

**JEWISH SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLING IN MONTREAL
IN THE LATTER PART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract of Thesis (English)	ii
Abstract of Thesis (French)	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Programme des Langues Ethniques (P.L.E.)	8
Chart of Jewish Enrollment in the Programme des Langues Ethniques (P.L.E.) in the years 1985-1991	25
Chapter 2: The Programmes d'Enseignement des Langues d'Origine	26
Chart of Programmes d'Enseignement des Langues d'Origine (P.E.L.O.) Enrollment in Quebec 1989-1991	35
Chapter 3: The Possible Impact the Programmes d'Enseignement des Langues d'Origine (P.E.L.O.) may have on the future of Jewish Supplementary schooling in Montreal (Hypothesis)	39
Conclusion	49
Notes	
Bibliography	

JEWISH SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLING IN MONTREAL IN THE LATTER PART OF THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

This study will examine the types of Jewish supplementary schooling currently existing in Montreal, with particular emphasis on the programs connected with the P.S.B.C.M. (Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal) school system, namely, the P.E.L.O. (Programmes d'Enseignement des Langues d'Origine) and the P.L.E. (Programme des Langues Ethniques) programs.

The P.E.L.O. program is a national heritage language program offered in most Canadian schools as part of the multicultural global trend in education which became apparent in the second part of the twentieth century. The P.L.E. program is a uniquely Quebec educational program developed and implemented solely in Quebec.

This study will offer a general view of the programs, concentrating on the Hebrew studies units. It is divided into three chapters: the first chapter offers a view of traditional Jewish supplementary schooling in Montreal, which at present is part of the P.L.E.; the second chapter examines the P.E.L.O. program; and the last chapter suggests the possible impact the P.L.E. and P.E.L.O. programs may have on future Jewish supplementary schools in Montreal.

L'EDUCATION JUIVE SUPPLEMENTAIRE A MONTREAL DURANT LA DERNIERE PARTIE DU
XXe SIECLE

Cette étude vise à examiner les types d'écoles juives supplémentaires qui existent actuellement à Montréal, mettant l'accent surtout sur les programmes reliés au réseau scolaire de la Commission des écoles protestantes du Grand Montréal, voire les programmes "P.E.L.O." (Programmes d'Enseignement des Langues d'Origine) et "P.L.E." (Programmes des Langues Ethniques).

Le programme P.E.L.O. est un programme national d'héritage linguistique offert dans la plupart des écoles au Canada et faisant partie de la tendance globale de multiculturalisme en éducation, tendance qui devint apparente durant la seconde moitié du vingtième siècle. Le programme P.L.E. est unique au Québec, ayant été conçu et implanté dans cette province seulement.

Cette étude offrira un aperçu général des programmes, se concentrant sur les unités d'études hébraïques. Le texte sera divisé en trois chapitres: le premier chapitre donnera un aperçu des écoles juives supplémentaires traditionnelles de Montréal, qui font partie actuellement du P.L.E.; le second chapitre examinera le programme P.E.L.O.; et le dernier chapitre envisagera l'impact possible des programmes P.L.E. et P.E.L.O. sur l'avenir de l'éducation juive supplémentaire à Montréal.

INTRODUCTION

Societies, which are territorially defined political units consider their cultural "capital" so valuable that they establish special agencies to preserve, supervise and transmit "valued" selections of it to all new members of society. In nation states, much of this process of cultural transmission is entrusted to formal institutions called schools.¹ In a similar fashion, an ethnic minority living within a majority society establishes structures which for the most part enable them to preserve and transmit their own cultural heritage. These structures correspond particularly well to the ideological particularities of the cultural communities, most notably their confessionality.

A minority ethnic society is subject to conflicting forces and aims. On the one hand the realistic need to integrate into the dominant society, which suggests the appropriation of the vernacular, social norms, values conceptions, customs, methods of thinking and communication for the purpose of survival, and on the other hand the need and the desire to maintain one's own cultural heritage. The golden mean in the conflict was found to be supplementary education which is usually offered after the regular public school day is concluded.

In Montreal, supplementary Jewish schooling is predominantly religious and synagogue-affiliated. Of the twelve supplementary schools

operating in Montreal, only one school was identified by its director as non-religious, as a Labor Zionist school. All the other schools choose to identify themselves as religious. Two of the schools are of the Reform movement, one is Lubavitch (Hasidic Orthodox), three are Conservative, and the rest are Orthodox.

The structure of the Jewish supplementary school system in Montreal is similar to that of most other Jewish supplementary schools in Canada and the United States,² sharing similar problems and constraints. One of these constraints is time, and the other is the trivializing attitude which many parents display toward Jewish studies, not to mention conflicts between the schools' confessional instruction and the secular home environment to which many of the students are exposed.

Although the majority of parents feel that their children ought to receive some sort of Jewish education, for various reasons the goals and objectives of this education are vague, undefined, and relegated to secondary importance at best. This attitude is clearly transmitted to the student who, after the first novelty of the Hebrew school wears off, begins to view his or her Hebrew studies as an imposition and as a burden which he or she is only too willing to shed at the first possible opportunity. The opportunity presents itself for boys right after their Bar-Mitzvah (age 13), and for girls after their Bat-Mitzvah (age 12-13), thereby rendering supplementary Jewish schooling secondary in importance and basically elementary in scope.⁴ Supplementary education lacks, in most cases, priority, compulsion and commitment; the latter are reserved for the general studies courses in the public school system.

The other major problem common within the supplementary school system is time -- actual time constraints and the time of day in which studies are conducted. Most afternoon schools teach their core curriculum in weekly units of four hours of compulsory attendance. Some schools offer additional two-hour enrichment programs based on voluntary attendance. The Sunday school programs offer a maximum of three hours of study, and lunch time programs provide two hours, at best. Taking into consideration holidays and other variables, the maximum time a supplementary school student spends in actual Jewish study is no more than 100 hours per year -- not nearly sufficient for a long-range influence on the student's religious behaviour.

The other time factor is the actual time of day in which schooling is taking place, a time at which neither the students nor the teachers may be operating at high energy levels. The problem regarding the teachers is due mainly to the nature of the supplementary teaching position itself. A Jewish supplementary school study survey done in the United States in 1988 reveals that most supplementary school teachers work in order to supplement their spouse's income, and that they are generally dissatisfied with their level of compensation. The limited earning capacity of the supplementary school teacher compels her (most teachers are female) to teach in more than one supplementary school. Some teach in three or four schools per week; one teacher in Westchester county teaches in five schools.

The combined average instructional load for 90% of the supplementary school teachers is less than eleven hours per week. The

limited number of "contact hours" that teachers have in any given school underscores the part-time nature of the profession itself. A great deal of time and energy are spent in traveling to and from schools and many teachers expressed frustration about the amount of time they are able to spend with pupils and parents either prior to or after classes. Some teachers take time to prepare classroom materials, yet most are unable to invest additional time for classroom preparation.⁵ The schedule of the supplementary school presents a serious challenge for the young students. Samson Benderly "believed that after a child had attended the public school until 3 p.m. he needs time for recreation. This recreational time could not be invaded by the Jewish school without unduly fatiguing the child."⁶ Yet, in reality, the students of the supplementary Jewish schools are expected to study, behave, and learn at a time of day when they long for recreation. A vast body of literature exists on the influence of the environment upon the individual and Jewish studies are no exception. In view of the fact that a Jewish child attending public school spends most of his day in a gentile environment, if that child's home environment is secular as well, the implication would then be that the child's only Jewish environment is the supplementary Jewish school in which he or she does not spend nearly enough time to form, or even fully comprehend, the essence of Jewish identity. On this issue Dr. A. Schiff states the following: "For the supplementary school, the need for establishing alternative environments "in loco parentis" is even more critical. To be sure, the number of hours children are exposed to Jewish schooling daily and weekly must be

increased. Yet even with the extension of school time, supplementary schools cannot possibly provide an adequate number of hours for developing sufficiently extensive alternative environments within the school setting for effective Jewish education."⁷

Dr. Schiff then itemizes recommendations for the creation of environments conducive to learning and a positive influence on the student in the formation of Jewish identity. He devises a plan whereby "between two and three hundred hours of total Jewish immersion will replace sixty to one hundred and twenty hours of classroom activity."⁸ For example, "two weeks of weekday school might be traded off for a week-end. Fall, winter, and spring vacation times and the summer months may be utilized for leisure-time Jewish fellowship. One of the greatest advantages of the leisure-time program is its potential Jewish socialization effect on the participants. By means of this process of total immersion they would acquire knowledge and skills in Jewish life beyond the scope of the ordinary school program. The week-end leisure-time Jewish fellowship program is all the more crucial for one-day-a-week schools. In this case the week-end leisure-time program would substitute for one Sunday each month during the school year."⁹

A similar notion was expressed by Dr. Samson Benderly. "It was Benderly's conviction that a student devoting a half day exclusively to study during the ten weeks of the summer could accomplish more than in an entire academic year."¹⁰ To this end Dr. Benderly organized a camp-type school, called Camp "ACHAVAH" where, in addition to its study program, the camp provided a unique opportunity for absorbing Jewish

values and for shared Jewish social experiences.

Another educational setting which attempted to resolve some of the problems mentioned here is Camp "Ramah" of which Raphael Arzst states: "profiting from solid thinking and experimentation in its formative years, Ramah had begun to put together the framework for a potent educational model. Briefly stated, it created an atmosphere for rigorous intellectual interchange based on the study of classical Jewish material and an arena for rendering the traditional language of Jewish symbols more meaningful. It offered a setting enabling its peers and adult population to be in healthy communication -- an opportunity for the young, and the adults who still felt young, to fantasize about a Jewish future, and outlets through which to activate some Jewish social values, thus teaching the Jewish foundation for social responsibility. The interrelation between these elements spawned a multi-faceted, organic, and dynamic educational framework which had a great impact on students and staff with even more promise for the future."¹¹

Time, the environment, and attitude are the crucial components interacting decisively in the success or failure of Jewish education. This study hypothesizes that the two heritage language programs, the P.L.E. and P.E.L.O. may exert a negative influence upon supplementary Jewish schooling in Montreal and may even pose a threat to its very existence through the factors mentioned above.

Conceivably the P.E.L.O. program by virtue of advertising may appear to be an attractive alternative for Jewish supplementary schooling, in which case parents may choose to send their children to

public schools offering the P.E.L.O. program rather than to the Jewish school system. Yet, throughout the ensuing pages which examine the P.E.L.O. program, it will become evident that such action will remove the student from any Jewish influence to which he is exposed at a Jewish school ultimately depriving him or her of any contact with a Jewish environment.

The P.E.L.O. schedule offered in the public school system affords the students even less study time than the traditional Jewish supplementary schooling, thereby minimizing the effect and aim of Jewish education. Additionally, the aims of the Heritage Language Programs appear to be contrary to those espoused by traditional Jewish education. An excerpt from a government publication explaining the rationale behind the creation of the programs clarifies the issue. "The integration of the Heritage Language courses into the public school system is the concrete gesture which ensures the importance of the children's cultural heritage and facilitates their integration."¹²

Clearly the purpose of the Heritage Language Programs is the integration of immigrant children into the majority culture, while the objective of Jewish education is the preservation of the Jewish heritage, culture and identity. A closer examination of the programs is however warranted before a conclusion can be reached.

CHAPTER ONE
THE P.L.E. PROGRAM

The P.L.E. program is a unique ethnic program existing in the Province of Quebec. It evolved in part through the multicultural awareness which swept the global socio-cultural community in the latter part of the twentieth century,¹ and in part due to the unique position of the province in the anglophone national majority. N.H. Mair elucidates the issue succinctly: "One aspect of the uniqueness of Quebec education must be underlined; its traditional adherence to the principle that the purpose of education has much to do with religious beliefs and values which lie deeper in culture than the mores associated with race, nation, and language. Despite the dominance of Catholicism in Quebec, the right of Protestants (and to some extent Jews) to found an educational system based on their own values was acknowledged and maintained."²

This acknowledgement then gave rise in 1970 to the P.L.E. program. The program is designed to encourage the various supplementary ethnic schooling systems operating in the province by means of financial support. The financial allocations are administered through the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration. It provides assistance for the teaching of heritage languages by the ethnic communities themselves -- heritage language by definition being any language other than English and French and consisting of the original

language of one's parents or ancestors.³

Qualifications for eligibility are as follows: recipients must be non-profit groups, possessing a charter under Quebec law. They must meet the requirements of the private education act, observe conformity to the heritage language instruction with the clearly identified needs of the target community. They must possess the ability to organize and ensure the congruency of the activities with the Ministry's expectations. In addition they must observe enrollment guidelines (minimum of 10 students per class), attest to the absence of duplication of programs, and the involvement of volunteers, and offer classes after the regular school day. Lastly, the parents must pay tuition fees. Compliance with the above conditions entitles a supplementary ethnic school to government grants covering about 10% of the school's total operating costs.⁴ The government expects the ethnocultural communities themselves to provide 76% of the school's operational expenditures, thereby ensuring their supervision and support.

Reports indicate that, as of 1990, over 19,000 students from 35 language groups are involved in these classes. Of these 715 are Jewish. This figure excludes the free Hebrew for juniors since their enrollment statistics for 1990 were not available. For the year 1991 the total student population enrolled in supplementary ethnic schooling is 20,000 of which 1,126 are Jewish. A detailed chart of Jewish enrollment is presented at the end of the chapter. All the supplementary Jewish schools presented on the following pages are classified under the P.L.E. program.

Free Hebrew for Juniors

As the name implies, the program is designed for elementary students only. It is a supplementary Jewish program offered in public Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal Schools. The program was founded by Mrs. Sima Paris in 1974 out of concern for Jewish children enrolled in the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal school system with no recourse to Jewish education. Since the majority of Jewish supplementary education is synagogue-affiliated, a large body of secular Jewish people who are non-synagogue participants do not send their children to afternoon schools. These children are in danger of growing up without any knowledge of their Jewish heritage and divorced from the Jewish community.

Mrs. Paris felt the need and the moral concern to remedy the situation. She had some fliers printed stating her readiness to extend free Jewish instruction to any and all willing Jewish students, and personally distributed them to the students of Rosemount school, where she was teaching at the time. To her surprise she found the response well exceeded her expectations. Her telephone began to ring constantly with requests for Jewish instruction to the extent that an immediate network had to be organized to accommodate all the students. Thus the inception of the "Free Hebrew for Juniors" school.

"Free Hebrew for Juniors" is under the principalship of Rabbis Yarmush and Paris. The school's head office is located in Montreal. The school is operative in various public schools and the rationale behind using the school premises is: greater availability to the students, accessibility to those who otherwise would be either unable or

unwilling to travel to a different school location, and the low operational overhead involved. One school is located in Chomedey, four schools are on the Lakeshore, and five are in Montreal.

"Free Hebrew for Juniors" is not completely free; at the beginning of each school year each student is charged a minimal fee of one-hundred dollars. The fee is in keeping with governmental regulations which state that part of the fee must be covered by the student's parents. The school's curriculum was developed over a period of two years by a group of educators who form the school educational committee. Some schools, as a matter of course, adopt ready-made curricula operative in other schools of similar religious orientation. "Free Hebrew for Juniors," however, is a unique program with very special requirements and as such a special tailor-made curriculum had to be developed to meet these needs. The school's religious orientation is Lubavitch. Yet, the Jewish students who attend the Protestant school system and form the majority school clientele are mostly of Jewish secular background with minimal Judaic knowledge and practice, an important element which had to be considered in designing the curriculum.

Great emphasis is placed on the affective domain. Both Mrs. Paris and Rabbi Yarmush expressed the conviction that the key element in learning and appropriating "Yiddishkeit" is the affective domain. The school's main objective and primary goal is to instill in the students a love of Judaism and Jewish identity. The curriculum encompasses six years of Jewish studies or six levels of progressive knowledge. The disciplines are numbered from one to seven in the following order:

1. prayer, 2. reading, 3. comprehension, 4. writing, 5. history, 6. heritage, and 7. Torah. On close examination of the study books used to teach these subjects it was discovered that the main focus is the religious element of instruction.

The activities that are part of the curriculum include holiday celebrations, which are designed to encourage parent participation, and shabbatons for older students in Orthodox homes, in order to acquaint the students with Jewish customs and ceremony. Since the school's orientation is Orthodox, classes begin with prayer. For an observer to follow and discern the study program is almost impossible, since each school's implementation of the curriculum is subject to its particular time allotment. For example, Jewish studies class time at the Beechwood School in Dollard-des-Ormeaux is 55 minutes per week, or each Wednesday from 11:15 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. while at the Greendale School in Pierrefonds the lunch time program takes place from 11:20 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; at Roslyn School in Westmount from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. and at Sunnydale School in Dollard-des-Ormeaux from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

In each of the schools mentioned there is a large percentage of Jewish students. Statistics on the ratio of Jewish students to the general student body are not available since principals are reluctant to supply the information. Classes vary in numbers, and Rabbi Yarmush estimates that 75% of Jewish students attend his classes. The total number of students attending Free Hebrew for Juniors is four hundred.

In years past, time allocation for each school was longer and more classes were in operation than at present. Lack of available funds

imposed shorter class time and fewer classes in 1991, a fact which causes great distress to the school's administrative personnel. The teachers employed by Free Hebrew for Juniors are all graduates of Orthodox seminaries, and are of Lubavitch orientation. As is the case with other Orthodox school administrations, they believe that the teacher must practice what she teaches or else lose credibility. In addition, the teachers receive training in the implementation of the hidden curriculum. As mentioned earlier, great emphasis is placed on fostering positive feelings in the students, and to this end, the necessity to bridge as much as possible the gulf between the students' background and the school's teachings is of the utmost importance. The teachers must not convey in any perceivable manner any negative responses to students who display opposing religious views or different religious practices. Teachers' attitudes must be approving, understanding, and patient in the instruction mode, and guiding, rather than judgmental or elitist. A tolerant, encouraging and approving atmosphere must be created and maintained in the classroom for the students to pleasantly anticipate their next classroom experience.

A close examination of one of the school's meeting agendas yielded a five-page detailed instructional handout addressing the upcoming Purim program and celebration and an additional three-page handout regarding the school's 2nd term report card. Staff meetings take place every eight weeks, and teachers receive detailed written instructions for the intervening time span.

The Rodeph Shalom Congregation School

The Rodeph Shalom Congregation School has been in existence for the past 25 years. It is of reform religious ideology with a total of 45 students offering three Jewish studies weekly programs. One program for levels K-1-2 on Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 12:00 commences with a half-hour synagogue service, followed by two hours of study, and a weekly study program for levels 3-4-5-6, which takes place on two afternoons for two hours each session. A recent program has been added once a week for levels 7-8. Rabbi L. Kaplan, the school principal, stressed the need to keep goals realistic and attainable in keeping with the special circumstances of the afternoon study program as well as the Sunday morning time constraints.

The curriculum was developed by Rabbi Kaplan himself, and it includes a family Shabbath worship for all the school's students once a month, as well as family holiday celebrations. The curricular focus is on Siddur literacy and synagogue participation, Jewish identity and pride. Rabbi Kaplan stated his satisfaction with the students' achievements and attitude towards their Jewish studies. He added that there is, however, always room for improvement.

The Temple Emanu-el Beth Shalom Religious School

The Temple Emanu-el Beth Shalom Religious School is the only other reform school in Montreal. It is larger and older than the Rodeph Shalom school -- founded 50 years ago, with a current total student population of 70 in levels K-9 inclusive. Classes take place on

Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. commencing with half-hour worship followed by school instruction for all grade levels and on Wednesday afternoons for an additional two hours of instruction for all grade levels.

The basic curriculum has been in use for some time, but has undergone revisions and modification consonant with the school's changing needs. Mrs. Andrea Fieldman, the school's principal, explains the school's curricular focus as religious and moral with equal emphasis on both personal moral development as part of Jewish identity and academic achievement. Hebrew is taught as a living language, comprehensive and communicative, as a preparation for visits to Israel and/or eventual Aliyah. Love for Israel and Jewish national pride are developed through projects, Israeli national celebrations and the specific methods in which Jewish history is taught. The school's main objective is to instill and foster Jewish awareness, pride, humanism and a global perspective on life.

The T.M.R. Co-Op Hebrew School

The T.M.R. Co-Op Hebrew School is different from the schools viewed so far, since it is not synagogue-affiliated but rather a community school. In the past, the school was affiliated with a Conservative synagogue and under synagogue directorship. In 1986 there occurred a conflict of interest between the directorship and the parents' committee, at which time the parents decided to form their own school in accordance with their particular requirements. Currently

the school occupies premises rented from another Conservative synagogue, but operates independently, although the school's religious philosophy is Conservative.

The school caters to 60 students in levels K-4 inclusive, and plans for expansion are underway due to additional enrollment. Students meet for school instruction one afternoon a week for a period of two hours, and are invited to attend an additional two hours of instruction on Sunday morning (optional).

The school's curriculum is spiral and was adopted from the Jewish Resource Centre in New York and modified by Mrs. Naira Lissak, the school principal. The curricular focus is "Zionist, Israeli" which translates as Jewish awareness and Jewish national pride. Siddur literacy and synagogue participation are stressed, as well as modern Hebrew. Modes of teaching rely heavily on all art forms as means of students' active participation as well as affective involvement. The school principal commented on the students' positive attitude toward their Jewish studies, and attributes this fortunate fact to parental support and involvement.

The Adat Rei'm Supplementary School

The Adat Rei'm Supplementary School is another community school in the sense that it began as a parent-initiated endeavor. At the time of the school's founding, the Adat Rei'm community was truly as their Hebrew name implies a group of friends who decided to pray together and supply their children the kind of Jewish education they deemed fit. The

community, which is of Conservative religious ideology, met for prayers in a rented structure and provided their children with Jewish instruction on premises leased from the public school sector. That was in 1988, when the student population numbered 60 in grades K-1-2 inclusively. At present the school is housed in permanent quarters. The number of students has risen to 176, and classes were extended to level 6 inclusive.

The school curriculum is spiral and was developed to meet the needs and objectives of the school as perceived by the educational committee appointed by the congregation. The school motto is "Judaism with Joy" and focuses on the affective domain in learning. Siddur literacy and synagogue attendance are central foci and accordingly modern Hebrew is taught only beginning level 4, where an intensive program is offered as Ivrit B'ivrit. The scheduled instruction period for the K level is a two-hour class once a week, and for all other levels two sessions a week consisting of two hours each. Additional classes are foreseen for the near future owing to rapid communal development and expansion.

The A. Reisen School

The A. Reisen School was founded in the mid-twentieth century by the Workmen's Circle. At that time the school provided supplementary Jewish studies instruction to some two hundred Jewish students in both the Hebrew and Yiddish languages. The school had two branches in Montreal and one in Chomedey. With the passage of time, enrollment decreased and

the school closed two of its auxiliaries. Currently the school supplies Yiddish and Hebrew instruction to only 25 students in one Montreal location. The student body consists mostly of Russian Jewish immigrants in two grade levels. A supplementary Russian teacher was hired who assists the regular teachers with Russian translations of the curricular material.

The curriculum development and implementation is left entirely to the teachers, since the school director is not a professional educator. Classes take place on Sundays from ten o'clock in the morning to one o'clock in the afternoon. Jewish holiday celebrations are part of the curricular activities of the school, but religious instruction is not. The school stresses the importance of the Yiddish language and culture, and tuition is free of charge to all students.

The Tikvah Program

The Tikvah program is a very unique Jewish studies program unlike any other and it evolved out of a specific communal need. The Tikvah program is of Orthodox religious ideology, and provides religious Jewish instruction to special Jewish children of elementary school age who, due to their adversity, would otherwise be deprived of Jewish education. The program was instituted by Dr. Abe Worenklein in 1975 with five students. The total student population to date is 90, but the number of students fluctuates, since any school with 4 special Jewish children requiring Jewish studies instruction could avail itself of the Tikvah program. All teachers possess special education certification and are

of Orthodox orientation; students, however, are of diverse backgrounds.

The curriculum was developed by Dr. Worenklein in collaboration with the Jewish Education Council to meet the program's special needs and religious orientation. It focuses on Jewish awareness, Judaic life and practices, Siddur literacy, synagogue participation as well as Hebrew language comprehension and fluency. Students are grouped according to academic achievement and physical abilities. The minimum student number for a class is four and maximum number is eight. The program is offered in five different Jewish community centers in and around Montreal, operating according to a varied schedule. The program's main objective is to fulfill its name and to offer hope where there was none.

Hebrew Academy of Congregation Beth Tikvah

The Hebrew Academy of Congregation Beth Tikvah is an Orthodox supplementary school in Dollard-des-Ormeaux. It was founded in 1964 as part of the synagogue Beth Tikvah. Classes are still being conducted in the synagogue building. Much has changed since the inception of the school: scheduling, number of students, and classes. The school has grown with the community. Currently, the student population numbers 210 in classes K to 6. Classes are conducted in English, with modern Hebrew as a separate Ulpan-style course. Each of the core curriculum disciplines is taught by a teacher specialized in the particular discipline to ensure proficiency in subject matter and in-depth coverage as well as transfer to the students.

The subjects taught are Siddur (which includes prayer, synagogue ritual, holiday celebrations, and Shabbat ceremonies with family

participation), Torah, history, literature, and philosophy. Emphasis is on the experiential domain and the development of Jewish identity. The importance of the State of Israel for world Jewry, community awareness, and living an ethical Jewish life which includes the recognition of a person's civic responsibilities, are the ideals the school is striving to foster in the students.

The core curriculum subjects for grades 1 to 6 are taught twice weekly, Tuesday and Thursday, for a period of two hours a day, with an optional two-hour enrichment program on Mondays. The K classes attend two hours once a week. Additional programs offered are: "Ezra" program for late starters, the "Tikvah" program for the learning disabled students, and remediation classes. Rabbi Zeitz, the school principal, explained that it is the school's responsibility not only to instruct the students academically but to prepare them for life in a changing world.

The Shaar Hashomayim Supplementary School

The Shaar Hashomayim Supplementary School was founded in the first part of the twentieth century adjacent to the Shaar Hashomayim synagogue of which it was an affiliate. The school's religious orientation currently, as stated by its principal Mr. Danny Elkin, is "extremely right wing Conservative". The school offers two study programs, one program taking place once a week for a two-hour period for the levels K-1-2 and 7, and a second program held twice weekly for a period of two hours each for levels 3-4-5-6.

The curriculum is based on the Jewish holiday cycle, and focuses on the affective domain, namely, love of Judaism, love of Torah and learning, as well as understanding the Bible and basic synagogue prayer and ritual. Aims and objectives as far as Hebrew linguistic proficiency are concerned are realistic. The Hebrew vocabulary taught is essentially the language of the Siddur, for Siddur literacy and comprehension. The curriculum was developed by Mr. Elkin himself from one of the Burman House Hebrew language curricula and modified to suit the school's needs and objectives. According to Mr. Elkin, the rate of a school's effectiveness and success is measured by the number of students continuing their Jewish education past their Bar Mitzvah.

Teachers are hired according to their professional ability and Jewish commitment, not necessarily ideological compatibility. The school is in a perpetual state of evolution and expansion, as is evident from the statistical chart at the end of the chapter, with new study courses being added in Jewish history and modern Hebrew, and an overall striving for academic excellence.

Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem Afternoon School

Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem Afternoon School was founded in 1964 as part of the synagogue in which it is housed. Like the synagogue, the school is of Orthodox orientation and direction. Currently the school provides Jewish study instruction to thirty students in levels 1 to 6. A Bar Mitzvah preparation program is available for boys and a Bat Mitzvah program for girls. Additionally, a special class is offered for

exceptional children, directed by a qualified teacher. Classes are held on two afternoons a week for a two-hour period each. The exceptional classes are offered twice weekly as well, but only for a half-hour each.

The curriculum used was developed by the founding principal in 1964 and modified periodically in keeping with the school's changing needs. It focuses on Siddur literacy, synagogue participation, holiday celebrations, Jewish awareness and identity.

Merkaz Sepharad Talmud Torah Danan

Merkaz Sepharad Talmud Torah Danan is a modest Sunday Jewish instruction program catering to 10 students under the supervision of one teacher. Classes are offered each Sunday morning from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The language of instruction is French, and the curricular focus is on Siddur literacy and the practice of Sephardic Orthodox tradition and custom.

The scant amount of information about the school is due to the fact that the only person available for comment has been affiliated with the school only recently and possesses only the very basic information listed above.

In addition to the supplementary schools listed above there is the "House of Israel Congregation" which is located in Ste-Agathe des Monts. The school is of Lubavitch orientation, but was not available for comment. Regrettably no information was to be obtained about the school.

Clearly, different supplementary Jewish schools operating in and around Montreal reflect the diversity of the Jewish religious society. On close examination of objectives, however, many consistencies are apparent. The elements of accord could be divided into three categories: God, meaning the Jews' responsibilities towards their creator; the Jewish people, meaning man's responsibility towards his fellow man, which includes not only one's responsibilities towards his family and his religious community but the global human community; and the Torah, which is the source of knowledge for life itself, as well as the book of the covenant. Alexander M. Dushkin divides Jewish curricula into seven component principles which he believes "are the inevitable organic materials from which any Jewish school curriculum must be constructed."⁶ They are:

1. The classical continuing Jewish tradition -- religious, literary, institutional and ethical, or Torah in its widest sense.
2. Concrete ways of Jewish living -- Mitzvoth, customs, folkways, language, and obligations.
3. Hebrew as a language and as part of the Jewish universal bond.
4. The Jewish people -- identification, knowledge of Jewish roots, of past and present, and the desire for Jewish survival and welfare the world over.
5. Israel -- its unique role in Jewish history and tradition and its continued up-building and development.
6. Citizenship -- participation and responsibilities to one's country of residence.

7. Faith in the divine purpose making for the betterment of the world and man, involving the human obligation to strive toward a better democratic world order.

These subjects are interrelated and form the core curriculum on which Jewish schooling is constructed; they are the classical values in Jewish teaching and learning. Above all else the Jewish schools and Jewish teachers, regardless of ideological and religious affiliation, are committed to the task of developing in their students Jewish identity and implanting in them the desire for Jewish welfare and continuity, the love of Judaism and the Torah. To this aim, teaching modalities are structured to focus on the affective domain.

There seems to be a consensus among Jewish educators regarding Jewish supplementary education in finding inadequacies and deficiencies.⁷ No system is perfect the world over, including education and schooling. On the credit side there is the need to recognize and appreciate the constant commitment and contribution Jewish supplementary schooling has made to Jewish survival and perpetuity.

SCHOOL	1985-86	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
ADAT REI'M	--	--	77	105	172
A. REISEN	23	24	25	25	27
FREE HEBREW	739	624	--	--	356
HEBREW ACADEMY BETH TIKVAH	304	294	215	239	192
HOUSE OF ISRAEL	--	21	11	10	10
RODEPH SHALOM	147	121	39	38	42
SHAAR PALS	177	143	112	80	98
TALMUD TORAH DE MERKAZ	26	27	21	16	9
TEMPLE EMANU-EL	74	78	67	88	90
T.B.D.J.	97	75	57	64	63
T.M.R. PRIVATE HEBREW SCHOOL	--	--	61	60	67
TOTAL	1,587	2,625	685	725	1,129

* Statistics supplied by the Jewish Educational Council of Montreal.

CHAPTER TWO
THE P.E.L.O. PROGRAM

Until the latter part of the twentieth century, ethnicity was discouraged, or just not acknowledged in any positive manner. Minority members were encouraged to immerse, blend, and integrate as quickly as possible into the majority society. This attitude caused major social problems and unrest as well as creating the reverse of what it aimed to achieve. Instead of social cohesion, it created social dysfunction. It imposed a false unity which harbored social ills and rebellion. This adverse reaction was evident in the problems immigrant children encountered in school. Many exhibited learning difficulties that were at first believed to have been caused by language crowding, assuming that bilingualism creates confusion.¹ They also experienced social maladjustment in school as well as alienation from the ethnic society to which they belonged.² Clearly the problems had to be examined closely and solutions found. The research findings indicated the fallacy of earlier theories and assumptions. It was evident that the root of the problem does not stem from the ethnic background or linguistic overcrowding, but rather from the conflicts created between the heritage culture, or the home environment, and the society in which the child tries to integrate, the school.

These findings clearly revealed that children can learn many languages without adverse effects, and that proficiency in the language of origin facilitates fluency in bilingual or trilingual acquisition. Theories of child social and emotional development have been reviewed and considered.³ Erikson's theory of child development and the importance of a positive self-image for the child's healthy development no doubt contributed to the changes in social attitudes and ultimately to the creation in 1978 of the P.E.L.O. program. P.E.L.O. is the acronym for "Le programme d'enseignement des langues d'origines," and in English "Heritage Language Program."

The program was created with a double objective and one major aim. The Minister of Education issued official literature clarifying and defining the rationale behind the P.E.L.O. program, and here is a short excerpt. The report states the following: "In Quebec, the programs for the teaching of heritage languages (P.E.L.O.) are the pedagogical outcome of the government's global policy which takes into consideration the difficulties faced by non-francophone Quebecers and which also recognize the important contribution of these cultural communities in the building of Quebec society. That society, while searching for unity through coherent collective policies does not wish to deny specific characteristics of the various segments of its population. The P.E.L.O. favors the development of a balanced bilingualism for the individual and a cultural pluralism for the society."⁴ Clearly then, easing the process of acculturation by creating a facilitating corridor between the heritage culture and the dominant culture through acceptance of the ethnic

culture through acceptance of the ethnic differences is one objective. The second objective is the recognition and respect for diversity and valuing their cultural contributions to society which fosters harmony in a multicultural society and social cohesion. The aim however is nevertheless integration.

The social reality in Montreal, where most immigrants choose to settle, the ethnic cultural communities, other than French or English, make up more than one-fifth of the city's population. The Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montréal (C.E.C.M.) reports that of a total school population of 90,000 students 20,000 are allophones. In many schools the allophones are in the majority. At the outset, the P.E.L.O. program was intended for active or passive speakers of the target language at the elementary school level, grades 1 and 2. It was a pilot project involving only 25 students of two ethnic communities, Italian and Portuguese.⁵

Since 1989 the program has been extended to all students of schools where the P.E.L.O. program is in operation. Of the eleven school boards in the Province of Quebec, only four offer the P.E.L.O. program. They are: the Brossard School Commission, the Montreal Catholic School Commission, the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, and the Baldwin-Cartier School Commission in Pointe-Claire. The P.E.L.O. program offers a wide range of languages. The four school boards mentioned offer a variety of eleven languages at the primary and secondary levels.⁶

Baldwin-Cartier has one group studying Arabic and one group of fourteen students studying Hebrew. Brossard teaches Italian and Mandarin Chinese.

At the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, courses are offered in Italian, Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish and Creole. The Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montréal has programs in nine languages: Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Lao, Portuguese and Vietnamese. This is the largest program in the province involving 2,040 students in 25 schools. The Quebec school boards foresee increases in P.E.L.O.'s scope and languages.⁷ The Quebec school boards offering the P.E.L.O. program base their courses on curricular material prepared by the Quebec Ministry of Education. Some school boards, however, as well as individual schools, choose to prepare additional material.

The Hebrew curriculum for the elementary level used by the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal was prepared by Mrs. Laura Stock-Vinegar in June 1988. It is designed for the primary grades, for students ages 6 to 11, and extends over a period of 192 hours of instruction, meaning that Jewish students receive 32 hours of Jewish studies instruction per year, or one hour per week.⁸ The curriculum is divided into levels and units. The first unit in level 1 is designated as Jewish heritage, intended for 36 hours of study and lists as its objectives: the students' ability to fully appreciate Jewish holidays, within the family, community and school environment allowing him/her to celebrate the holidays with greater sympathetic awareness of their own culture. The second unit is listed as Hebrew, intended for 60 hours of instruction and states its objectives: to acquire a knowledge of all the letters and vowels in the Hebrew alphabet.

The first unit in level two of the curriculum is listed as: Jewish heritage, and intended for 36 hours of study (Mitzvot). The

general objectives are: the student will know the ten commandments and have a deep understanding of the Jewish values of the Mitzvot. Additionally, they shall have developed a pride in "trying to help make the world a better place." The second unit of level two is Hebrew, extending over a span of 60 hours of instruction. The objectives noted are: the overall goal in Hebrew language is to develop reading comprehension skills. Upon completion of this course the student will be capable of communicating orally, using approximately 300 words of conversation. The student will also be capable of reading fluently short simple dialogues and stories. The student will also have mastered the written forms of Hebrew (print and script).

The first unit in level three begins with Jewish heritage, a unit on Bible characters. The time allotted is the 36-hour period assigned to the heritage units, and the general objectives are: the student will acquire basic Jewish and universal truths, transmitted through the study of the biblical stories and related concepts and be capable of applying the moral message to their own concerns. The second unit of level three, which is also the last one of the curriculum, is Hebrew, which provides for 30 hours of instruction. The general objectives are: upon completion, the student shall be able to communicate orally, using approximately 800 words of conversation. The student will also be able to read fluently simple dialogues and stories. They will be capable of writing short, simple sentences of their own expression, having mastered the ability to write simple Hebrew words. There follow criteria and

modes of evaluation, various games, creative activities and learning experiences, lexicons, grammar summaries, lists of people and places to visit, the Jewish calendar and an extensive bibliography.

At the secondary level, the curriculum was developed by the Jewish Educational Council in 1986.⁹ It consists of Jewish history from ancient times to the twentieth century. The curriculum is divided into two fifty-hour blocks extending over the secondary years of instruction for accredited courses. Each fifty-hour block is to be studied over a two-year period earning the student four credits. The first fifty-hour block consists of Jewish history and literature from ancient times to the eighteenth century, and the second fifty-hour block consists of Jewish history and philosophy from the eighteenth century to the twentieth. Completion of the one hundred-hour program earns a student a total of eight credits.

The P.E.L.O. classes since 1989 are not limited to students for whom it is a native language, providing that the number of ethnic students for whom it was intended constitutes at least 50% of the class. The P.E.L.O. classes in the non-integrated format are normally offered from Monday to Friday outside of regular classroom hours, either early in the morning, at noon, or immediately after school. However, schedule guidelines are not rigidly enforced, and mostly are left to the individual principal's discretion. Flexibility with regard to the number of students for the formation of a class is exercised as well by the school boards.

The formation of any ethnic class in a school must be initiated by the parents committee which presents the school principal with their

request, providing that the ethnic student body of the target language constitutes the majority ethnic population in that school. The principal in turn petitions the school board and submits a list of potential candidates for the teaching position for the future class. The school board then sends an advisory representative, which, in collaboration with the parents committee, interviews the candidates and arrives at a mutually satisfactory decision. The minimum number of students for the inception of a class is 15 students of the target language. Additional classes of the target language could be formed with a lesser number of students since an overlap calculation is considered.

Hebrew language heritage programs are offered in four of the P.S.B.G.M. schools on the Island of Montreal. Three of the schools are located in the Côte-St-Luc area and one in Snowdon (Royal Vale) where the ethnic population is predominantly Jewish. The schools are: Merton, Edinburgh, Royal Vale and Wagar. At Merton School there is one class with 17 students; at Edinburgh, one class of 12; at Wagar one class of 20; and at Royal Vale the total number of students is 204.¹⁰

Through personal or telephone interviews with teachers or principals of the Wagar, Merton and Edinburgh schools, it was learned that classes are composed of students of various levels of Hebrew linguistic proficiency which necessitate the formation of group learning and variations in curricular activities. At Edinburgh, classes are offered twice weekly for one hour as an after school program. A similar schedule and teaching method is in place at the Merton school as they

are both elementary schools with a similar number of students in their heritage language program. Wagar is a high school, therefore the Hebrew heritage language program is offered as an elective on six days out of a seven-day cycle for one hour a day as the last class of the day. At the Royal Vale school, Jewish heritage language classes are part of the school's compulsory supplementary program. Classes are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the day for one hour each day. The teaching staff engaged by the P.S.B.G.M. for the Heritage Language¹¹ Programs must be qualified and fluent in the target language of instruction.

School commissions in Quebec all receive the same funding for P.E.L.O., which consists of provincial grants that pay the instructors' salary which is at par with all the other teaching staff, and a grant of 150 dollars per group for the purchase of materials. No additional funds are provided by the Ministry for professional development of the teachers.¹²

The Canadian Education Association, conscious of the controversy persisting into the 1990s over the Heritage Language Programs, set out to sample the school boards across Canada to find out their input. The report consists of the following: The administrators in the Quebec school commissions believe that they notice a link between the language ability of the children taking Heritage Language courses and their aptitudes in the official language of instruction (i.e. French or English). Most find that knowledge gained in one language is easily transferred to another, and that language teaching has a positive impact

on the cognitive development of children. Other advantages cited include: better integration of the student into school society, improved affective and cognitive development of the student, strong links between the parents and the school which promotes social integration, increased participation of a greater number of professionals from the cultural communities in the labour market, increased learning of French, ability to meet community needs, the capacity to communicate with the family who live in the country of origin. P.E.L.O. allows children to adopt their heritage language as a vehicle of communication and not as a dead language and prizing of the language and culture of the student and consequently his own identity. The disadvantages cited were few and consisted mostly of the need to extend the school day.¹³

CLIENTELE SCOLAIRE PELO 1989-1990
PAR LANGUE ENSEIGNÉE

Langue enseignée	Commission Scolaire	Secteur	Nombre total d'élèves par commission scolaire	Nombre total d'élèves par langue enseignée
Italien	C.E.C.M.	français	573	3,548
		anglais	1,364	
	C.E.P.G.M.	anglais	140	
		Jérôme-Le Royer	français	
			anglais	
		Ste-Croix	français	
Portugais	C.E.C.M.	français	367	538
		anglais	171	
Grec	C.E.C.M.	français	46	46
Espagnol	C.E.C.M.	français	519	579
	C.E.P.G.M.	français	35	
	Ste-Croix	français	25	
Vietnamien	C.E.C.M.	français	124	134
	Ste-Croix	français	10	

CLIENTELE SCOLAIRE PELO 1989-1990
PAR LANGUE ENSEIGNÉE

Langue enseignée	Commission Scolaire	Secteur	Nombre total d'élèves par commission scolaire	Nombre total d'élèves par langue enseignée
Laotien	C.E.C.M.	français	61	82
	Ste-Croix	français	21	
Chinois	C.E.C.M.	français	24	50
	Ste-Croix	français	26	
Cambodgien	C.E.C.M.	français	103	153
	Ste-Croix	français	50	
Arabe	Baldwin-Cartier	français	14	350
	C.E.C.M.	français	223	
	C.E.P.G.M.	français	13	
	Ste-Croix	français	100	
Hébreu	C.E.P.G.M.	français	198	212
	Baldwin-Cartier	français	14	
Créole	C.E.P.G.M.	français	29	29
GRAND TOTAL				5,721

CLIENTELE SCOLAIRE PELO 1989-1990
PAR COMMISSION SCOLAIRE

Commission Scolaire	Secteur	Langue enseignée	Nombre d'élèves par langue	Nombre total d'élèves par commission scolaire		
C.E.C.M.	français			TOTAL: 3,575		
		arabe	223	Loc.	non	
		cambodgien	103		loc.	
		chinois	24			
		espagnol	519	1,798	244	2,040
		grec	46			
		italien	573			
		laotien	61			
		portugais	367			
		vietnamien	124			
anglais	italien	1,364	1,491	44	1,535	
	portugais	171				
Jérôme-Le Royer	français	italien	208	TOTAL: 1,459		
				Loc.	non	
					loc.	
anglais	italien	1,251	188	20	208	
			1,151	100	1,251	
C.E.P.G.M.	français			TOTAL: 415		
		arabe	13	Loc.	non	
		créole	29		loc.	
		hébreu	198			
		espagnol	35			275
		anglais	italien	140		
Ste-Croix	français	arabe	100	TOTAL: 244		
		chinois	26			
		cambodgien	50	Loc.	non	
		espagnol	25		loc.	
		laotien	21			
		vietnamien	10	244		0
		anglais	italien	12		

CLIENTELE SCOLAIRE PELO 1989-1990PAR COMMISSION SCOLAIRE*

Commission scolaire	Secteur	Langue enseignée	Nombre d'élèves par langue	Nombre total d'élèves par commission scolaire	
Baldwin-Cartier	français	hébreu	14	TOTAL: 28	
		arabe	14	Loc.	non loc.
				28	0
GRAND TOTAL:				5,721	

* The statistics are courtesy of Madame Françoise Binamé, Direction de la Coordination des Réseaux Services aux Communautés Culturelles, Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation.

CHAPTER 3
THE POSSIBLE IMPACT THE P.E.L.O. PROGRAM MAY HAVE ON
JEWISH SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION IN MONTREAL

From the preceding chapters it is clear to see that all ethnic supplementary schooling in the Province of Quebec is under the supervision of the Quebec government via the financial aid extended to them by the government in conformity with certain conditions or guidelines. Ethnic schooling is classified either as the P.L.E. program, which is the ethnic language program conducted by the various ethnic communities themselves through their own educational agencies, or as the P.E.L.O. program which is the Heritage Language Program offered by the government in the public school system. In attempting to hypothesize the possible impact the P.E.L.O. program might have on the future of Jewish supplementary education in Montreal, there is a need to examine both in terms of aims and objectives.

Notwithstanding ideological and/or religious affiliations, in terms of aims and objectives all Jewish education and schooling is committed to Jewish preservation and continuity. Each ideological stream, as each religious orientation, is trying to direct its students in its own particular route according to its own interpretation of the essence of Judaism. Yet, by any route or fashion, they are all united in the common goal of self, which is Jewish preservation and continuity.

This aim can be achieved only through the medium of education, since it is the species mode of perpetual transfer, guidance and training.

Dr. Alvin I. Schiff in his essay "Jewish Continuity through Jewish Education" offers an enlightening exposition of the meaning of continuity as well as the impact of the environment upon the success or failure of the aims of education:

As a rule when discussing Jewish existence, we use the term 'survival.' Actually, continuity is more accurate. Certainly it is more dynamic. Continuity indicates the state or quality of being continuous. It denotes the fact that Jewish life is an uninterrupted succession of Jewish people and events. Continuity is an absolute condition. Survival, however, indicates an act of surviving, of merely lasting longer than others. Survival connotes something continuing to exist after the cessation of something else. As such, survival is a relative phenomenon. Moreover, continuity implies creative growth; survival connotes bare existence, even decline. The title of this paper suggests that Jewish education is crucial to maintaining the continuum of Jewish life. This is a generous supposition. Not all varieties of Jewish education can be treated in one breath. In fact, some efforts in Jewish education do not result in continuity at all.¹

Continuity then is described here by Dr. Schiff as a generative force, promoting growth, life and vigor to the uninterrupted succession of Jewish history. This continuity depends largely on Jewish education which, according to Brian Bulivant, is "a cultural achievement based on a system of values, as could be said of schooling, since its primary

function is to transmit among other information, the knowledge, norms, behavioral expectations, technical skills, traditions, and beliefs valued by the society it serves."² The society that Jewish schooling is to serve is the ethnic Jewish society, and the culture it is entrusted to transmit is the Jewish culture, defined by Brian Bulivant as "being the group's problem-solving, survival device which programs its institutions to cope with the problem of living within its environment."³

Jewish schooling, then, is geared to serve its society by transmitting to the students Jewish culture for the purpose of Jewish continuity. Congruency of purpose between the government and Jewish society regarding the heritage language program would imply the positive effect and outcome expected of the program for all concerned. Cross purposes, however, would imply the adverse effects this program might have on Jewish supplementary enrollment in Jewish schools. The issue stems from the fact that the majority of students attending Jewish supplementary schooling in the various Jewish schooling systems "are from culturally deprived backgrounds", culturally deprived backgrounds meaning "students who come to Jewish schools from homes not committed to the goals of the respective schools in which they are enrolled."⁵

"The role of the parents in education is critical,"⁶ states Dr. Schiff. Undoubtedly the parents are the ones who choose their children's schooling; they are the most influential people in the children's lives through the formative years. Yet, these parents being religiously uncommitted may be enticed by the relative ease offered by

the P.E.L.O. program in that it is being conducted in the same location the student has spent most of the day and where he still is, thereby eliminating the necessity of transporting the student to a different location. Many parents have vague ideas concerning their children's Jewish education. They may feel that one program is as good as another, besides, they are entrusting their child's general studies education to the public school system, the education which will affect his material future in terms of employment potential and general social skills. Why not do likewise with Jewish education which, after all, is only supplementary, implying marginal importance in many instances. Should the government Heritage Language Program prove to be at cross purposes with the traditional aim and direction of Jewish education it would be then one of the varieties Dr. Schiff refers to as "an effort in Jewish education which does not result in continuity at all."⁷

In reality, Dr. Schiff alludes to the home environment as the one crucial factor in reinforcing and promoting Jewish education. "Schooling alone cannot compensate for deficits of a culturally-deprived home." This statement is backed by empirical proof. How much truer and sadder this statement is when the education which the home environment is supposed to reinforce, and does not, is in itself not fulfilling the purpose Jewish education is intended to fulfill? Since "while the influence of parents on Jewish education cannot be overemphasized, the role of the school vis-à-vis the children must not be underestimated" research demonstrates that "the effects of parents upon religiosity are substantial, they occur mainly through Jewish schooling."⁸ Regardless

of all other factors, the most important agent for Jewish continuity is the school, Jewish education.

In examining the P.E.L.O. program, in the attempt to assess its validity to the continuity of Jewish ethnic society, several questions must be asked: Why was this program created? For whom was it created? What is its purpose? What is its focus? An examination of some government documents yields the answers; some excerpts that are deemed relevant to the subject follow. In one of the publications, issued by the Government of Quebec Ministry of Education in March, 1983 entitled "Heritage Language Programs, Why?"⁹, the rationale behind the creation of the program is explained thus:

In Quebec, more specifically in Montreal where most immigrants have chosen to settle, there are more than forty languages being spoken. The cultural communities, other than the French and the English, make up more than one-fifth of the city's population.

Inevitably the schools are bound to reflect the transformation in the community. The existence of these groups enriches the recipient society, but it also causes certain integration problems. In general, the problems are caused by the reaction of immigrants who have settled in an environment where the language of the majority is not their own. Their reactions are largely due to their own personality, the cultural gap and the attitude of the recipient society. The children are often the most deeply affected, because all these various and often contradictory influences are happening at a stage in their lives when they are searching for their own identities.¹⁰

Immigrant children are often caught in a double bind; family values and the milieu outside the family. This gap which is engendered by these conflicts can lead a child to feel uncertain about his true identity.

With time, these psychological, cognitive, and social problems have a marked effect on their school marks and on their behavior. Often their schooling leads to failure and consequently these children accumulate all sorts of handicaps which will have serious effects on them and the society.

Solutions: Faced with the challenges of integration, many countries have made a serious effort to help their immigrants develop positive attitudes towards their own cultural heritage and towards the receiving society.¹¹

Clearly the excerpts presented answer the questions posed previously. The P.E.L.O. program was created as a solution to the problems created in the majority society by an influx of ethnic minority societies regarding their integration in their adopted land.

The focus of the program then is simply successful integration of all ethnic minorities into the mainstream of society. Professor Manoly R. Lupul explains it thus: "Multiculturalism, then, is the development of a consciousness of one's ancestral roots of ethnicity for creative purposes to the end that a distinctive Canadian identity will emerge which is neither wholly European nor wholly North American but which incorporates elements of both. It seems obvious that the better one understands the ancestral language, the deeper will be the under-

standing of one's ancestral culture, and the stronger will be the creative base for the talent that exists.¹² The concentration, then, is on the convergence of all multicultural heritage creative energies not for their individual preservation but for the purpose of constructing "a distinctive Canadian identity". P. Lupul further explains that "the emphasis must be on ethnicity as a wellspring, as a point of departure for creativity."¹³

It would seem right to assume that this is not quite what Dr. Schiff meant in discussing Jewish continuity, or what the Jewish people hope Jewish education would transmit to or develop in a Jewish child. Jewish education is entrusted with the development of a distinct Jewish identity not as a 'wellspring' but as a solid foundation for Jewish living. In a survey conducted by the Jewish Educational Council of Montreal in September of 1989, in the assessment of subjects most important to parents of supplementary school students, 'Jewish identity' ranks as number one.¹⁴

A report by the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, in 1988, notes that "all interviewees indicated that education for Jewish identity and Jewish attitudes/involvement is an essential goal of the school."¹⁵ In terms of percentage of respondents, the following is listed: Jewish identity - principals, 93%; Jewish attitude/involvement - principals, 94%. The study further states that: "Taken together, the curricular outcomes in Jewish knowledge even in synagogue-related subjects like Jewish holidays, customs and ceremonies, Siddur and prayer, Jewish involvement and Jewish attitudes make a dramatic statement."¹⁶

Alexander M. Dushkin elucidates the role of Jewish education as well as the essence of Jewish identity: "Jewish education, like all other systems of education, must educate the human being for complete living; that is, give him understanding of the world in which he lives, ability to order his life toward the achievement of freedom and happiness, and the will to be the partner of the Almighty in the betterment of the world. The human being who is a Jew can have no complete life unless he takes full cognizance of his Jewish relationships, accepts his Jewishness readily, and knows how to direct his Jewish life toward the completeness of his life as a human being."¹⁷

Jewish identity then is an awareness and full acceptance of one's heritage combined with the generative force for creative living within a universal scope. Jewish education as it is conducted in Jewish supplementary schools (and/or any other Jewish educational agency) is aimed at Jewish continuity and fostering Jewish identity, while the P.E.L.O. program was designed to ease the immigrants' integration into Canadian society, as well as to foster Canadian identity. The program therefore may adversely affect Jewish ethnic society, in the event that it may become popular and divert Jewish students from Jewish schools in which case the Language Heritage Program may pose a serious threat to Jewish continuity.

For the sake of objectivity, one other aspect should be presented. Although the Jewish community would be well advised to examine interventions in the Jewish supplementary school system and to be cognizant of the motivating elements informing them, realistically, the

Heritage Language Program in the public schools may lend Jewish studies a legitimacy they had not enjoyed before and reach a segment of Jewish students whose only recourse to Jewish studies is the public school system. The penetration of Jewish studies into the public school system is deemed positive by Zvi Adar. He lists 330 American colleges and universities offering Judaica courses, 37 of which offer undergraduate majors, and 27 offering graduate programs (1972).¹⁸ He describes this expansion as incidental, nevertheless the consequences are identical regardless of intent. This positive factor may help to offset the negative ones.

In 1928 Samson Benderly, concerned about the large group of adolescents who had not acquired an Hebraic background, proposed to teach Hebrew as a modern language in the curriculum of the public high schools of New York City. "He believed that such a program which would include Hebraic textbooks, Hebrew songs and dances, and Hebrew exercises appearing on the classroom blackboards, would not only impart knowledge but cause a revolution in the attitude of the Jew to his culture. In addition, the mere fact that Hebrew was being taught in his public school, would constitute psychologically an assurance to the Jewish adolescent that his father's cultural values were worthy of respect. Moreover, this blending of American and Hebraic cultures would develop a better Jewish citizen and would combat the existing apologetic attitude of many children of immigrants' Jewish parents towards things Jewish."¹⁹

The possibility exists that the intent "designed to restrict access to instruction in any language except French"²⁰ may have a positive facet in an overall negative situation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Jewish supplementary schooling in Canada enjoys a long and prestigious history. In fact, it is the very first mode of Jewish education in the country. The system began as a Sunday school, organized and implemented by Rabbi Abraham de Sola in 1850.

Like many other groups in North America, the Jewish communities in Canada made their supplementary educational system a subsystem of their religious and ideological orientations, thereby creating a pluralistic structure in actuality and scope. This diversified structure is united, not in deed but in aim, in preservation and perpetuation of the Jewish heritage, culture, religion and language, as well as developing and fostering Jewish identity and identification. The foregoing is a difficult task to achieve in the environment of the diaspora. In the Province of Quebec, this task is made even more difficult since Jewish education had evolved in the shadow of the confusing battles over the linguistic and confessional nature of the public school system.¹ This battle acquired intensity with the advent of the quiet revolution of 1960, and the process of Quebecois self-identification and self-affirmation. "After 1960 the question of the integration of immigrants within the French-speaking milieu became one of the leading leitmotifs of Quebec politics. The issue was at the heart of the

massive campaign to salvage the French language and give it new visibility."²

To this end, between 1960 and 1977 three successive provincial government laws dealing with language issues were drafted and passed. Of these, the most crucial one was Bill 101 which compels children of immigrants to enroll, without exception, in French language schools. So intent was the government on achieving its purpose that an attempt was made to redefine the school system along linguistic lines supplanting the one existing since Confederation, founded on confessionality. The attempt failed, but the efforts continued to the extent that it is estimated that by the year 2000 the proportion of children enrolled in French language school will be four times the proportion of 1977, the year Bill 101 became law.³

The language reforms did not leave the private school sector unaffected. In order to promote the study of the French language in private ethnic schools, a program of subsidies was created, designed to encourage French immersion programs. "At the moment, several Jewish and Armenian schools and one Greek private school in Montreal, where French instruction now exceeds in length that of English, have been made beneficiaries of such funding policies."⁴

Clearly the government's intention to create a new French Quebecois society from the immigrant ethnic population is unmistakable. Professor Pierre Anctil states that: "The change that is now taking place in Quebec society will mean that eventually francophone Quebec, at least in the Montreal region where most immigrants have converged, will

become as racially and culturally diverse as the rest of North America. As a result, new forms of popular culture will emerge and the face of La Belle Province may literally change.⁵ Conceivably these changes will affect the system of Jewish education in Montreal in many unforeseeable ways. Whether those changes will be positive or averse to survival and continuity of Jewish ethnic society in Montreal, only time will tell.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. The Multicultural Curriculum, James Lynch, p. 13.
2. Jewish Education in Israel and in the United States, Zvi Adar, p. 159.
3. Canadian Jewish Mosaic, Weinfeld and Shaffir, p. 120.
4. Jewish Education, Zvi Adar, p. 160.
5. Jewish Supplementary Schooling, An Educational System in Need of Change, pp. 67-68.
6. Jewish Education in a Pluralistic Society, p. 75.
7. Issachar American Style, Alvin I. Schiff, p. 164.
8. "Heritage Language Programs, Why?", p. 3.
9. Issachar American Style, Alvin I. Schiff, p. 164.
10. Ibid., p. 132.
11. Studies in Jewish Education, Vol. 1, edited by Barry Chazan, p. 151.
12. "Heritage Language Programs, Why?", p. 3.

CHAPTER 1

1. Heritage Language Programs in Canadian School Boards, p. 1.
2. "Quest for Quality in the Protestant Public Schools of Quebec", Nathan H. Mair, p. 69.
3. Heritage Language Programs in Canadian School Boards, p. 3.
4. Ibid., p. 6.
5. Ibid., p. 23.
6. Jewish Education, Alexander M. Dushkin, p. 74.

NOTES

7. Studies in Jewish Education, Vol. 3, edited by Janet Aviad, p. 104. Article: "Organizational Perspective" by Ronald Reynolds.

8. Statistics from the Jewish Educational Center.

CHAPTER 2

1. Heritage Language Programs in Canadian School Boards, p. 1.

2. Ibid.

3. Educational Psychology, Robert G. Slavin, p. 41.

4. "Heritage Language Programs, Why?", p. 3.

5. Ibid., p. 1.

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CHAPTER 3

1. Issachar American Style, Alvin I. Schiff, p. 161.

2. Studies in Jewish Education, Vol. 1, edited by Barry Chazan, p. 42. Article: "Transmission of Tradition in an Orthodox Day School" by Brian M. Bullivant.

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5. Ibid.

NOTES

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13. Ibid.
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16. Ibid.
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19. Jewish Education in a Pluralist Society, Nathan H. Winter, p. 124.
20. Canadian Jewish Mosaic, p. 116.

CONCLUSION

1. "Linguistic legislation and Ethnic Enrollment in Montreal's French Public Schools" by Pierre Anctil. The article appeared in the Journal of Cultural Geography, Bowling Deer, Ohio, Spring-Summer 1988, Vol. 8, M.Z., p. 115.
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