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Pedagogy in Immigration

German Zionism, geographically belonging to 'Central Europe', was unique in that it never completely belonged to Western Zionism or to Eastern European Zionism. Like Western Zionism, the German version did not grow out of existential difficulties or Jewish traditions, but rather presented itself as an option for those who wanted to maintain some form of Jewish identity in their countries of residence. Prior to 1914 the overwhelming majority of German Zionists, despite accepting Zionism as a Jewish national movement, considered itself grounded in German culture and society. To them, Zionism was a solution for the desolate situation of their Eastern brethren, with whom they acknowledged national ties, thus lessening the integration into their own country of residence. The outbreak of WWI changed the situation of German Zionists drastically. The so far theoretical commitment was now tested against reality and real life encounters became inevitable. This personal exposure to Jews in Eastern Europe brought about a change in perception: instead of relating to abstract political questions German Zionists now had to deal with practical and ideological decision making.

The issue was particularly prominent among young socialist Zionists. In their opinion, the War provided a golden opportunity to realize the idea of a joint Western-Eastern European Jewish community. The war refugees, especially children, created the need for a large scale commitment in education, employment and healthcare. In this connection, the example of Zigfried Lahaman with his romantic, if not mystique nationalism, thriving towards creating a renewed Jewish community of East and West is interesting. His was an expression of a desire for "community and experience" (Erlebnis) that was typical and widespread among this Jewish youth generation in Germany. From that point of view, Lahaman is a symbol of his time. Many of his supporters shared the ideological and spiritual inquietude of the time, which was brought about and influenced by the political, social and economic instability of post-WWI Germany. In this

respect, the activities of Lahaman reflected the basis of the conflict that was typical of German Jewry. His was an attempt to find a synthesis between radical ideas and Jewish origins.

Zigfried Lahaman and his partners, having established the institutions 'Volksheim', 'Orphanage in Kovno' and 'Youth Institution in Ben-Shemen', attempted to create a mixed community of East and West European Jews. This process began after this group of young people got tired of the prevailing atmosphere of indifference among the Jewish bourgeoisie in Germany. Instead, they proposed to create a popular community that would combine the Jewish and the Western European elements with elements of Eastern European culture. In their opinion, this process of getting closer and merging would eventually cause a renewal of the Jewish people and the amendment of the Jewish community, which they wished for. This idea was based on various pedagogical theories which dealt with different social frameworks and were aimed at materializing the liberal and socialist ideas the group believed in.

This paper questions the nature of the pedagogical and textual contents that were used by the group in order to initiate the process of attempting to merge the Western and Eastern communities. Moreover, this research tries to follow the inclinations of the process, not only in Europe, but mainly in Israel. It attempts to track the process of copying pedagogical contents from Europe to Israel. This polar change not only created new problems, but also raised new questions regarding the merging process into a different social climate. No attempt has been made so far to find the connection between the pedagogical contents and the merging process. Most of the research on the topic is descriptive or deals with reasons for the founding of institutions; it tends not to focus on the pedagogical contents which characterized them in Europe and mainly in Israel.