VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE IN PALESTINE

By DR. E. ARNSTEIN

Director, Vocational Guidance Office, Louis D. Brandeis Vocational Training Center, Palestine

1. A Review

We can trace the first signs of Vocational Guidance in Palestine back for almost 20 years. In 1926 a "Psychotechnical Society" was founded in Haifa. The society outlined a program of research and guidance for examining the immigrants and the Palestinian youth. The work in Haifa has continued. In 1936 the "Society for Educational and Vocational Guidance in Haifa" was founded, and a regular guidance service began. More than 1400 pupils and working youths were tested and advised on their educational and vocational career.

Meanwhile the "Society for Biotypology" in Tel-Aviv opened a Vocational Guidance Clinic under the management of Mr. L. Malinovsky. This clinic was later taken over by the Municipality, and developed an extensive and useful activity. Between 1939 and 1944 not less than 4,000 cases, most of them elementary school graduates, were advised.

In Jerusalem a Vocational Guidance Bureau was founded by the Working Youth Organization (Noar Oved), with Mrs. G. Oestreicher at the head. It should be pointed out here that the Noar Oved has always realized the value of systematic vocational guidance for their members. About 2,500 cases received guidance in this bureau since its foundation.

2. The Brandeis Vocational Center

In 1944 the Louis D. Brandeis Vocational Training Center, founded by Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organization of America, decided to extend its activities in Palestine to the field of Vocational Guidance. A central office in Jerusalem and a branch in Haifa were established under one management. The Brandeis Vocational Center is desirous in building up Vocational Guidance on a scientific basis, and in cooperating with all public bodies interested in this sphere.

During 1944-45 the main aim of Vocational Guidance activities of the Center was to advise elementary school graduates in Jerusalem and Haifa. More than 700 pupils were examined and advised. Second to this came the entrance examinations of nearly 300 candidates for various vocational schools in Palestine. This figure includes candidates for the Hadassah School of Nursing, the Kadoorie Agricultural School, the Alice Seligsberg Secondary Trade School for Girls, the Haifa Vocational School of the Technion, etc.

In addition to this, research work in elementary and secondary schools was carried out, particularly to establish norms for intelligence and achievement tests.

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3. Cooperation

The following are represented on the Advisory Committee of the Vocational Guidance Office of the Brandeis Vocational Training Center: The Hebrew University, the Education Department of the General Council (Vaad Leumi), the Child and Youth Welfare Organization and the Labor Federation (Histadrut). Negotiations have been opened to add also representatives of the Tel-Aviv Municipality. As from the beginning of the activity year 1945-46, the Vocational Guidance Office of the Noar Oved in Jerusalem was incorporated in the Brandeis Vocational Center Bureau, and a similar plan is to be established in Haifa. Close cooperation with the Tel-Aviv Vocational Guidance Office is also hoped for in the very near future.

When these projects will have taken a concrete form, which is most likely they will, the Vocational Guidance service in Palestine will have attained a high scientific and public value.

4. Future Aspects

In order to achieve a sound development of Vocational Guidance in Palestine, activities in various directions are very urgently needed.

We have to work out reliable testing material to measure the intelligence level and various special aptitudes of our youth. In standardizing these tests, it is necessary to consider the great social and ethnical differences existing in the Yishuv.

A not less important factor in the guidance work is the assessment of personality traits and vocational interests of our youth. In this respect the full understanding and cooperation on part of the teachers and parents has to be gained.

Another difficulty is to ascertain the fluctuating occupational trends of a country in the process of upbuilding. Vocational Guidance is to be considered not only as an educational factor, but also as an economic one.

A systematic follow-up of all the youths advised by our Vocational Guidance is essential, and this will help to develop norms for the examination of adults.

These are some of the lines of activity envisaged for the next few years; all we require to materialize these plans is a sufficient number of people suitable to undertake this work.