

JEWS AND COLLEGE FRATERNITIES

JEW S ARE BARRED FROM JOINING desirable fraternities and kept segregated from social contacts worth while, complains "A Seeker for Justice" in a recent letter to *The Yale News*. After stating that Jews are excluded from fraternities at the college proper, and at Sheffield, he deplores that they are forced into organizing their own groups and associating exclusively with members of their own race. Then he exclaims feverishly:

"You Anglo-Saxons are too drunk with power to realize that the Jews are a superior people. They were highly civilized when your ancestors were still semi-barbarians. The Jews have contributed materially to civilization. Such names as Heine, Einstein, Spinoza—yes, and Christ, too—illustrate what the Jews have given to the fields of literature, science, philosophy, and religion.

"You are proud of your democracy, aren't you? Well, the American Revolution was financed by Jews. It would be fitting to give them a little of the equality of opportunity for which the democracy of America—and therefore Yale as an American institution—is supposed to stand."

While all this must have relieved the overcharged soul of "A Seeker for Justice," comments *The American Hebrew* (New York), "it put him and our coreligionists at the New Haven institution in an unenviable light."

"In the first place, the facts do not jibe with his accusations, as the editor of *The Yale News* dispassionately points out. In the second place, even if they did, what is gained by setting up a howl for social recognition? No one wishes to pick his boon companions at the wailing wall, and no one ever will tap into a desired fraternity the too-facile vocalizer of his sorrows and his self-pity. Ululation and initiation do not go together.

"As to the facts. 'If the writer of the above communication,' comments the editor, 'will scan the past records of junior fraternities, he will find Jews listed in several memberships. . . . The writer forgets that many Anglo-Saxons in Yale are not members of fraternities, and that social adaptability is more or less of a prerequisite, regardless of racial extraction. This is true not of Jews alone, but of all races whose members were and are members of Yale junior fraternities. It is well to remember that one is first a Yale man and, secondly, a member of a certain race. The converse does not hold here.'"

It is possible to verify *The Yale News* editor's rebuttal of the complainant's accusation, says *The American Hebrew*, which, with a note of sharpness, goes on to recite that what seems to be the truth is this:

"A very limited number of Jews have been admitted to junior fraternities purely on the basis of personal merit. Their racial and religious connections were not a bar. They were judged by the exacting court of their contemporaries and peers to be socially desirable Yale men. They made the grade and, we hope, lived happily ever after.

"Undoubtedly, too, reading between the lines, it has been difficult, almost impossible, for a Jew to gain the precious fraternity memberships reserved mainly, as 'A Seeker for Justice' claims, for Anglo-Saxons. What of it? The highest type of Yale man, measured by open-mindedness and nobility of character as well as by a passion for the truth and general cultural breadth, will hardly fail to recognize a kindred spirit, whoever and wherever he may be.

"No Jew need beat pudgy, unavailing fists at a locked door. And the open sesame is surely not a grandiloquent mouthing of racial superiority which every one not emotionally concerned properly translates into just 'Ouch!'

"Pride and common sense should have prevented 'A Seeker for Justice' from rushing into print with his undignified complaint. We feel certain that now it sounds as puerile to him as it does to us. A true son of the Maccabees does not indulge in self-pitying squawks.

"Generally speaking, the habit that some of us have lapsed into of shouting 'Anti-Semitism' when we have been personally hurt does us little credit. There are marauders against whom we must be warned. *The American Hebrew* takes full cognizance of this, as our news items and our editorial columns have shown again and again. But we do not believe in shouting 'Wolf! Wolf!' when we see a raccoon coat."