

## The Aims of Jewish Youth at the Present Time, From an Underground Publication, 1940\*

...We, the Jewish youth, cannot free ourselves from the influence of the situation as a whole on young people in general. To this is added the specific lack of contact with the land of the Jews and the special hatred that accompanies us as Jews. The war and the Nazi Occupation have revealed the tragedy of our Jewish youth very sharply. We have become a group that is ostracized, attacked and humiliated, the object of scorn and derision. Jewish youth has been worn down and has withered physically and spiritually in the Nazi labor camps. Jewish children are cut off from school and education. First of all there hangs over us the sword of want and unemployment, which cuts short the existence and lives of thousands of individuals, which ages Jewish youth before their time, turns them into worn-out people, apathetic and full of doubts, without faith and without the ability to change their lives.

What must we do in this situation? In which direction shall we turn our attention? It is only natural that we cannot speak of one road for the whole of Jewish youth. There are different diseases and different forms of cure. There is one situation for the youth that fills the streets and courtyards, who are without schools and supervision, in whom one can see all the undesirable aspects of the whole adult world. They spend their time buying and selling. The situation is different for the youth which has an opportunity of acquiring education. But this youth withdraws into itself, and is unwilling to descend into the life of the Jewish masses.

The first group must be enabled to acquire an elementary education: we must arrange courses in reading and writing Yiddish, Hebrew, and in arithmetic, etc.; to draw the street youth into warm social surroundings, to attend as far as possible to their personal future, and to implant in them a feeling of solidarity and responsibility; and with the aid of singing and games to create a youthful atmosphere for a Jewish youth that has become old before its time.

The other part of Jewish youth must be helped to a consciousness of its common fate with the Jewish masses; it must be brought down from Olympus; its feeling for the people must be awakened; it must be given an awareness of

Socialism; it must be drawn into public activities in every part of Jewish life; enriched with the spiritual treasures which the Jewish people have created through the ages. And, finally, we must gather together the best of the Jewish youth, which has already received its education in our movement, and forge it into a cadre that is prepared for battle and that will lead the way for Jewish youth....

Yad Vashem Archives, JM/215/1.

From the article by R. Domski (T. Borzykowski) in the underground newspaper of the Dror-He-Halutz movement in Warsaw, *Dror*, No. 3, August 1940.

**Source : *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1981, Document no. 94**