were recognized in 1960 when the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds awarded NCJW the William J. Shroder Memorial Award--the American Jewish community's highest honor for service.

### Builds Hebrew University High School

The Council-built Hebrew University High School opened its doors to Israeli youngsters for the fall term, 1963, and became one of the best educational facilities in the Middle East in its dual function as a model secondary school and as the practice-teaching and demonstration center for the John Dewey School of Education of Hebrew University--which receives a major share of support from NCJW.

Job Opportunities for Youth (J.O.Y.) was established in 1968 as an after-school job placement service for high school students in Chicago.

Chicago Section contributed \$10,000 in 1971 to encourage the Jewish Federation of Chicago to establish a store-front service called "Response" for the young in trouble.

### Service to Chicago Seniors

In 1974, despite the depressed economic situation in the nation, the Chicago Section initiated the first service dealing exclusively with providing part-time or full-time jobs for the senior adult. It is still the only service in Chicago exclusively for this group. The placement rate is nearly 50% of all applicants, which is considered quite successful.

Although the national headquarters of NCJW is now in New York City and leadership activities are centered there, the Chicago Section, although the oldest, shows no signs of slowing down. It sets a pace for others to follow because it lives by its Code of Personal Commitment which declares, "I will know that as I build, so is the world built; and if I am indifferent, I abandon the world!"

## CONGREGATION SOLEL

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controversial, and often unpopular guest speakers at the synagogue includes Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., members of the Chicago 7, Senator George McGovern, Daniel Ellsberg, and Reverend Jesse Jackson.

### Social Concerns Broad in Scope

Concerns for the plight of the United Farm Workers Union, displaced American Indians, and fair housing legislation led to the establishment of new committees to study the issues and take action. Anxiety regarding air and water pollution, the constitutional aspects of the Nazi march, and the MX Missile led to open forums and special congregational meetings where resolutions were adopted in an attempt to alleviate problems.

Social action also occurs on a more individual basis. One Cambodian and two Laotian refugee families have been sponsored by the congregation; money has been pledged to save the life of a Falasha; and efforts to free Soviet Jewry have been diligent.

The congregation sponsors an active Solelim youth group which meets weekly throughout the school year and focuses on religious action, study, and socialization. A newly instituted Solel Funeral Plan provides that the congregation assume the entire expense for the funerals of all Solel members and their immediate families.

### Looking Ahead

Rabbi Marx, upon reflecting upon the 25th anniversary, wrote: "If we are to use this year simply to remember the past or even to talk about new program ideas for our congregation, we will have missed a precious opportunity. For what is needed now is so much more than a new adult education course or an idea for innovative services. We need to look at the end point of what we are doing. We need to ask: Are we creating human beings who can learn how to give? Are we creating human beings who can listen to one another without being constantly judgmental? Are we creating human beings who can learn how to make a commitment? Are we creating human beings who can learn how to love? Are we creating human beings who can truly be Jews? Every bit as much as Torah and study and charity, these are the tasks of our congregation."

# BERMAN DISCUSSES EMIL G. HIRSCH AT JANUARY SOCIETY MEETING

## ANIMATED DISCUSSION FOLLOWS TALK CENTERED ON HIRSCH'S ACHIEVEMENTS

By Moshe (Mark) Mandle

Rabbi Howard Berman of Chicago Sinai Congregation talked about the legacy of Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch at the January 30th meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. A polished speaker, he gave a well-organized talk on Hirsch's life.

Rabbi Berman discussed Rabbi Hirsch's great contributions to Chicago and the Jewish people. Rabbi Hirsch was the leading exponent of liberal Reform Judaism in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He built up Sinai Congregation as the largest synagogue in America. Emil Hirsch made Sunday morning services central at Sinai. Hirsch was against the materialism of dogma and the dogma of materialism. He believed in religious and social reform.



Rabbi Howard A. Berman

Rabbi Hirsch founded the Reform Advocate, which became one of the major religious newspapers in America. Hirsch was concerned with the role of women and social welfare work among immigrants. He saw the synagogue as a community center and helped build the huge Sinai synagogue and community center which served as a neighborhood center.

The animated question period which followed proved that Hirsch was still a controversial figure to some. Rabbi Berman defended Hirsch's ideas. The meeting was chaired by Program Chairman Burt Robin.



Three grandsons of Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch at the January meeting of the Society. They are (1. to r.) Emil G. Hirsch II, son of Samuel Hirsch; Harry Levi, son of Gerson B. and Elsa Hirsch Levi; and Emil G. Hirsch, son of David Hirsch.

(Photos by Moselle Schwartz)

### YES: I WANT TO CONTINUE TO

- Be informed of CJHS meetings
- Learn more about Chicago Jewish History
- Receive issues of Society News
- Enjoy local summer tours at reduced rates

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for my 1983 dues. (\$15.00 regular; \$10.00 senior citizen or student; \$25.00 institutional or sustaining; \$50.00 patron; \$100.00 sponsor) Dues are tax-deductible.

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