

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN FRESHMEN

HOUSTON--Young Jewish men and women entering college tend to reject the achievement values held by their parents' generation, while retaining other traditional life goals. Yet despite any generational disagreements, these young Jews believe almost unanimously that their parents care deeply about them. In this crucial respect, Jewish youth appears to agree completely with Christian youth, though the two groups differ in other ways.

These are some of the main findings of an inquiry conducted by the American Council on Education for the American Jewish Committee, and released by Phillip E. Hoffman, AJC President, at the annual meeting of AJC's policy-making National Executive Council.

The study was undertaken to learn how Jewish college freshmen differed from, or resembled, their Christian peers. The data were obtained as part of an ongoing Cooperative Institutional Research Program pursued by the Office of the American Council on Education. They were analyzed by Dr. David E. Drew of ACE, who also wrote the research report.

The sample surveyed consisted of approximately 170,000 freshmen entering the nation's four-year and two-year colleges in the fall of 1969, or nearly 10 per cent of all of that year's freshmen. Respondents were asked to fill out a four-page questionnaire during their orientation periods.

The life goals named least often by either Christian or Jewish freshmen included some of the leading achievement values of former generations: "contributing to scientific theory" (named by fewer than one-eighth of both Jews and non-Jews); "being an expert in finance" (one-sixth or fewer); "becoming a community leader" (one-sixth).

On the other hand, the objectives most often named by both groups included such time-hallowed aims as "developing a meaningful philosophy of life (selected by over four-fifths in each group); "raising a family" (about three-fourths); "having friends with different backgrounds and interests from nine" (two-thirds); and "helping others who are in

difficulty" (two-thirds).

Whether or not a generation gap was felt, 97 of every 100 freshmen, both Jewish and Christian, agreed that "my parents are deeply concerned about their children." Moreover, four-fifths in both groups credited their parents with an interest in intellectual and cultural pursuits and in politics.

Only with respect to religiosity did the two groups' perceptions of their parents differ materially. Two-thirds of the Christian students, but only two-fifths of Jewish students, considered their parents "deeply religious."

Among other results of the survey, it was unexpectedly revealed that Jews constituted only 4.2 per cent of the total, highly representative sample. Since Jews currently constitute about 3 per cent of the U.S. population, and since they traditionally place strong emphasis on higher education, it had been generally assumed that they accounted for a larger proportion of the nation's students.

In presenting the data, Mr. Hoffman speculated that the relatively low percentage of Jewish freshmen might be due to the steady increase in the number of young Americans of all faiths attending college. The present 4.2 per cent figure represents a decline from 5.4 per cent in 1967 and 5.0 per cent in 1968.

With respect to motivations for higher education, slightly more than half of the non-Jews agreed that "the chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power"; of the Jews, just under two-fifths thought so.

By and large, Jews and non-Jews did not differ greatly on the fields in which they expected to major, except that social sciences were named by 14.8 per cent of Jews and 8.4 per cent of non-Jews. "Social sciences" were defined in this context as anthropology, economics, psychology, social work and sociology.

In the freshmen's career expectations, the most striking finding was the small and almost identical proportion of Jews and non-Jews who expected to become businessmen (about one-tenth). The similarity was doubly surprising

in that only about one-fourth of the non-Jewish but about one-half of the Jewish students in the sample had fathers who were businessmen.

More than twice as many Jews as non-Jews thought they would become lawyers or doctors (physicians or dentists); approximately 8 per cent as against 3 per cent in each field. However, among both Jews and non-Jews, more than twice as many students hoped to become lawyers as had fathers who were lawyers. Similarly, among the non-Jews, students aspiring to become doctors were a good deal more numerous than students having fathers who were doctors, but the same was not true among the Jews.

Two-thirds of the Jewish students, as against one-half of the non-Jews, were planning to get a degree beyond the Bachelor's. However, while one-sixth of Jewish students were undecided about their career plans, only one-tenth of non-Jewish students were.

In the area of college or university affairs, Jewish and non-Jewish freshmen differed little or not at all on whether students from disadvantaged groups should be given preferential treatment in admissions (favored by about two-fifths), faculty promotions should be based in part on student evaluations (favored by two-thirds), and students should have a major role in specifying the curriculum (favored by nine-tenths).

On other university issues, significant differences were noted. Thus, two-tenths of non-Jews but only one-tenth of Jews said college officials had the right to regulate student behavior off campus. Nearly one-third of non-Jews but one-sixth of Jews agreed that colleges had a right to ban extremists from speaking on campus. One-half of non-Jews but less than one-third of Jews asserted that the Federal Government should be more involved in controlling activists.

The largest difference was found on whether student publications should be cleared by college officials. More than half of the non-Jews said they should be, but only just over one-fourth

(Continued on Page 19)

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