

Excerpts From:

REFORM ZIONISM

AN EDUCATOR'S PERSPECTIVE

MICHAEL LIVNI (LANGER)

**Section 6 - Reform Zionist
Youth Movement in Israel**

Telem Noar as a Movement and a Community¹

Telem Noar currently includes some 350 youngsters and members of *Garinim*.² Approximately one quarter of this number are members of *Garinim* who intend to settle on Yahel and Yahel B³; they are currently at various stages of the Nachal army track. Another third are in our largest group, in Haifa, and the remainder are members of the smaller groups in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Beersheva, the Ben Shemen Youth Village and the Eshel Hanassi Agricultural School.

It was three and a half years ago that Rabbi Tovia Ben Horin, the rabbi of Telem Noar, proposed that all the groups and *Garinim* should be combined in a single movement. The author of this article was recruited from the Ichud kibbutz movement to assist in this task, and to attempt to establish a “real” youth movement beginning from the junior sections. This process include experimental activities in various directions.

Over the past year, our main efforts have been devoted to creating a sense of being a movement and a sense of togetherness without which no real youth movement can function. This was the goal behind the five-day movement-wide camp held on Kibbutz Yahel in the spring — an event we intend to repeat at Hanukkah. In the fall, we held several national conclaves. The summer camp at Kfar Silver also contributed to this goal, particularly for the younger section. Most important of all, we introduced regular educational leadership meetings every two weeks, and we can now note that the movement has a national team of youth leaders.

The youth movement as an autonomous community

It is not enough just to create awareness of our being a movement. We also need to develop a tradition of responsibility on the part of members of the movement for directing work and setting policy. This clearly implies that Telem Noar must be an independent youth movement.

We held two educational councils this year, each attended by approximately

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1. *Tlamim* (Newsletter of the IMPJ), Kislev 5741, December 1980 (translated from Hebrew).
 2. Settlement groups of men and women within the “Nachal” Army framework where periods of military service alternate with living and working as a group, generally on a kibbutz.
 3. Yahel B — the future Kibbutz Lotan.

forty members, representatives of local groups and youth leaders. We may note with satisfaction that a democratic process is emerging at the educational councils for determining the "Halacha" of Telem Noar, at least as far as national events are concerned. This also underscores the responsibility taken on by the youth leaders and the young members. To some extent, a youth movement functions as an independent community. Thus the youth movement could be seen today as an additional community within the IMPJ framework.

We hope that the different activities and experiments in the Telem Noar community will serve to train the future leadership of the IMPJ on the national level, in the congregations in the cities and in the kibbutzim. Perhaps we will even manage to develop additional social models through which Progressive Judaism may be experienced.