

CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

971.004924
C35
v.41
1988

FOUNDED BY SAUL HAYES, O.C., Q.C., LL.D., F.R.S.A.
FIRST EDITOR LOUIS ROSENBERG, F.R. Econ.S., F.S.S.

Nous nous souvenons

NEW SERIES 41

Forgetfulness leads to Holocaust;
Remembering is the root of redemption.
(*Baal Shem Tov*)

THE FIRST JEWISH LITERARY SCHOOL

Compiled by
DAVID ROME

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, CANADA

1988

ISSN 0576-5528



Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec

CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

FOUNDED BY SAUL HAYES, O.C., Q.C., LL.D., F.R.S.A.
FIRST EDITOR LOUIS ROSENBERG, F.R. Econ.S., F.S.S.

Nous nous souvenons

NEW SERIES 41

Forgetfulness leads to Holocaust;
Remembering is the root of redemption.
(*Baal Shem Tov*)

THE FIRST JEWISH LITERARY SCHOOL

Compiled by
DAVID ROME

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, CANADA

1988

D8805077

ISSN 0576-5528

CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES - Serial Publication

Founded by Saul Hayes, O.C., Q.C., LLD, F.R.S.A. (1904-1980)

Original series, edited by Louis Rosenberg, F.R. Econ. S., F.S.S.,
numbers 1-6, 1955-1962

New Series, edited by David Rome, M.A., Ordre nationale de
Québec, numbers 1- , 1974-

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS (Founded 1919)
1590 Avenue Docteur Penfield
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 1C5 (514-931-7531)

National President
National Executive Director
Executive Vice-President
National Archives Chairman
Director National Archives
Historian
Editorial Assistant
Research Assistant for this issue

Dorothy Reitman
Jack Silverstone
Alan Rose, C.M.
Professor Irving Abella
Judith Nefsky
David Rome
Lily Kaplin
Eiran Harris

FC
106
J8C35
v.41
1988

CONTENTS

The First of Many Migrants	Page 1
The Silent Years	9
Their Culture	12
Founding Zionism	16
The Montreal School	20
Visitors	34
The Canadian Sholom Aleichem Tradition	46
Wolofsky's First Editors	51
Abraham Aaron Roback	60
The Son of an Immigrant Family	66
"The Jewish Achievement"	73
In the Quebec Countryside	76
The Steinhouse In-Laws	78
Crisis in Beauport	82
The <u>Adler</u>	86
A Debate on the Campus	96
The Future of Jewish Montreal	106
Goodbye Montreal	109
High Priest of Yiddish	115
Roback's Peretz	127
Remembered	133

The first of these is the
fact that the
the first of these is the
fact that the
the first of these is the
fact that the

The second of these is the
fact that the
the second of these is the
fact that the
the second of these is the
fact that the

The third of these is the
fact that the
the third of these is the
fact that the
the third of these is the
fact that the

THE FIRST OF MANY MIGRANTS

Not for centuries had world Jewry experienced flight from horror as in 1882. (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 39) The brutalities of those months were reechoed beyond the frontiers as reports spread far. But even more concretely they launched a tremendous wave of desperate men with no destination probably without precedent since the horrors of 1648.

Western Europe was experiencing a foretaste of the vast history of the next seventy years. Without an awareness of those events later generations can have no understanding of subsequent time. For the end of the nineteenth century witnessed a complex series of new challenges, in the West as in the East, which demanded profound disentangling of philosophies, of social objectives and of Jewish relationships in Western Europe and led eventually to the present and to our future.

Such an examination can clarify the beginnings of Montreal Judaism, the settling of the continent with Ashkenazi, the new future of the Argentine, of Jewish farming in Western Canada, and of Israel.

The major powerful actors in this world-wide saga had their homes in France, Britain, in the Canadian capitals, but in the long run the effective actors were the anonymous masses of sufferers who reached decisions on their own about their fates and slowly convinced the eminences of western Judaism. It was they who decided on the urbanization of their settlement rather than their agricultural settlement, upon the forms of their religious life, upon the language of their culture and their ideologies.

For a variety of ideological reasons farming was seen as the relevant and decisive process. Countries such as Russia, Hungary, United States, Canada and Argentina saw Jewish farm settlement as the answer to the Jewish problem and as the Jewish contribution to their nation's development. Baron de Hirsch agreed. But in the event not a hundred families were settled on Canadian soil -- in Mosoomin, Wapella and Lipton -- during the first two decades of this migration, 1882-1905 the newcomers concentrated on the urban settlements of their choice, on the occupations of their choice in the ghetto quarters of the cities. It was the cities which they created that became the home of all Canadian Jews and the nest of a remarkable and particular Jewish society. The observer of today can himself measure to what extent Canada is the heir of the Western European Jews who welcomed the eastern migrants to the warmth and generosity of freedoms or whether it is the continuation of Eastern Europe with the traditions and philosophies they had been nurturing for a century in the East.

We need to glance superficially at the few Jews in the Canadian large cities at the moment of the arrival of the numerous immigrants after 1882: The gross Canadian statistics of Jewish population tell of growth: only 1330 Jews lived in Canada in 1871, before the beginning of mass migration. This was the core of the Jewish group built up in Canada since 1760 originally of English origin, some of them Americans and some few of German origin, since before 1837. Roughly this has been the history of Jewish population distribution throughout Western Europe, England, the United States, Latin America, Australia, etc., small settlements of anglicized Jews, with western acculturated traditions, synagogues marked by decorum, none of the features of Yiddish culture -- until the migration of the 1880's which swept all these early Jewish settlements out of their established majoritaire condition.

In Montreal there was some minor confusion as to whether by 1871 these German or "Dutch" were westernized or Yiddish in their culture; hence the questions about cultural character of the 1846-founded congregation of Polish, German and English Jews, later renamed the Shaar Hashomayim Congregation.

In any case the majority of the 1330 Jews in Canada by 1871 were anglicized and Canadian even though there was a certain Yiddish cultural relict among them. Hence the ensuing cultural assimilationist conflict in the decades to come. (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 37)

Largely as a result of this immigration the Jewish population had grown to 2,500 in 1882; 6500 in 1891; 16,400 in 1901, and 76,000 in 1911. The corresponding figures for Montreal in 1891 were 2500; 1901, 7000; and 1911, 28,800.

In the 1890's Winnipeg's Jewish population ran as high as 40% of Toronto's Jewish population and 30% of Montreal's Jewish population. The prairie city Jews numbered 2.6% of the total population; while Jews counted less than 1% of the Montreal population and Toronto Jews were only .6% of the city's population.

Only in 1911 did Toronto and Montreal Jews attain the 6% proportion of Jews in their total population.

On the philanthropic level an understanding of the efforts of Canadian Jews -- and of other charitable Canadians -- to share the human crisis that surfaced at the time calls for a deep understanding of the philanthropists of the period and their social and biographical background. It challenges the imagination of the reader of this history in spite of its petty figures and of its vast changes.

The decade 1870-1880 saw a doubling of Montreal's Jewish population from 400 to 810.

The percentage of Jews in the population of the city remained virtually the same, .3% and .4% in 1851-1871; and .6% in 1881.

But between 1881 and 1890 it nearly tripled to 2,500 and doubled in proportion of the entire population to 1.1%.

The flood mounted. The reception of new Canadians was on so large a scale that the Montreal society needed to rent three warehouses on St. Peter St. for dormitories in 1880.

Within the year or two the 20-year-old Montreal society found itself totally overwhelmed. Fortunately the London Mansion House, with the possible encouragement of the Anglo-Jewish Association which by now had a Canadian committee, came forward with a contribution of £500, a sum which equalled a year's relief expenditure during that half decade.

By 1881 the Russian arrivals in Hamilton had emptied the resources of its 10-year-old Deborah Association.

The figures for Toronto are parallel, tripling between 1851 and 1871 to 150, to .3% of the population, and tripling again in 1881 to 550 of the population, to .6% and tripling again to 1425 in 1891.

In the early 1880's Toronto, through its branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association, rivalled Montreal in immigrant aid initiative. Its Ladies Montefiore Benevolent Society pioneered in 1878, later in cooperation with the Dorcas Society and its sewing school. Before the end of the century the Austrian Ladies Aid Society, the Polish Ladies Aid Society, the Ezras Nashim Society and the National Council of Jewish Women (1897) were active. Several of these were among the first societies formed by the immigrants. Before the end of the century, Ottawa had its Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society (1898), all of them largely dedicated to immigrant aid work.

The Montreal Jewish Benevolent Society founded some twenty years before the large migration wave, found the burden of refugee reception quite burdensome. Groups of 25-50 immigrants were arriving at one time. Emergency shelters were found necessary. In 1883 the relief budget was \$1500. But the figures do not indicate the considerable proportion of transients, especially to the United States.

Social committee work in the 1880's consisted of selecting immigrant families who were accorded fare to New York, or to Plattsburg, or Toronto, or Chicago.

The case records of the decade indicate that most of the immigrant applicants for aid were Roumanian, with a few Russians among them.

By 1844 the immigrant society was beginning to organize, in structures to cooperate with the philanthropic agency and, on other occasions to meet the various needs of their own groups. Eventually this became a vast and important network comparable to the non-Jewish social organization of the ambient society.

In 1882 the Gazette wrote of a new synagogue established by the newly arrived.

Not surprisingly the first of these immigrant institutions seems to have been the Beth David Congregation assembled in 1884, now a constituent of the Bailey St. Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem Synagogue.

The founding of this synagogue passed uneventfully; indeed, in the course of time, the congregation acquired the structure which the corporatation of Spanish and Portuguese Jews had built in 1838.

But when another immigrant group, the Bnai Jacob, decided to organize a congregation, in 1886, they met with remarkably concerted opposition from the three chartered synagogues -- the Spanish, the Congregation of English, German and Polish Jews and the Reform Temple Emanuel -- who claimed that the law of 1829 limited the organization of additional synagogues. It required the wisdom of Catholic Justice Samuel Pagnuelo to remove this block and to permit the growth of Quebec Jewish religious life.

It was already clear that the class of migrants and the historic conditions about the movement called for more than simple handouts. Rehabilitatory assistance of the twentieth century was required. In 1883 the committee instituted "a system of loans owing to the influx of the Russian refugees who have taken up residence in this city, in sums varying from \$10 to \$30 each, security to the satisfaction of the board being obtained in each case, and the applicant undertaking to repay the same in weekly sums. Returns have been promptly made. The society's attention can be wholly turned to the relief of the local and transient poor." (Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society Annual Report, 1884)

Remarkable testimony from an immigrant of this date portrays the religious state of the community, in Hamelitz of 1884 from the pen of Joseph Elijah Bernstein who took pride in calling himself "Man of Poland." Documentation in terms of accuracy is limited, but the freshness and balance of the report are unquestioned:

"The number has been increased by some 400 families exiled from Russia, and many of our brethren who are coming here from other countries; their number at this time is rising to some 1,000 families. Generally speaking, our brethren are scattered throughout the country and many of them have travelled to Manitoba, an area of the New Land which is only now being settled. The Jewish communities throughout the country do not number more than those who reside in the largest city of the country, the city of Montreal, on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, whose population runs to some 150,000, among them 500 Israelite families. In this city, there has been established Jewish synagogues, charity organizations, social centres, cantors and preachers, shochtim, mohalim. There are three

synagogues, corresponding to the communities which differ in their customs and their rites."

The annual meeting of the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society of 1886 heard some statistics about the cases they assisted at a cost of \$570. Of the 142 from Eastern Europe, 87 were Russian, whatever that means; 40 were Roumanian, whatever that means; and 15 were Austrian, whatever that means. There were 2.5 members in each Russian family, 2 in Roumanian families and 1.4 in Austrian families.

The following year of the 51 such cases, 39 were Russian, 3 Austrian, 6 Poles (!) and 1 German.

In 1888, out of 62 relief cases with which the institute dealt, 39 were Russian.

The Montreal Roumanians were stranded at Dalton, Ont. in July, 1886.

Five workmen on the CPR line found themselves stranded and petitioned for relief, which was refused them.

One Jewish workingman was killed out of the city. For technical reasons it was not possible to bring the body for burial.

Fifty-three Roumanian Jews arrived in October. Plans were put in effect to send them to Albany, N.Y.

The Russian Society appealed to the Benevolent Society for assistance in the burial of Mr. Mutznitz. A hearse and carriage were provided.

The 1887-88 annual report of the Hebrew Benevolent Society indicated 39 Russian applicants for relief and 55 foreign applicants; the others included 3 Austrians, 6 Poles and 2 Roumanians.

In 1889, some 100 such immigrants drew upon the aid of the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society: 57 Russians, 15 Austrians, 7 Poles and 17 Roumanians.

In 1889, in the same sense, 57 Russians were among its 132 relief cases. Each year the program cost some \$600.

The following year the cost of relieving 87 non-local cases (300 persons), a third of them Russian, mounted to some \$750.

There was much dissatisfaction and even unhappiness in the relief program. Many of the arrivals were suffering from poor health; others could not find work. They asked the society for employment or else for transportation to New York, to other American points, or back to England.

An analysis of the 1886-90 half decade record of the 690 Benevolent Society relief cases aided shows that 400 of them were Russian, 105 were Roumanian, 107 Austrian, 13 German and 14 were Polish.

Early important communal activity by the newcomers began to appear. In 1887 Alexander Harkavi attempted to organize a Zionist organization in Canada.

In 1898 the Zionist Society of Canada was founded in Montreal.

In 1890, 260 immigrants were assisted: 155 Russians, 73 Austrians, 23 Roumanians and 9 Germans.

Again the Montreal society requested the Mansion House Committee and the Board of Guardians in London to send to Canada only "the proper sort of emigrants to Canada," not peddlers.

Immigration figures for 1900-1 analysed by J. Kage indicate 3376 arrivals in Canada for the year; but this too fails to record the departure across the porous frontier. (With Faith and Thanksgiving, Montreal. 259 p.)

The very statistics of Canadian, and other Jewish migrations and the quality of the institutional welcome by the small settlements in the western world reflected the profound significance of the movement.

The first decade (1901-1911) saw a nearly five-fold increase in Canada's Jewish population, from 16,000 to 74,000. Of this increase Montreal was four-fold (7,000 to 29,000); Toronto nearly six-fold (3,100 to 18,000), and Winnipeg eight-fold (1,000 to 9,000).

The 1911-1921 Canadian increase was two thirds (74,000 to 125,000). Of this increase Montreal enjoyed a third (29,000 to 48,000) and Winnipeg 60%.

Half a century later editor S. Mark Selchen of the Winnipeg Israelite Press was crossing the St. James railway bridge over the Assiniboine with a friend who recalled, "We built this bridge in 1905. We accepted any job -- bridges, sewers, railways --, not as engineers but as labourers; not pampering our fine hands which had never handled shovels in our earlier days.

"We were paid from \$7 to \$12 a week, not a day, and we saved to pay for steamship tickets to bring our families over from Russia.

The record year of immigration, from Russia, of 1890 was not surpassed until the next peak of immigration from Roumania in 1900 and the far greater wave in 1905, as a result of the "lamentable war between Russia and Japan when, as the Baron de Hirsch Institute reported, "Men in the prime of life, with wives and families depending upon them for their livelihood, were apprehensive of being called upon to fight and perhaps to sacrifice their lives for a cause in which

they had no sympathy. They therefore determined to seek a new home in a country where freedom and liberty are accorded to all who desire to become law-abiding citizens." (42nd Annual Report of Baron de Hirsch Institute, 1905)

Looking back five years later upon 1900 the head of the Montreal philanthropy noted that "more than 90% of the 2019 Roumanian immigrants who arrived in Montreal that year are now placed in positions where they can support their wives and families who have since joined them. Only a few -- and these for the most part widows who came with a family of young children -- have now to apply for assistance; and the day is not far distant when the children will be able to support their mothers.

"During the past year (1904) a Roumanian synagogue has been built in the city which is an ornament and a credit to those who have been in our country for comparatively so short a time."

The immigrants were almost all Russian and Roumanian; young (25-30), with families.

The immigration figures dived for a year (1244 in 1901-2) and mounted again (2534 in 1902-3 and 4578 in 1903-4) steeply, doubling to 9578 in 1904-5).

In sheer numbers the Institute was overwhelmed. 1600 cases involving 5300 persons; 1000 of them Russian, 400 Roumanian, 150 Austrian. Six hundred had arrived that year, but even more had been in the country for more than a year and still needed relief. Three hundred of the cases were persons at work, but were not earning their livelihood.

The statistical survey provided by Dr. Kage shows that the 1905 admission of 9,400 in Canada was double that of 1904 and was maintained, and even surpassed, for all but three years, until the First World War shut off communication for a decade.

The 1905 essay at revolution in Russia was sending a new type of migrant, now radicalized, socially sophisticated, articulate, possessing his own understanding of America and of Canada. Upon coming here he was a man with a voice.

The migration from Russia at this time was impelled by political and cultural events in the land of their birth. It included many who were politically more aware than was the total Jewish population of the Jewish heartland a generation earlier. By this time more educational and ideological institutions had shaped more members of the community and had even prepared them psychologically for migration. A remarkably large number were to be found in the cultural and institutional record of the immigrant society. They can be pointed out almost at random from the thousands who came in this flood. The Baron de Hirsch Institute reported at this stage that the immigrants

were of good human quality, lacking only the language of the country.

The Gazette described them in 1905 as the finest body of men that have come from Europe this season.

By this random choice we can focus on Elchanan Hanson (1888-1950) who landed at Calgary in 1906, worked on the CPR rail gang at the Field Tunnel, homesteaded at Cochrane, was a dairy farmer at Clover Bar and a carpenter and builder at Edmonton, trading with the far Canadian north. An activist for Zionism and for Jewish education, for unionism and later for the CCF, he was a gifted writer. His short stories based on northern Canadian life are an invaluable social and paedagogic document in the polyglot literature of Canada; they constitute one immigrant's "thank you Canada, for saving my life" and for its gift hospitality. (Yiddish title, Trader Ed, with introduction by S. Mark Selchen, editor of the Israelite Press, from the publishing house of this newspaper, 1957. 108 p.)

The case of A.J. Cherniack (1885-1972) is more than representative. Passing through Montreal en route to his destination in Winnipeg he had received the treatment often accorded to immigrants those days.

A few years later, now an accredited and successful lawyer and founder of the Jewish educational system in Western Canada, he stopped off in Montreal to recall his plight at the Baron de Hirsch Institute.

Leib Zuker, who soon founded of the Paole Zion in Canada, would not tolerate the attacks on Jews in the streets of Montreal and led young Jews to beat off the Christian ruffians.

The appearance of the Adler was a symptom and a causative factor.

THE SILENT YEARS

The movement being so spontaneous and unorganized from its earliest stage, it is difficult to establish a typology. The reader of this history is faced with the arithmetical summation of biographies of persons having but little in common:

They all varied culturally, rooted as they were in the Jewish civilization and in their period and in their space. Their first language is Yiddish; their education is largely drawn from one distinct source; they are conscious of their background and basically loyal to it in a variety of modes.

Beyond that comes personal biography which interests us and challenges us.

The Jewish civilization, traditional of Eastern Europe, unlike its spacial western Jewish neighbours, and unlike its temporal predecessors in time in Spain and in Arabia at the time of the Gaonic sages, was not given to emotive literature as a form of creativity. When belles lettres battered their way into this world as an "external" revolutionary force, their emotional life became that of the revolutionaries; not necessarily the lives of the persons they altered. In the ancient pre-Haskalah world the legacy of Hassidism -- notably of Reb Nachman of Braslav -- romantic as it was essentially before the term, we find the most powerful and personal emotion recorded.

The particular nature of Jewish oral religious teaching depended more on the semantics of reading the Siddur and even elementary Biblical and other studies, upon the teaching methods of the Maggidim, the complexity of gestural and body language, the exactitude and refinement of the rebbes' heritage and upon the architecture of Pilpul conveyed to all levels of Jewish society -- even the least educated -- all a sophistication of "oral" communication not very distant from the written. "They listened with their 'noses,' those Wolofsky early "shmekers." His own pseudonymous writings are particularly difficult to read without following his style which called upon more than his five senses.

Hence the paucity of contemporary emotive documentation of this early Canadian Jewish history.

The materials of recollection are particularly untrustworthy being not only ex post facto but also because they date from a period when the attitudes and the intentions of the person remembering has altered.

The expressive and recording processes were therefore hampered by many situational circumstances and by other forces which were intellectual products of will.

The final years of the first decade were remarkable not only quantitatively but by its very character. Clearly the massacres and the revolutions of those years marked them as distinctive. The Jewish reaction to these events, the activism, even the Jewish vocabulary in the face of God were proof that history was producing fruit to seeds that had been gestating for a century.

In this remarkable intensely populist movement the less literate carried the intellectuals with them in the sweeping tide, which was borne by historic developments.

"The ideologists and the journalists of the time in Europe paid relatively little attention to the migration. Their minds were on anti-Semitism, politics, Zionism, socialism, revolution or on the continuation of the traditional way of life.

"One cause of this condition was geographic. Generally the migrants came from the seething centres of community life in the large and growing cities. The migration was of limited ideological concern to the thinkers of the period; it was fed by the hopes and by the rumours that reached it from great distances. It did not need ideological endorsements.

"In the final analysis there was also a class element in the situation. They did not come from the middle class or from the intelligentsia which was articulate, that wrote and stormed. From their own perspective they reveal a total lack of understanding of the migration, except for a small group of Socialist-territorialists. The migrants were of the anonymous mass, the poor, the very people whom the ideologists wanted to help. Migration received attention only at times of crisis; at such moments as the riots of 1881-82, or when Baron de Hirsch revealed his Argentine program, or during the Rumanian 'Foosgeyer' drama.

"Nor did the traditional rabbinical authorities consider it their duty to lead in the secular affairs of Jewish society," the English historian of this Jewish migration A. Gartner wrote.

The archival tradition of this world creates further difficulties. The family traditions there, again unlike their coreligionists to the west, did not develop a custom of family or organizational collections of documentation; not to speak of the social instability which tended to destroy what existed there. Cataclysms of records -- the very term holocaust -- in Europe precluded the survival of any documents that may have been collected in families which were distinguished by their inherited traditions, and any correspondence they have received from their kin emigrated to Canada.

The other destruction occurred in the New World where the children's attitude to the world of their parents was not conducive to the preservation of papers reflective of the period before their own or of any time or space other than their own future.

The special character of the migration during these early years can be measured in decibels. Before 1900 Canadian Jewry was silent in its Yiddish and Hebrew. It seems that by a common understanding the immigrant society adopted a vow of written silence.

Nor are we referring only to those who had arrived in Canada after 1881. Many residents who had come before 1881 were Yiddish speaking; they included prominent, articulate, concerned citizens. Nevertheless, all the Yiddish residents of Canada were initially mute, dumb for a quarter of a century. Not only was there no Yiddish press, no books, no poems, no sermons, no leaflets, few personal letters, diaries, genealogies, minute books, songs. This long Yiddish silence reigned in the universe of learning, literacy, refined semantics.

"The Shaar Hashomayim Congregation in 1886 was seeking a printery in the city which would produce a brief ritual in English and Yiddish, but it had to resort to the Yiddishe Gazetten of New York," Israel Rabinovitch noted.

THEIR CULTURE

Rabinovitch wrote that the first Yiddish language printing in Canada appeared in 1887 from the pen of Alexander Harkavi (1865-1937) -- in Latin letter type. (1932 Jubilee Issue of the Adler; repeated in his article on "Yiddish Literature and Yiddish Literary Activities in Canada," in the Adler of October 1959, P.9)

The occasion was a federal election when one of the candidates, not Jewish, felt it useful to circulate a piece of campaign literature "to the Jewish immigrants who had already surpassed in number the earlier Jewish settlers. The political candidate felt that he would be best understood by these new Canadians in their own language. They even sought means of establishing a Jewish printery, but this did not prove practical at the time.

"The famous Yiddish lexicographer Alexander Harkavi who then resided in Montreal advised the ambitious politicians that a leaflet could be issued in Yiddish which he could transliterate in English letters. They followed his advice, and thus was born the first Yiddish imprint in the country.

"By the time of the 1896 elections Montreal possessed the Jewish printery of A.L. Kaplansky. During that campaign year he had printed an election leaflet in the 'square letters' of the Hebrew alphabet."

In the Hebrew school of the Shaar Hashomayim Congregation, in 1887-90, Alexander Harkavi was toiling on the foundations of the not inconsiderable Canadian Hebraica heritage even as he was teaching in their synagogue school. At the time he reported on Montreal in the Warsaw Hatzefirah in the Petersburg Hamelitz and in the Hamagid in Goldfaden's Yiddishe Illustrierte Zeitung -- even as he experimented in engraving on stone and sought to mobilize pioneers for the Zionist vision.

Upon his departure from Montreal for Paris, Harkavi was succeeded in the Shaar Hashomayim School by his friend David Moses Hermalin (1865-1921) who also continued to report in 1898-99 on the Canadian community, in New York periodicals before he turned his attention to translation of European plays and other literature to Yiddish. (C.H. Fox. Hundert Yahr Yiddishe un Hebraeische Literatur in Canada. 1980)

We are fortunate to have the informed comments on the linguistic condition of the time in the memoirs of A.A. Roback.

Curiously, as an important exception, the first Canadian book in Yiddish from the immigrant society soon appeared, representative of

the culture lived by these immigrants. It was a small Hebrew Calendar for the Year 5655 (1895) commissioned by the famous James A. Ogilvy and Sons store, then located on St. Antoine and Mountain Streets, "the most extensive centre of peddlers' supplies in Canada," produced by Montreal printer A.L. Kaplansky (1861-1941) who sought to serve the communal, personal and commercial needs of the group. (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 36, Pp. 25-26, 50)

Kaplansky describes his first shop at 1897 Notre Dame opposite the Belmont Hotel: "Jewish, German, English and French job and book printing; all printing for lodges, societies and associations, as well as business cards, bill heads, statements, letterheads, envelopes, receipt books, programs, order of the dance, invitations to engagements and weddings, visiting cards and various works of art with pictures as well as photographs, rapidly supplied and calculated at the lowest prices."

At one time he printed The Jewish Times for S.W. Jacobs and Lyon Cohen.

With the Yiddish calendar in 1894 he created a significant publication during the "silent" period, eight years before the appearance of the Adler and fifteen years before the Elimelech Levin Erziung Bei Yidn, Canadian Jewry's first Hebrew-Yiddish book, issued in 1910.

This calendar is a reminder that this Jewish institution is a complex development in astronomical science and incorporates much learning and many liturgical conclusions.

It is therefore worth close examination.

The body of the 20-page calendar includes 12 monthly Hebrew pages, October 1, 1894-September 18, 1895) with listing for each day, noting holy days, fast days in Hebrew and English, Sabbaths with Pentateuch readings. Thanksgiving Day, 'January, 1895, New Year,' Washington's birthday, Easter, Decoration Day, July 4 Independence Day and Christmas Day are noted in English as are the traditional holidays.

A page of "Chronicles" records that the Deluge occurred 3999 years earlier; our patriarchs arrived in Egypt 3318 years earlier. Moses our Teacher was born 3288 years earlier; the exodus, 3208 years ago; the arrival in the Holy Land 3168 years earlier; the first temple was built 3728 years ago; the exile of the ten tribes, 2452 years earlier... Columbus' discovery of America, 402 years earlier; Queen Victoria had been born 78 years earlier; she had been crowned 56 years ago; the Prince of Wales was 53 years old; the firm of James A. Ogilvy and Sons had been established 30 years ago, and the Jewish printing office, a year ago.

The monthly pages are set in somewhat tighter type, and they include American entries and no Canadian days of observance. Queen

Victoria's birthday is listed only on the Chronicles page, together with the date of the founding of Kaplansky's print shop.

We might be led to suspect that the twelve monthly pages might have been set outside Canada, for the larger American market, but in fact each of these pages has a line or two of text on the Montreal Ogilvy store.

A comparison with current American calendars might explain the available technical Hebrew calendar lore to the new Montreal Jewish printing house. Yet Cantor Kaplansky was himself an ignoramus in Hebraic lore.

It is not clear that the entire work was composed in Canada, or whether the calendar pages were also set in Canada.

Clearly the compilation and the very description of the calendar was not the work of a printer of business cards, letterheads and invoice forms or even of twelve months.

The calendar "marks the "5655th year since the creation of the universe and includes all festivals, new months and seasons of the 12th year in the 298 minor lunar cycle, and the 27th year in the major solar cycle of 290 years; and the 6th year in the Shemitah jubilee cycle as determined by the Gaonic sages, may their memories be a blessing, and according to the Men of Eretz Israel."

The four seasons of the year: the season Tishre began on Saturday, the sixth of the month, (Oct. 6) 3 PM; the season Tebet on the 9th of Tebet (Dec. 5), 11 PM; the season of Nissan on the first of Nissan (Apr. 7) at 6 AM; and the season of Tammuz (July 7) at 2 PM.

The prayers for Dew and for Rain begin on Kislev the sixth (Dec. 4).

"Ogilvy's is the most extensive centre of peddlers' supplies in Canada. Headquarters for cheap goods. You may send your orders in various languages: English, German, French, Russian, Yiddish, etc. Mail orders a specialty. Please keep the calendar in your pocket, so that you will not need to search for my address. If you wish anything from our list, come to the right place to get the best assortment at lowest prices: tablecloths, napkins, purses, razors, laces, lace curtains, men's and ladies' waterproofs, tweeds for coat and pants, toilets (toiletries), pillow shams, lace middies, etc."

Kaplansky served the Baron de Hirsch day school and its other activities in 1909 by printing programs and other reports. He utilized Hebrew type in his printing of the order of service at the gathering in memory of the Baroness de Hirsch on April 23, 1899.

Kaplansky attended the 1903 convention of the Federation of Zionist Organizations in Canada and was named to the convention committee.

The printer who began his Canadian life by issuing the first Jewish imprint in the century ended it, as the family tradition affirms, by another act of community service: during the early months of the Second World War by rescuing a Jewish refugee from the very jaws of the Nazis.

The refugee had been seized by Canadian immigration officers for illegal entry and was on a train for deportation to Europe. In utter despair, he jumped from the moving car and broke his ankles. He was picked up by charitable strangers and brought to a Jewish home. In this refuge someone remembered Kaplansky, then an early social worker for the Baron de Hirsch Institute. An appeal was made to the authorities which was allowed on compassionate grounds.

FOUNDING ZIONISM

In 1896 the Bnai Jacob, one of the new synagogues in the community, opened a chapter in Montreal Jewish history when they called 29-year-old Lithuanian-born Rabbi Aaron Mordecai Ashinsky from Detroit to lead them.

Born in Reigod in 1866, Rabbi Ashinsky had come to America at the age of 19 when he had received Smichah, and served in Syracuse for two years before coming to Detroit in 1889.

During his tenure there he studied medicine at the Detroit School of Medicine for several years until his health became threatened by exhaustion. Upon his departure for Canada the Detroit community attested his qualities as an intellectual, kind and sympathetic servant of the American community. (I.J. Katz in Detroit Jewish News, Apr. 22, 1949; Jewish Times, May 12, 1899)

His highly cultivated mode of teaching orthodoxy, his broad education, his founding of the Agudath Zion, his dedication to Jewish education won him immediate and unquestioning admiration from the entire community -- the old timers no less than the immigrants.

Before the coming of Rabbi Herman Abramowitz and long after the passing of Rev. Abraham de Sola, Rabbi Ashinsky was the outstanding rabbi in Montreal at the turn of the century. The columns of the Jewish Times were entirely open to the newcomer immigrant from Lithuania.

Rabbi Ashinsky's lectures to the Jewish communities outside Montreal probably initiated the important institution of personal contacts which, over the years, further advanced Jewish education and national unity at a period when coast-to-coast communication was much less extensive than it became during the century. These relationships later flowered in such national organizations as the Federation of Zionist Societies in Canada and the Canadian Jewish Congress. There is, therefore, considerable significance in his appearances in Toronto, Halifax, Kingston and in the west.

A paragraph in his Ottawa address at a Zionist meeting in June 1901 brings to life the profound interest in Israel in Canadian communities.

"So large was the audience that it was found necessary to have an address first delivered in English to those most familiar with that language, and after the withdrawal of the first audience a second address was delivered in Yiddish to a new audience, and at both addresses every available foot of room was occupied. The Rev. Mr. Ashinsky's addresses were, needless to say, in eloquent and powerful strain, and evoked great enthusiasm. Quite a number of Christian

sympathizers were present to listen to the address delivered in English, among others the manager of the Bank of Montreal at Ottawa, and also the manager of the Ottawa Bank." (Jewish Times, June 21, 1901)

Significantly, from his first days in Montreal as minister of a congregation that was not of the establishment, Rabbi Ashinsky enjoyed the respect of the publishers of the Jewish Times and of the society whose voice it was.

When his five-year term as rabbi came to an end in July 1901, he was reelected for another five-year period and the occasion was fêted at a banquet, (Jewish Times, July 5, 1901) but within a few months he accepted a pulpit in Pittsburgh.

Rabbi Ashinsky expressed his grave concern for the educational needs of the community in a letter to Kasriel Zvi Sarahson, publisher of the Yiddishe Gazetten of New York (June 21, 1901), in which he called on the rabbi in each community to donate all his energies and determination to Jewish schooling.

Israel Rabinovitch noted half a century later that it was within the walls of this Bnai Jacob Synagogue that Rabbi Ashinsky in 1896 revitalized the Talmud Torah in Shapiro's Minyan (in Mr. Shapiro's home) at 130 Cadieux St. and moved it to 401 (later 245) Lagauchetiere St. E.

In the fall of 1898 the Jewish Times announced "the public examinations of the pupils attending the Talmud Torah Hebrew Free School at the Cadieux Street Synagogue on Sunday, Sept. 18th at 7:30 p.m. This will be the second annual examination and distribution of prizes. The friends of Hebrew education are invited to be present and encourage the good work that is being done by this institution. The school is located at 401 Lagauchetiere street, where 125 boys are instructed daily in Hebrew and religion. It is entirely supported by voluntary contributions, and costs about \$1,500 a year to maintain. This school has been a gratifying success, due mainly to the exertions of its principal, Rabbi Ashinsky, and its honorary officers: Mr. Morris Denenberg, chairman; Mr. A.I. Cohen, secretary; Messrs. M. Glasier, M. Grudginsky, E. Phillips, M. Silverman, M. Rosenbloom, S.M. Glickman, and E. Cohen, members of the Board."

In 1901 S. Talpis reported that a school building was about to be built; \$1,000 had been raised for this purpose. (Gazetten, Mar. 15, 1901)

In 1898 the rabbi was among those who convened within the walls of his synagogue, the Zionist Organization of Canada. "All orthodox rabbis are Zionist." When the federation of Zionist organizations, the first national institution in the community were assembled the following year, he was a candidate for the presidency, but lost to

Clarence I. de Sola. (M.G. Brown, Jewish Foundations in Canada: the Jews, the French and the English to 1914. P. 320)

A realistic portrayal of a harsher truth about the position of Rabbi Ashinsky in Montreal comes from the Winnipeg correspondent of the Jewish Times, the Rev. Dr. Nachman Heller,

"Rev. Dr. Mardchi Ashinsky, a very learned man, one of the greatest scholars in Israel, here or abroad, an excellent speaker, a good orator in Hebrew, German and English, a preacher and a teacher, a most prominent Rabbi, capable of being the "Rabban shel kol B'ne-Hagola," is officiating as minister of a small congregation in Montreal, in whose interests he has got to work day and night, never having a chance to get his meals on time, never being able to go to sleep at the proper hour, for a salary that is not sufficient to cover his expenditures."

In keeping with the mobility of the orthodox rabbis of the time, Rabbi Ashinsky returned successively to Detroit and to Pittsburgh after a number of years. His name parallels those of Rabbi Simon Glazer and Rabbi Hirsch Cohen as important and creative religious leaders in the early community.

Rabbi Ashinsky was succeeded briefly at the Bnai Jacob Synagogue by Rabbi Solomon Beir Sprince who had studied at the Volozhin Yeshiva under Rabbi Joshua Leib Berlin. His ordination was endorsed by Rabbis Isaac Elhanan of Kovno, Samuel Wohliner and by the Beth Din of Vilno. He had served a congregation in Montmartre, Paris before arriving in Montreal in 1902. (M. Brown, P. 287)

But this was not the end of Rabbi Ashinsky's Canadian experience. In July 1906 he was reported to have returned to Montreal "as rabbi of a number of our city congregations who up to the present time have had no regular minister. He will not be Chief Rabbi of Montreal, as the secular press has erroneously stated, there being no such official. The congregations to which he will minister are of recent growth. Apart from them there are the old congregations -- Shaar Hashomayim with Rabbi Abramowitz at the head; Shearith Israel with Rabbi Meldola de Sola; Temple Emanu-El with Rabbi Kornfeld; Beth Israel and Beth David with Rabbi Hirsch Cohen," as the Jewish Times clarified on July 27, 1906.

But this return did not materialize, and Ashinsky did not come back to Montreal. He was invited briefly to Winnipeg to deal with the perpetual shechitah problems there. But it was the sad end of his Canadian experience.

While in Pittsburgh the rabbi had a narrow escape at the laying of the cornerstone for the Hungarian synagogue Shaare Zedek.

"Rabbi Ashinsky had delivered the opening prayer, and the Hon. A. Endlis, the master of ceremonies, had just introduced Rabbi Rudolph

I. Coffee to make a formal address. When Rabbi Coffee had begun the entire platform gave way, and about two hundred people were precipitated to the ground. After the people had been removed from their dangerous positions, it was found that but three persons were injured, and these only slightly. Rabbi Coffee continued his address from the middle of the street, and his stirring appeal for funds brought forth a large amount of money." (Jewish Times, May 17, 1907)

Rabbi Ashinsky spoke wistfully to Dr. A. Roback about the days after he left Montreal. Long after his departure he longed to return for he missed the scholars there, the men of heart and the piously-oriented who surrounded him. But he met opposition from a certain party, and he felt it from his first day; but he was unwilling to provoke dissension or unpleasantness in the community.

He recalled to the Harvard professor, equally nostalgic for Montreal, the farewell banquet for him sponsored by Bnai Jacob on December 3, 1901 which was also attended by many who were not of that congregation, adverting gently to the leadership of other immigrant synagogue groups.

Another articulate member of this immigrant society, Louis Gurofsky, emerges unexpectedly in the company of the youthful Torontonion William Lyon Mackenzie King, then researching labour conditions in Canada.

Gurofsky was an activist in the young Jewish labour movement early in the century; he made himself available to young King who was very grateful for the introduction to this remarkable workingmen's world, and a very warm relationship was established between the two men.

The young Jewish man continued his interest in Zionism, in the press and in other community affairs for many years, serving in the Jewish Legion in Palestine during the First World War. (Canadian Jewish Archives, nos. 12-13)

THE MONTREAL SCHOOL¹

Scattered through the cultural documentation of the age are vignettes of impressive but humble personages enjoying and disseminating the young fruit of the Jewish age.

A year after arriving in Montreal in 1902 H. Hershman set about to realize his program of distributing Yiddish books and periodicals among the new arrivals. He opened a Jewish bookstore which became a political and social centre and turned his upstairs dining room into a free library and reading room -- the precursor of the Jewish Public Library. (See I. Medres on Hershman's book store, Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 10, Pp. 107-8)

S. Gilletz, later noted construction entrepreneur, also remembered the days of Hershman's inspiring centre,

"Those who were not alien to labour ideals were scattered and would meet only at Hershman's on Main St. after a day's hard work, and dream the visions of the old home. We tried to unite the forces that were here. But the very freedom of this country, when it was so easy to convene people by mere handbills and to debate unionism and socialism, destroyed interest in this question among the very people who had conducted this work conspiratively. The very effort there had stimulated interest, and had evoked a new religion. The old father rose early each day for synagogue prayers, and his sons went at the same time to a secret meeting in the forest." ("Twenty-five years of Workmen's Circle in Montreal," in Branch 151 Souvenir Book, 1907-32. Pp.1-2)

A quarter of a century later H. Carin, one of the founders of the Workmen's Circle in Montreal, recalled those early days,

"Social and cultural life was poor. Only at Hershman's, on Main St. near St. Catherine St. could we meet someone of education. It was the only place for conversation and exchange of views. It was there that the idea of forming a group was born, in the event the Jewish Social Democratic Organization which met for discussion and self education in a rented double parlour on Cadieux St. We must have frightened the landlord for they soon drove the social revolutionaries out."

That was the beginning of the Workmen's Circle, in October 1906, as Branch 151. (Ibid., "Reminiscences." Pp. 19-21)

¹Text of paper presented at Jewish Public Library, January 14, 1988.

In the middle of the first decade of the century H. Wolofsky (1878-1949) discovered the literary riches within the immigrant community, riches which he could utilize to serve that community. He began to draw upon these remarkable resources which in effect became a cultural explosion.

The decade of the first school has a demographic reflection in Canada: a gross extension of the decennial census indicates that the Jewish population of Canada grew, during this period of extraordinary flourishing, at an unprecedented tempo (which was not later followed) from 45,000 in 1906 to 100,000 in 1915, when Brainin left Montreal, with a median Jewish population of 75,000 in 1911. Immigration figures for the period are about even, unusually high for 1912-14 and low for 1914-16.

For years new talent in Montreal daily created -- and Wolofsky published -- writings interesting to his new Canadian readers which were destined to have a rich literary continuity for decades after the authors' very names were forgotten.

B.G. Sack noted fifty years after the event that early in the century an educational Jewish group in the Maritimes decided to print its bylaws in Yiddish as well as in English, but could find no printer in Canada to do the job.

They resorted to a printery in New York. "Somewhere there must be a copy of this remarkable first Canadian Yiddish imprint which was however printed in the neighbouring United States." ("A Chapter on Yiddish in Canada," typescript in National Archives, Canadian Jewish Congress)

In reality the Adler was the first Canadian Jewish book printery. It is therefore natural that the Adler was the site of the issuance of the first Yiddish-Hebrew book in Canada, Erziung by Yidn (Education among Jews) 1910, from the pen of Moshe Elimelech Levin Ish Naomi (1863-1933).

The 128 page text includes a historical survey, "brilliant statements in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmudim, the Midrash Rabah and Tanchumi, the Yalkut and other documents on Jewish child education" as well as his lengthy program for the conduct of a kindergarten and eight classes -- an important historical document for the time," as C.L. Fox notes. The book is prefaced by a number of commendatory statements from such communal leaders as Reuben Brainin and Rabbis A.S. Isaacs and H. Cohen.

A native of Lithuania, Levin came to Canada in 1890. He taught at a modernized school in Ottawa until he was invited to Montreal in 1903 by the progressive pioneer Zionist Rabbi M. Ashinsky to head the Talmud Torah.

"It says much for the institution that its director took the initiative in compiling this work," wrote Sack long after.

The Yiddish press in Toronto and in Winnipeg introduced Yiddish printing and book publishing; in Ontario H. Hirsch published his fables Hundert Tropen Tint in 1915 after the appearance of the Toronto Yiddisher Journal (issued under the title Fablen in 1918 in Montreal), and in Winnipeg Milchomeh Veyen appeared from the press of the Israelite Press.

The year 1918 is historic in Canadian literature as marking the appearance of the first book by J.I. Segal, his Fun Mein Velt.

The impact of Yiddish job printing which was associated with the journalistic presses upon the life of the language in society was, of course, incalculable.

The founders who wrote in Brainin's day, during the First World War, constitute a distinctive school of their own.

The contributors to the Adler and its progeny Der Veg and the Folkszeitung during its early decade, form a substantial literary school in Judaism. All of them derive from the Yiddishland of Eastern Europe; they were educated in the cultural system particular to that Jewish civilization, during the period transitional from its own ancient medievalism to the Jewish modern age of the twentieth century -- when Montreal became one of the points of its flowering. Indeed, these very men represented and created much of this flowering.

They emerged almost incidentally in a dramatic historical development; these men from the schools of their youth had never been trained in composition, writing, spelling, Yiddish grammar, Jewish or world history, formal literature, geography, mathematics. Text books and writing materials were not part of the equipment of their Chadorim in Yeshivot. Yet, miraculously, they suddenly produced, in Montreal as elsewhere in the western lands of migration, newspapers which can be read with respect and admiration by the sophisticates of nearly a century.

It was a society which in examination in retrospect, it is easy to admire, to idealize and to distort. As we read the recollections of Dr. Syrkin and Sholom Aleichem visiting the city we find much that is ridiculed and ridiculous and in poor taste. It is helpful to establish balance to read the Adler editor J. Gallay,

"It does not serve the humourist to attack sharply the people or the groups that do not appeal to him. He would better avoid biting and ridiculing of the communal activists. They too have made a positive contribution to Jewish life in its formative stages. These men of ambition in the immigrant period who strove for public positions and prominence without always possessing the necessary education -- but for them, much of which we are so proud today would not be in existence at all." (Obituary of Israel Medres, in Adler, Aug. 5, 1964)

These writers, who began Yiddish literature in Montreal with the Adler are, of course, the founders of the literature which eventually flowered into other major schools after the First War with J.I. Segal, Israel Rabinovitch and Jacob Zipper and later, after the Second World War, with Yehudah Elberg, Melech Ravitch, Rachel Korn and Mordecai Husid.

In the state of Canadian Yiddish writing, its authors depended on its fledgling press and on readers whose institutional culture found a home in its young theatre. Their work was largely in prose. Little of their criticism concerned itself with poetry; playwriting served the drama with which they were enamoured -- much of it vulgar. This was the subject matter of much of the early writers, when it was not nostalgic or analytical. Indeed, the absorption of this literature with the culture of its native habitat shaped this writing into a veritable gallery of human types, a treasury of moral and social personae created deliberately as the fruit of the society, an encyclopaedia of anthropology, particularly linguistic and religious; valuable because it recorded faithfully and objectively, with fine scholarship, a precious oral civilization.

The Canadian writers were faithful pupils of the first classic Yiddish authors -- Mendele, Peretz and Sholom Aleichem -- or their predecessors, the Maggidim, and the communicators of the Chassidic rebbinat. Their Montreal readers were themselves simultaneously readers of these texts which were also the models of the Montreal journalists. There was no confusion of identity of roles.

Inexplicably there was a border between the American and the Canadian literatures, and 1907 was a demarcation line. By that year American Jewry had developed a rich Yiddish gazettography, with Canada as a substantial subsidiary market. Canada had nothing. But, as Nachman Meisel noted, 1907 was an American Yiddish time border of its own. That year its young *littérateurs* first assembled in print in collective form under the annunciatory title Yugent (Youth) "to gather in our periodical the work of only young writers." The second issue included work of Montrealer M. Shmuelson. (Tzurikblicken un Perspectiven. Tel Aviv, I.L. Peretz Publishing House, 1962. Pp. 304-5)

The family of Yiddish writers in Canada was born with the Adler. Its date of 1907 suddenly introduces a complete editorial and literary team, with the short-lived support of relatively unimportant managing editors from New York. The Montreal contributors were more than sufficient and durable.

But their skill confirms that they were not just beginning to learn communications in Yiddish in 1907; the Canadian Jewish community in that language dates from 1882, a quarter of a century earlier -- or to 1846, the date of the charter of the Ashkenazi Congregation, currently bearing the name of the Shaar Hashomayim. We may not have such archival documentation, but the maturity of the Adler's

first issues testifies to the preceding literary generation which had been learning, speaking and reading a literary and sophisticated Yiddish before their words were suddenly set in lead in Montreal by Wolofsky.

More generally, and to explain Wolofsky himself, it is helpful not to confine ourselves to the pioneer date of 1882. The quarter of a century since that migration has an internal dynamic history, and 1905 is its own world-wide metropolitan landmark date of revolution, ideology, literature, Yiddishism, sophistication and immigration. The Canadian explosion of 1907 could not have occurred before 1905, or long after that date.

Years later J.L. Malamut, who was one of the early Yiddish writers in Montreal, recalled his associates Zisha Cornblitt and Dr. Ezekiel Wortsman in the Adler of 1911. From the maelstrom of Yiddish New York, he wrote that "pre-World War I, Montreal possessed a Jewish intelligentsia which, somehow, was always a feature of that city." He recalled the names of M. Shmuelson, S. Schneour, Abraham Komaroff, L. Rubinstein, H.M. Caiserman, Solomon Bercovitch, H. Noveck, B.G. Sack, H. Hershman, L. Zuker, the Cheifetz brothers, I. Pruzhansky, L. Elstein, M. Dickstein and H. Wolofsky.

"The group stood at the helm of all community and cultural developments, and communal events were marked with a festivity which New York could not duplicate. The editorials of the Adler were carefully read in New York."

The Montreal roster of early writers included:

Publisher H. Wolofsky

Editors Landau, Aaronson, Wortsman, Reuben Brainin and Y. Kaufman

S. Nepom, father of Canadian Yiddish poetry

Associate of Sholem Asch, M. Typograph

S. Schneour, ideologist of Poale Zion

Louis Gurofsky, labour and immigration activist

Leon Rubinstein, first principal of the Jewish National Radical School

Historian B.G. Sack

Antiquarian Samuel Talpis

Journalist A.M. Mandelbaum

Doctors Max Wiseman and Abraham Stilman

Rumanian-American author Konrad Bercovici who taught music in the Mile End Yiddish School, American popularizer of gypsy lore

Isaac Yampolsky and his brother M. Yampolsky, of the Sholom Aleichem family whose writings had more than a touch of the style of the great humourist

M. Shmuelson, short story writer who became a distinguished documentalist of his contemporary overseas migration

Radical revolutionary Leon Chazanovitch

Educationalist H. Noveck

Canadian-bred Michael Garber and A.B. Bennett

Francophone trained L.M. Benjamin

Anarchist H. Hershman

Encyclopaedist of Jewish education Elimelech Levin

Principal C. Lozinsky

Drama critic and columnist B.J. Goldstein

Fiction writer J.L. Malamuth

Novelist Zisha Cornblitt

Labour agitator, civic reformer and labour Zionist ideologist H.M. Caiserman

Translator Nathan Kaufmann

Community worker Yoneh Myerson and his younger brothers Nahum and Moses

Bible scholar and editor H. Hirsch

Labour Zionist activist, historian and Congress founder, Simon Belkin

Educator-become-doctor S. Gold

Paedagogues A.S. Sacher and A. Chaitman

Louis Mitnick, theatre impressario

Hebraist M.Z.R. Frank

Poet and immigration worker Joseph Goodman

Later arrivals to this Montreal school included A.C. Sheps (Almi), Alexander Chashin and, "last and most cherished," J.I. Segal.

Most of the members of this school of intellectuals were, of course, related to the Yiddish press of the period and to the advanced Yiddish-Hebrew schools which were established in Canada at this period.

This group of Montreal Yiddish writers suddenly emerged during the decade 1907-15. To anticipate, they were not followed immediately during the First World War by as many or as celebrated successors when Brainin left Canada in 1915, and the glory of the Adler slowed until the emergence of J.I. Segal and Israel Rabinovitch several years later.

Most of their writings were originally published in the early Canadian newspapers.

None of the literary men of Canadian Jewry but put their creation, no matter how erudite or abstract, into the columns of the Adler.

It might possibly be maintained of each of them that, in their consequent careers, these talented writers did not maintain their cultural leadership positions in the other Jewish communities where they made their homes.

Remarkably, all of the names from the early school of Canadian Yiddish literature but Brainin and Yehudah Kaufmann -- and the very existence of the literary school as a unit have been erased from Canadian Jewish memory; not even the anthologies compiled by the lovers and promoters of Yiddish remember names of the first decades of this Canadian literature.

Seldom in history was a literature so much a people's heritage, written by the people, or by authors living so close to the people, to teach, elevate and guide them.

The playwrights were the teachers of the people and wrote to incarnate the folklore and to teach as well as to amuse. Nor did they teach only literature and aesthetics. They became the mentors of ethics, of nationalism, of politics, courtesy, philosophy, of converse and of Jewish loyalty. They gave expression to the experiences of the people, their fears, their ideals, their dreams. They lived their lives in public, not as shocking bohemians but as men of moral conscience, not distant from the consumers of their written or spoken words.

The short tales and novels of this culture, the poetic works of this immigrant world were not kept private until published, after the polishing of the novel or poem had been completed. They appeared as regular features in the monthly or even daily press as they were being written, and current literary criticism was an acute and

ongoing activity in which everyone, readers and critics as well as authors, participated.

These writers were not a class. Only very few were graduates of their countries' official schools trained in curricula of communication through letters or arts. In their shtetlach of Eastern Europe they had studied the Bible and Talmud in Chadorim and Yeshivot, became wise in the adult education chevrot, in the social conversation structures and in the revolutionary framework of their Jewish century.

The earlier the period under examination the more it was true that the immigrants were traditionally cheder-yeshivah educated, and that fewer of them had the benefit of universal public schooling. Increasingly education was becoming compulsory and universal not only in the lands of migration. In Canada schooling was also spreading widely, but no more rapidly than in the European countries of Jewish emigration where society was experiencing developing technology and intensified nationalism. An important characteristic of deeply rooted Jewish migrants was fading out; but it had not yet disappeared at the time of the birth of the Yiddish theatre, when the Yiddish culture was developing in the New World, early in the century.

H.L. Fox lists hundreds of Canadians who published trivia or great works in the Yiddish which they had learned to shape into various instruments for their complex North American Jewish purposes.

There were cultural reasons for the presence of large number of men with facile pens in this immigrant society from the Shtetel.

Thrown as they were pell mell into the metropolitan centres, their survival, but above all recognition, identity, their status and leadership among strangers, depended upon oral assertion, and therefore upon linguistic skills, the preliminary to written skills, and upon precise affirmation of personality. This was particularly true in ideological and syndicalist spheres and in mutual aid associations. Upon this depended family status and interpersonal respect. It was a powerful extension of the relationships in the Shtetel synagogue and in the complex Chassidic circle.

For the writers of this generation were intimate with their admiring public. They came from the very homes of their readers, had the same informal education; had learned to write in the same process whereby the others had learned to read; were often dependent for their livelihood upon factory work, like their public; were members of the same organizations and movements. Above all, they frequently appeared before the people on the lecture platform, in debate with other writers, at political and family gatherings. They were ill in union or mutual aid society sanatoria, drawing union benefits. When they died they were laid to rest by their readers in common consecrated soil.

The people's dramatic and literary associations -- whether personal or institutional, in libraries, cultural groups, publishing committees -- became their ecclesia. Their journals and books enriched twentieth century Judaism lavishly and provides the spiritual documentation of the age.

A Montreal Christian weekly described the ghetto of 1911,

"Situated in the very centre of the city, as far north as Cuthbert Street, as far south as Notre Dame, as far east as St. Denis. The 'ghetto' dwellers are a busy people. From early morning until late in the evening they can be met hurrying from one place to the other on business bent. Energetic and personally ambitious, they never fail to take advantage of any opportunity that presents itself to make money; but though they are eager to make money, they are liberal in spending it for all charitable purposes.

"A curious and interesting sight it is to watch the Jewish toilers every evening after six, going in one long stream to the Hershman store to buy the Yiddish newspapers. For the average workingman Jew is an omnivorous reader, and, like his Gentile cousin, he must have his daily paper.

"Whenever the Jewish bulletins announce anything important, groups of Hebrews congregate together in and outside the Jewish newspaper stores, and have very heated arguments pro and con."

The Canadian observer is supported by the reminiscences of H. Hershman who dedicated his life to the Yiddish press. He recalled the day the New York Forward first appeared, on April 22, 1897 and, again the first day it appeared in Montreal five years later, 1902. In 1897 he had been a mere spectator of the popular festival; in 1902 he was a central figure in the Montreal event; he brought the Forward to Canada, the agent, the first peddler (newsboy).

In New York he was an 18-year-old youth, just arrived from Starozhintze in Bukovina, now an apprentice operator in a factory making kneepants. He recalled his 15-18 hour work day, but also the customary Friday evening break after sunset, the times for a lecture by Ab Kahn or a union or a socialist meeting, and the days of slack.

When he came to Montreal in 1901 there were no kneepants being made here, so he became a skirt operator, a newly developing industry, more primitive than the American plants. The men's and women's better garments were imported from the United States, and the local factories were producing cheaper garments for French Canadian farmers. Children's clothing was homemade; often these were father's old pants altered to size.

Unlike the New York shops, the Montreal factories had electricity for light and power. Hours were more humane; not more than sixty hours; five and a half day weeks; some shops observed the Sabbath.

"I had more leisure but less use for it. There was no sign of cultural life in the society of several thousand immigrants for someone who had already spent several years in a city like New York with its rich environment. The immigrants drew their living from penny trade such as junk peddling, selling small wares from a basket door to door -- candles, matches, needles -- or small stores. The more daring ones ventured into the French Canadian countryside."

These oppressed, frightened peddlers could be found on the most obscure roads, carrying the 2000-year-old exile in their eyes, bent in three under their heavy packs, seeking their bread in the language of the deaf and dumb. Some of them avoided coming to Montreal by ordering replenishment by rail freight from their wholesalers. They had no one in the cities, and there was nothing for them here, but the High Holy Days or the Passover."

In several cases young Jewish country peddlers, torn from their natural sources, met French Canadian girls and married them, and became accepted by the native families, integrated into Quebec society with some success. Conversion did not follow nor change of name. All because Montreal, the nearest centre, exerted no attraction upon the young Jewish people in its broader periphery at the time.

In his own cultural isolation in Montreal Hershman turned to the New York editorial offices of the Yiddish press. They supplied him with the addresses of their Montreal subscribers. As he contacted their few readers he developed what he himself called his *idée fixe* of spreading radical Yiddish culture by disseminating this press. "It was hard to expect these workers to advance \$1 for a subscription to an American newspaper, but it was possible to ask for 7¢ for a week's papers," he wrote.

A series of readers he thus met became comrades and members, and thus came the stationery and bookstore -- one of the social and political institutions that shaped Canadian Jewry as Hershman continued to supply Montreal Jews with American and British socialist and literary reading.

The petty distribution effort seemed doomed to failure when, in 1903, the Kishineff and Homel pogroms unleashed a mass migration, largely to the United States. People who had never dreamed of leaving their ancient homes, who entered socialism suddenly without preliminary preparation, who had passed through stages of social training and experience in socialist and revolutionary activity brought a new spirit into the gathering of Montreal immigrants Jews.

The labouring Jewish population expanded rapidly and helped industry grow in productivity. The men's garment industry surpassed the shade of the Knights of Labour in class consciousness and began to create a ladies cloakmakers syndicate, in 1907 under the I.W.W. The Forward assisted J. Gilletz in 1905 to establish the

carpenters union, in 1907 the bakers union and several branches of the Workmen's Circle.

The Forward became a continental institution under the leadership of Ab Kahn, and Montreal Yiddish life was influenced to a degree in its political life as in the case of Joseph Schubert who sat on city council as a socialist spokesman. But other Jewish political figures who were not radical, such as S.W. Jacobs and Peter Bercovitch, were also supported in the interests of the Jewish community. The same broad pro-Jewish interests led the Forward to mobilize unionist and socialist for Canadian and international Jewish relief aid such as the People Relief Fund and consequently to combat assimilationist tendencies which grew out of socialist cosmopolitanism.

The aid program with which Hershman was so intimately connected in the rescuing of 150 war orphans from Poland after the first war, has seen the number of the assisted grow (by marriage, birth) to nearly a thousand. (H. Hershman. "The Forward and the Jewish Masses in Canada," in Forward, May 25, 1947)

This social education was proceeding all over Jewry, in Europe under increasingly urbanizing conditions and in the lands of immigration which were industrializing very intensely.

This first school of Canadian Yiddish literature was secular in nature, although deeply steeped in the religious tradition of the shtetel. Only two or three of the authors were religious, notably Yehudah Kaufmann, H. Hirsch, editor of the Adler after Reuben Brainin and Rabbi Judah Rosenberg who has published comments on the Zohar and many other works of religious concern; the chassidic rebbe was the grandfather of Mordecai Richler. Some of the leading rabbis in the community such as H. Cohen, A.M. Ashinsky and S. Glazer did contribute from time to time to the Adler and to the Jewish Times.

Some of the best of these stylists, such as the Yampolskys and Shmuelson, discontinued their literary activities. Except for B.G. Sack, who remained with the Adler until nearly his last years, and Brainin who had raised a generation of followers on the communal and political scene, their names scarcely appear in the historic record of the Canadian community or in the monographic literature of its history.

Brainin himself, who suffered greatly in the debacle of the Montreal breakup, lived the following twenty years in decline; Montreal had been one of his great periods. He returned frequently to this scene where part of his family and hundreds of his devotees lived in the pride of his name and of his inspiration, until after his last day when he was brought to rest in Montreal. The archives of his Quebec colleagues such as Goldstein, Roback and Malamuth refer to their Montreal years with more than nostalgic warmth.

In his obituary on A.B. Bennett (Canadian Jewish News, July 31, 1980) Ben G. Kayfetz refers to this second decade of the century as "the intellectual renaissance that was taking hold of the younger, more conscious elements centred in metropolitan Montreal, at that time a trilingual city. It was in this centre that he drank from the fountain of Judaic wisdom."

From the Canadian perspective it should be noted that Montreal's overwhelming superiority did not preclude Yiddish literary activity in other centres. Ontario is represented by Melech W. Grafstein of London, the Peretz and Sholom Aleichem enthusiast. Traditional Hebrew literature is represented by a 1914 work issued in Palestine by Rabbi Jacob Gordon (1877-1934), a collection of Yiddish poems by Pessach Matenko in 1917, the Yiddish collection of Leiser Rosenberg, Canada, 1919, and the two editions of H. Hirsch's Fables. Indeed, both Toronto and Winnipeg were ahead of Montreal in Yiddish bookmaking before 1919.

Remarkably Winnipeg Jewry multiplied as vigorously, or even more rapidly, than did Montreal, 1891-1911. Its proportion of the city population rose from 2.5% in 1891 to well over 6%, compared to Montreal's 1% to 5%. There was a remarkable culture reflection in the nature of the community.

Winnipeg saw the publication of Ezekiel Bronstein's (1897-1965) Sparks of a Little Man (1917); and Milchomeh Veyen (War Woes) first collection, poems and prose by Ezekiel A.M. Bronstein (1897-1968); poems by Mordecai Miller (1895-1946) and an essay by Hershel Galsky. (Winnipeg, Ferlag Winnipeg, 31 p.)

A second collection of prose and poetry was in print by the publishers at the Israelite Press. in collaboration with M. Miller (1895-1946) and Hershel Galsky (1918); Two Worlds by Bronstein and Miller in 1919 and another volume by Joseph Goodman that year.

Contributions to the local and the Montreal press from Winnipeg by Perl Almazoff, A. Ossovsky (later author of his autobiographical Three Generations, Two Worlds), Mark Selchen (of By the Way) and other prairie writers were frequent and prominent, as were those from Hamilton, Sudbury, Glace Bay and from Kingston which gave early Canadian literature a national character.

For decades whoever entered Jewish printery on the most mundane business soon learned that the man at the counter or sewing the folios or at the linotype was a carrier of great traditions from Vilno or Warsaw or Lemberg that had a bearing on the letterhead or the card that the customer was ordering, not to speak of the book or the periodical that was under discussion.

Meir Kastoff was a veteran of the underground Russian press and became an activist for Yiddish culture in New York. He married out of the Wolofsky home soon after coming to Montreal on October 8,

1907. (M. Kastoff. "My Recollections" in 1927 anniversary issue of Adler. Pp. 24-25)

His successor at the type case, B. Small, had had a similar career in the illegal press in Russia.

In the years of the Jewish and of the Russian revolutions, before the mimeograph machine, Jewish printers shared in the nobility of the revolts. So it was with a double sanctity that they were crowned in that world.

M.L. Goldsmith came to the Adler in 1911 as a veteran having been a typesetter in glorious Odessa where he had been the first to put into print metal the works of Mendele Mocher Sephorim and Bialik and the Hashiloach review. He had also worked at the Balaban printery in Lemberg. He had served with the Russian dragoons, had witnessed the 1905 revolution and the pogroms of that year. His eyes had seen the murder of the Odessa rabbi David Shlomoh Sloushcz (father of Prof. Nahum Sloushcz). In London he had worked at the Goroditzky printery where H. Brenner, the passionate Hebrew author, set his own type as he composed his work in metal, without the intermediary of author's copy on paper. There the anarchist movement was at its greatest strength, with the gentile German Rudolf Rocker as its Yiddish literary spokesman and as the voice of its inspiration. ("Memories of a Jewish Typesetter", in 1932 Souvenir Edition of the Adler, Pp. 119-21)

The family name of M. Typograph in Montreal in 1910 was significant as proudly indicating the occupation of printer. A century earlier this was the name of the Vilno family before they assumed the title of Rome.

M. Greenspan of 43 Dorchester St., advertised as the first Jewish bookbinder in Montreal. (Adler, July 10, 1910)

To appreciate the epic of this first Yiddish literary school of Montreal it is helpful to note its ending which came in the dispersion, which occurred suddenly.

This event had at its centre the same H. Wolofsky who had assembled the group in the first place, ten years earlier.

Five years after Wolofsky had founded the Adler he risked greatly by engaging as editor a man of stature, worthy of heading the major cultural institution of Canadian Jewry, a man who had held a parallel position in Yiddish and Hebrew world Jewry and Zionism -- Reuben Brainin. For several years Wolofsky and Brainin cooperated as editor and publisher, but in 1914, with the First World War, a major split occurred in Jewry on profound policy questions. A younger group saw the world conflict as the beginning of a greater cataclysm, a holocaust of Jewry, the ultimate destruction of Czarism, the

possibility of ending exile, of establishing the Herzelian state. The establishment saw the 1914 war as a more normal development.

The theme, the horrors of war may appear to be universal; but within the Canadian Jewish community there was a most significant ideological and durable conflict. The more integrated and conservative element saw World War I as one of the "normal" wars of the Western world, whereas many of the immigrant society, led by Brainin, in the Herzelian perspective, saw 1914 as presaging the holocaust and called upon Canadian Jewry to prepare for the coming decades.

Brainin, ever the prophet, together with the visionary young clashed with Wolofsky and his associates in de Sola Zionism. Canadian and world Jewry divided painfully for some thirty years.

Brainin left the Adler. He established Der Veg, which was even more brilliant than his Adler. But the Montreal community was torn and could not support two daily Yiddish newspapers.

Brainin, with Kaufmann, left the city; others also left. More writers could not continue to create for the Adler; others ceased writing and within months Montreal was without its earlier and later glory.

In his 1957 summary of the history of the Adler, he adds the major names of those who after 1914 followed the Brainin leadership of the Montreal journalistic scene: H. Hirsch, L. Meltzer, A. Almi, Leon Cheifetz, Israel Medres and Rabbi Chaim Kruger.

VISITORS

The visits of the literary figures and of the philosophers of this Yiddish society were an important element in the educational and emotional life of this people.

The Baron de Hirsch Institute from its first days was proud to open its doors to these Yiddish intellectuals in spite of the early conflicts with organizations in the immigrant society. It welcomed learned guests to its halls; later the Jewish Public Library established these lectures as a major tradition. Z.H. Masliansky came to Montreal synagogues as Preacher to the Nation, as M.M. Dolitzky came to the Talmud Torah in 1900 to read his American Hebrew poetry, as Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky spoke on "The Sense of Human Life" in the Auditorium Hall, and at the Baron de Hirsch Institute on Tolstoy and on "Modern Jewish Literature."

Similarly, the visits of Nahum Sokolow, David Pinsky and other men of the pen and the platform left lasting marks upon a generation and upon their children who inherited reverence and semantics. Similarly the audiences at the Baron de Hirsch Institute were elevated by Yehoash with his fresh modernist Yiddish verse and his poetic version of the Palestine dream.

Esther Zuker, the daughter of Labor Zionist Leizer (Louis) and Sarah Zuker, recalls the legendary home in which she was brought up,

"Our home was the reception centre for guests from overseas; leaders of the Poale Zion, Yiddish authors and thinkers. I remember the impressive figure of Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky seated in our living room, surrounded by disciples. I remember our crowded room packed with reverent readers of the playwright D. Pinsky or the classic poet H. Leivick. I remember the heated debates on occasions with Baruch Zukerman, Golda Meir and Isaac Ben Zvi. These discussions were followed by snacks and folk singing.

"I remember the party my parents arranged for the friend of my youthful years Rebeccah Rubin Roisenblatt (later Ruth Rubin), researcher in Yiddish folk singing, when she published the collection of her poems, the first volume by a graduate of the Peretz Schools." (Esther Zuker, in Leizer Zuker Gedenk Buch. 1968. Pp. 22-35)

Esther's father recalled a visit of Nachman Syrkin, the Zionist Territorialist editor of Dos Yiddishe Vort during the summer of 1907,

"At a Sunday meeting of our Territorialist executive in our home on Chenneville St., near Dorchester, one member, A. Komaroff, a news agent on the Montreal-Quebec train, told us that the night before, as he was walking in Quebec from the station to the hotel, a man with

very interesting features stopped him to ask the way to the station. Komaroff showed him the way, but soon he was very sorry that he did not detain him to ask him his identity.

"I reflexively called out, 'That must be Chaim Syrkin.' Everybody laughed and we forgot the incident." Komaroff was Poale Zion delegate to the World Zionist Congress in 1913 and to the World Poale Zion assembly in Vienna.

(That year Komaroff, together with Zuker and Schneour, supported the successful candidacy of Blumenthal for city council. He was an early worker for the Jewish Public Library and a founder of the Jewish National Radical School, later Peretz School.

(In the far-reaching conflict of parties between Brainin and Wolofsky in 1914 which divided the immigrant community in particular, Komaroff separated for a time from Zuker who led the Brainin faction. S. Belkin. Die Poale Zion Bavegung in Canada, 1904-20. Montreal, 1956)

"Sometime later I was accompanying David Narinsky on a Sunday noon to his home on Cadieux St. (later De Bullion St.), corner Dorchester. On Main St. near the Monument National I saw a man who looked like the one Komaroff had described. I told Narinsky, 'There is the man who looks like the one Komaroff had told us about, and it is Syrkin. Let us ask him.' But by the time I had convinced Narinsky, the man disappeared; we looked for him but could not find him.

"We decided to look for him, and walked to the docks to ask whether someone by that name had arrived from Quebec by boat. We went to the hotels, thirsty and hungry, tired as we were, and we could not call home, this being before telephones were common. Supper time we came to a small hotel on St. James St., near the old Grand Trunk Station, later the CNR. There we actually found his name on the register, 'Syrkin - Petersburg.'

"We were admitted to his room and saw in it a suitcase full of Yiddish papers, but the owner was not there. We decided to wait for him. After about an hour, he came running in. 'Chaverim?' he asked. 'Yes,' we acknowledged. 'Hurry and help me pack. My train is leaving for New York.'

"When we came to the station just in time, the U.S. inspector was faced with a large pack bound with ropes which had to be opened and inspected. The official proved sympathetic. Was it his impressive appearance or his excellent French?"

In the event Syrkin first visited Winnipeg, Calgary and Toronto in June 1908.

"That winter we invited him for a lecture and a banquet. We asked him to explain his disappearance that Sunday noon on Main St. He told us that as he was passing the Monument National he saw a

French library nearby so he entered it. Later he passed by the Labour Temple where a lecturer was speaking on 'The Laws of Moses.' During the discussion an anarchist arose to make a point about the evil to be found in bearded Jews. He illustrated his argument by pulling at Syrkin's beard lightly. Syrkin did not react, but continued to sit quietly. No one knew at the time that it was the renowned Syrkin that the well-known local radical Shefler had thus offended. After this revelation the anarchist seldom appeared at lectures." (L. Zuker composed in 1956 and published in his Gedenk Buch, pp. 16-18)

The bourgeois Baron de Hirsch Institute did not hesitate to extend the hospitality of its hall to Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky on December 3, 1909 where he lectured in Yiddish on "Socialism" and on "Jewish Historiography."

L. Mitnick had produced David's Fiddle and Joseph and his Brothers in April 1909 in the Auditorium Hall, a production successful beyond expectation.

The visit of Sholem Asch to Montreal in April, 1910 was characteristic of the community response to the presence of literate personae in its midst.

When the famous Yiddish novelist and playwright informed Morris J. Typograph of his availability "many new activists offered their services to help make the Asch visit a success."

Typograph was himself one of the Montreal Jewish men of the pen. He published a sketch, "On the Mountains," about a love stricken young man and a capricious girl, in the Adler of June 12, 1910, and a humorous column on "Gossip" on July 26, 1910.

Delegates representing various institutions met in the Typograph home at 1352 St. Catherine St. and in the offices of the Adler. Among the organizations thus mobilized were the Poale Zion, the Jewish National Workers Alliance, the Workmen's Circle and the Canadian Jewish Times represented by its new publisher Mr. Norwich. H. Hershman was made responsible for the sale of tickets; at 15¢, but 25¢ at the door. Rabbi Nathan Gordon of the Temple Emanuel was named to preside over the lecture.

The sponsoring committee included Rabbi Gordon, Dr. Stern, B.J. Goldstein, Mr. Norwich. Mr. Typograph met Asch and escorted him to the St. Lawrence Hall Hotel where he was to stay for several days.

The program included musical solos and a recitation as well as the address of the guest author on current development in Yiddish literature. He also read his story, "A Jewish Child."

The following day he visited the offices of the Adler where he noted the wealth of literature being created by Yiddish poets. He regretted

that the authors in the New World write largely about European life and do not pay enough attention to their American environment. He also spoke of the state of the Yiddish theatre in the U.S.A. where competition was forcing great talent such as D. Kessler, J.P. Adler, Mogulesco, the Tomashevskys and Mme. Liptzin to perform in vulgar plays. Discussing Zionism he revealed that he had recently purchased a plot of land in Palestine.

B.J. Goldstein wrote in the Adler editorially on Asch, "possibly the only Yiddish writer whose pen can evoke in simple letters the most delicate and finest tones. Such lyrical sounds might not come forth from other, even great, talent if they were confined to a language as poor as Yiddish is as yet. His dramas have been performed in German theatres while in Warsaw -- whence he posted the texts to Berlin and Vienna -- the Jewish public was satisfied with vulgar productions." (Apr. 11, 1910)

On April 15, 1910 Asch appeared in Toronto.

Montreal was the only Jewish community outside New York to invite the Yiddish playwright Peretz Hirshbein for an evening of music and readings on December 22, 1912. The evening was the first instituted by Brainin as a series of literary programs of Yiddish culture. The arrangements committee included dentist J. Stern, S. Ortenberg, R. Darwin, Y. Myerson, M. Lightstone and Brainin.

This program at the Baron de Hirsch Institute featured Konrad Bercovici who spoke on "Music and Character" and played his own compositions. (Adler, Nov. 14, 1912)

Hirshbein visited Montreal again in February 1913 to attend the premiere of his The Remote Corner presented by L. Mitnick at the Monument National. He came to Canada to ensure that the comedy would be performed "according to his standards of dramaturgy."

Peretz Hirshbein, romantic Yiddish playwright, visited Toronto in the company of Reuben Brainin on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the local Bnai Zion Association in March 1913.

Poet Yehoash lectured on December 16 and 17, 1910 on "The Man of Today" at the Baron de Hirsch Institute for the first time, under the auspices of the Poale Zion. Tickets were available at Hershman's, Elstein's and Lazarus' book stores and at the Adler office.

The editor of the Adler commented on the sufferings of the poet from tuberculosis, the social epidemic which was attacking so many of the Jewish workers in the large cities at the time. Like many thus affected he was enabled to escape New York and to come to Canada under the care of the labour unions and philanthropists. (Dec. 16, 1910)

The Palestinian Labour Zionist leader Zerubavel was the guest of the Poale Zion in Montreal on October 30 and 31, and November 2 and 3, 1912 at the Baron de Hirsch Institute. Among those welcoming him were Brainin, M. Schneour and Leon Chazanovitch. Tickets were distributed by Belkin's, Freierman's and D.H. Lazarus' book stores.

During the last days of 1912 Dr. Nachman Syrkin, leader of American Labour Zionism spoke at the Institute on Tolstoy and Nietzsche and at the Labour Temple on the Social Revolution.

The response of the people was familial. There was nothing demeaning about the benefit concerts at which moneys were raised for Yiddish writers -- such as the 1909 gathering in Montreal for Sholom Aleichem. This was the Canadian effort, largely spurred by the Poale Zion and the Zionist Territorialists, led by Isaac Yampolsky, to relieve the artist in his financial plight.

Among the participants were Rabbi H. Cohen, Zionist Leo Goldman, B.J. Goldstein and S. Schneour who read an essay by Adler editor Landau (Wohliner). The members of Progressive Dramatic Circle participated. (Adler, Jan. 19, 1909)

All over the world aficionados contributed to the fund which would return to the author the copyright of his published works. (Adler, Oct. 4, 1908) It enabled him to continue with his writing in an atmosphere of reasonable security, until the world collapsed in war in 1914.

Readers of the Adler from its first year had been familiarized with Sholom Aleichem.

One of Brainin's contributions to the Adler from Europe dealt with Sholom Aleichem who responded from Berlin on February 17, 1908 with his usual humour admixed with seriousness, modesty and a possibility of superiority and even sharpness.

Brainin had asked whether the humourist was as profoundly modest as his style of writing had implied. The humourist "confessed" that "my modesty forces me to become arrogant and to wonder whether this very quality forces me to ask whether I am truly as great as some hold me to be."

Sholom Aleichem touches on Brainin's Yiddish style which is not lesser than that of Mendele Mocher Sephorim. "I could not write differently of him than I would of your people's language. You have a golden pen in either language. I never dreamed of you speaking 'Jargon'! Above all, you write well of my modesty; but -- pardon me -- you erred in thinking of it as a sort of joke. Its true source is simply -- foolishness. Simple." (J.D. Bercovitch, ed. Sholom Aleichem Buch. New York. 1926. P. 222)

The two writers met in Montreal in Brainin's home in June 1915. (Photograph, *ibid.*, P. 255)

Nothing illustrates this more vividly than the nature of Sholom Aleichem's work.

Here was a playwright who chose to become the creative tape recorder of the people. The people read him and marvelled at how faithfully he caught the sub-tones of their voices, the nuances of their gestures, the idioms of their phrases. He not only collected their words to write them down in plays and tales but he later delighted to read them back, and was himself the most delighted member of his own audience.

An article on "Sholem Aleichem on the Life of the Child" appeared in the Adler of December 22, 1908.

Soon after the Canadian Jewish Times came under new ownership, Yiddish-loving Joseph Stern wrote a long article on "Sholem Aleichem and His Work,"

"I fear that, in spite of his popularity, he would prove an unknown quantity to many readers of The Times, and it seems a pity that this should be so. I suppose his great sin and his greater misfortune lie in the vehicle of his thought, not in the field of his endeavor. Yet, be it said truthfully, Sholom Aleichem could not have given as good an account of himself, could not have injected so much genuine, brilliant humor into his work, had he attempted to depict Jewish life in small Russian towns, in English, even if that language had been his most willing slave.

"Somehow the real inherent customs, manners, religion and home-life that characterize Jewish life in small Russian, Austrian and Romanian cities, will remain forever a closed book to all except the Yiddish reader who alone can decipher its contents. One must be to the manner (sic) born, must imbibe its spirit from childhood before he can attempt to describe it...

"He sees Jewish life in small Russian towns in all its reality, -- narrow, cramped, sordid, and pious, -- all of which is stamped with childish naiveté. Its inhabitants are absolutely influence-tight; that is to say external influences do not step in and undermine their firmly established culture, manners, thought and beliefs.

"They are not vexed by those serious problems that perplex humanity in thickly populated centres. Life there flows on in a smooth, even stream, unruffled by those larger breezes that sweep the universe. Once in a great while, an event like the Dreyfus Affair drifts in, unheralded, three months after the final word was spoken, and drops, 'as news' from the lips of Lazar, the local gossip. This simple and innocent occurrence, seen through Sholom Aleichem's eyes, and fashioned by his nimble brain, becomes at once ludicrous,

mirth-provoking and humorous enough to chase the shadows and smoothen the wrinkle of the most acetic-acid countenance.

"Such is the wondrous power of his genius that simple words and phrases become charged dynamos when he pens them. With a singleness of purpose, peculiar to all great talents, he continues to ply his trade and extract humor from the simplest situation. Beyond doubt, he can create more tickling episodes from the sparse monotonous material afforded him than any other living writer.

"You feel the light in your eyes more brilliant, the color in your cheeks lightened, the tidal-wave of laughter gathers, swells, and an overflow is imminent. You guffaw and, if you happen to be the person who deems whole-hearted laughter unbecoming, you are glad no one is about to watch you. It is all so very, very funny.

"His methods of work are original, inimitable, unique. He draws his characters boldly, yet with great dexterity. A stroke here, a dab there, and behold, the people he portrays in flesh and blood!" (Feb. 5, 1909)

A photograph of Sholom Aleichem, Brainin and J.D. Bercovitch, taken at this time appears in the Sholom Aleichem Buch, edited by Bercovitch, N.Y., 1926. P. 255)

Moishe H. Myerson, who became in the course of the years one of the useful activists in the Canadian Jewish Congress and in the Jewish Public Library, recalled Sholom Aleichem's visit to Montreal in 1915,

"I was then a student at McGill University.

"It is because I believe I am one of the very few still living, that met with Sholom Aleichem, that I want to add this biographic note of the great literary genius which characterized so well the playfulness of Sholom Aleichem the man.

"When he was here he spent a good deal of his time in the home of Reuben Brainin, a luminary in the Jewish literary world in his own right, in constant discussion and debate...

"As intimate friends of the Brainin family, we surely were very happy to come to see Sholom Aleichem in person in the Brainin home... To us he was the great talent whose Yiddish stories we read with so much joy and ecstasy.

"When Sholom Aleichem was about to leave to go back to New York, we gladly joined Reuben Brainin in seeing him off at the Windsor Station, which was then comparatively new.

"As they were talking leisurely Sholom Aleichem turned to Brainin and asked him whether he found a shortage in his box of cigars. (I

should add that Sholom Aleichem was in declining health at that time, and without Brainin knowing it, could not stand the smoke of cigars.)

"'Ya, ya,' Reuben Brainin answered in his daichmerish Yiddish. 'I had a full box, and now it is half gone.'

"'I'll tell you why. Remember we were sitting near an open window when we were discussing. Every time you opened your cigar box and lit a fresh cigar you would get excited in your discussion and put the cigar down. I would then pick it up and throw it out through the open window. I did that repeatedly during the discussions we had in your studio. You were so intense in your argumentation that you didn't even notice it. That is the reason for the shortage.'

"The quotation may not be textually exact, but it contains the gist of what he said. Surely an excellent characterization of Brainin by Sholom Aleichem, what is equally important, a wonderful description of the man who wrote fascinating children's stories, but was a playful child himself."

Montreal had strong links with Sholom Aleichem in the persons of two brothers, relatives of Sholom Aleichem, Isaac and Moses L. Yampolsky, both in Montreal at the time, both brilliant. Isaac Yampolsky, a teacher in the Talmud Torah, was one of the galaxy of Canada's early Yiddish writers. He contributed generously to the first volumes of the Adler and equally consistently to Reuben Brainin's Der Veg when the great Hebraist broke with Wolofsky's daily in 1914.

His brother Moses was also a sophisticated author. By 1912 he had moved to Lipton, Sask. where he was named a Hebrew teacher; farmer J. Glasman attested to his fine work in the local Jewish school. (Adler, Sept. 1912) After World War I one of the first contributions to the People's Relief Committee on the continent came from Canadian Jewish farmers organized by Yampolsky.

Their father Reuben was an author of Yiddish tales.

Leah Kaufman, daughter of Sholom Aleichem, recalls that her father, himself chronically in straitened circumstances, sent moneys to her mother's uncle, Mendel Yampolsky to assist him through the Passover. (Ibid., P. 135)

His familiar relationship with the great humourist is evidenced by an undated letter from the Yiddish writer. (Ibid., P. 227)

Yampolsky had published one of the versions of Sholom Aleichem's epitaph, a copy of which he secured a decade before the demise of the humourist. It appeared in the Montreal Adler on the occasion of a Sholom Aleichem jubilee. The famous writer responded in a letter "from Nervi at Genoa to his Kosher friend,

"If you are in that distant paradise on earth which is known as Nervi, when you are alone and sick, and you receive a letter from a friend, and a Kosher friend at that, an honest soul like Isaac Yampolsky's, you feel well, and you smile at the sun, and you find you have an appetite at the table.

"How am I? You may remember that I don't care to talk much of myself. In short, I am beginning to be all right. I hope to God (may America forgive me for uttering the Name of God; when you get to meet the Angel of Death in person, you recall the old God), that if only I shall have the wherewithall to pass the entire winter here, I will leave a Samson.

"You tell me that the American newspapers are peeved with me. It is possible, probably because I stole from them (not they from me) and that I reprinted their sketches (not that they reprinted mine).

"Say what you will, I have no enemies, because I hate no one; because Tevyah is a man of faith, and because Menachem Mendel believes the whole world. Believe me, have a drink and keep on writing.

"Soon you will read of a jubilee of a Shlim Mazel Shmuel Shmelkes which I have written while bedridden. So don't be surprised if it came out sort of weak. And it may not be quite so weak.

"You know, I trust everybody except myself. Somebody is within me, a Mephisto, always laughing and mocking and ridiculing my scribbling. Every time I write something and read it to him with enthusiasm, like all writers do, he does nothing but makes whistling noises, and his eyes are smiling. If I could only catch him, I would choke him.

"Sometimes he hears me out quite seriously, and nods with his head. So I think that this time I have won him over, and I send it off to be printed. He then bursts out with a laugh. You should see him! A Mephistopheles, may he burn.

"There has been a bit of a change in the epitaph which you published. I have added four lines (in verse) to the opening,

"'Mister, excuse me, what is your wish?

"'So Mister, we still need you.

"'You know, Sholom Aleichem,

"'He lies buried deep.'

"Send me printed matter, whatever may interest me; also send me all your scribbling, indeed and indeed. Be strong, Yampolsky, and write good things, and be successful; the wishes of your friend, Sholom Aleichem." (Adler, Dec. 22, 1908)

Montreal Jews read Sholom Aleichem's letter from Denmark where he was trapped by the outbreak of the war together with C.N. Bialik and Zalman Schneour. (Adler, Aug. 30, 1914)

Two months earlier Montreal readers had before them a study of Sholom Aleichem from B.J. Goldstein. (Adler, Oct. 21, 1908)

M.L. Yampolsky, a well-built man, accompanied Sholom Aleichem as secretary during the humourist's lecture tour of Canada and the northeastern states not long before the passing of the great Yiddish author. They came to Montreal from Toronto with J.D. Bercovitch, not very long before his passing, to participate in their pleasure of his reading.

In a playful mood the famed writer persuaded Yampolsky to pretend to be Sholom Aleichem before the reception committee in a small American town. A local journalist was the first to be deluded; then the rest of the welcoming committee. Seated in the rear of an open Ford, Yampolsky replied to the journalist's questions, with reserve and dignity. The truth was revealed before the party reached the hotel; the interviewer claiming that he had seen through the joke all along.

During the same tour a journalist found the writer reading the collection of fables Hundert Tropen Tint by the Canadian fabulist H. Hirsch, editor of the Adler. The newspaperman proceeded to deprecate it.

The classic humourist said, "Sure you are an expert on fables, let me show you one of mine." He went into another room and soon returned with a copy of one of the Hirsch fables.

The journalist was enthusiastic. "What a comparison, yours and Hirsch's!"

Sholom Aleichem then revealed that the fable in question was in reality Hirsch's.

"Let me see it again," the journalist grumbled on. "Yes, at first it appeared as not a bad fable, but looking carefully at it again I can see that it is unworthy of your pen."

"In that case you should know that in reality, it is my own fable." Sholom Aleichem kept on teasing the young journalist. (Recorded by J.D. Bercovitch in the Sholom Aleichem Buch. Pp.156-57)

Isaac Yampolsky proposed movies based on Sholom Aleichem stories which are located in Kasrilevke. (Adler, July 7, 1914)

Sholom Aleichem addressed a characteristic letter to Reuben Brainin from Cleveland on May 3, 1915 when the Canadian editor announced publication of his Yiddish paper Der Veg, as well as a Hebrew weekly

Haderech. (The latter in fact, did not begin publication.) In his own manner he took a stand on the linguistic controversy of their age regarding the relative merits of Hebrew and Yiddish as the national language of the Jewish people which happened to be dear to both correspondents. The letter is therefore full of allusions to the terminology of the controversy of the time

"My friend Mr. Reuben Brainin,

"When I heard that you are beginning to publish a paper in Montreal -- two papers, one in Yiddish, the other in Hebrew -- I was triply happy; first that another paper is born; secondly, that my friend Isaac Yampolsky will work on this paper, and thirdly, that a passage -- a new passage: 'For from Montreal shall come forth the Torah, and the word of God from Canada' -- will be fulfilled.

"This passage applies to the Hebrew paper which you will issue, I mean Haderech. For how would Sholom Aleichem dare such a profanation, such an offence against God, as to apply such sacred words to Der Veg, a Yiddish paper which expresses itself in jargon?

"But you might ask, what will I do with the Yiddishists who will object to my giving priority to Hebrew? So it is really not very good. You can't please the entire world.

"Nevertheless, we have a great God: I have been writing Yiddish for thirty-two years, and I have never hid my sympathies for our old language, for Hebrew. After all, my beginning was in Hebrew in Hamelitz, in Hatzefirah, He'Assif and others, and no one has ever condemned me, and no one has accused me of desecrating it. The young ones seem to know that I love both languages equally, just as I love all Jews for, as the passage has it, 'There is room on the head for two phylacteries.'

"I hope that these sentiments also guide your hand as you write both languages with one hand. It matters not that I also (and I recall my sins today) once permitted myself a joke that 'the goy is treif but his coin is Kosher.'

"I think that you know as well as I do that it is a short leap between Yiddish and Hebrew. Why did I underline Yiddish and Hebrew twice? As a compromise; do not call Yiddish a jargon, as I do not call Hebrew the holy tongue. The Zaide (Mendele Mocher Seforim) refers to jargon as 'feh', and the ignorant refer to Loshen Kodesh (the sacred tongue) as 'Lockshen Koilech' and this is not to be permitted."

Sholom Aleichem had a very strong link with Western Canada, a link which has been fully documented by Winnipeg historian Rabbi Arthur Chiel in his Jewish Experiences in Early Manitoba. (Winnipeg, Manitoba Jewish Publications, 1955. Pp. 1-12)

Uncle Nissel, the younger brother of Sholom Aleichem's father, was an important figure in the humourist's biography. He was a distinctive character in the family; he had broken somewhat from his more observant brothers, had developed the arts of song, dance, storytelling -- interests not alien to the Chassidic tradition -- and even composed poetry. The nephew was serious in seeing in his uncle a lost poet among so many failed artists and men of talent in a nation hitherto dedicated largely only to other interests. Sholom Aleichem is generous in ascribing to Uncle Nissel Rabinovitch encouragement to his own artistic flourishing.

This can be read with particular interest when we recall Sholom Aleichem's very strong relationship with all the members of his family in all its extensions. It is possible to think of Sholom Aleichem considering all his characters as members of his family; his reading public reciprocated and his audiences received him in the same relationship.

The saga of Uncle Nissel, "the nut hard to crack," documented as it is, is incredible, in the class of the village "Shtadlonim" intercessors, more authentic than the Shtadlonim who figure in ideological literature; they are more truthfully narrated in such "Reminiscences" as Warshawsky's which Sholom Aleichem prefaced. But Uncle Nissel ended "fortunately," after the pogroms of 1882, after the flight through Brody, to the even greater hardships of the Canadian prairies of the 1880's.

He had found it possible to survive those sober Russians whose ludicrous bureaucrats sometimes failed to exert the extremity of ukases. But the difficulties of Canadian pioneering were of a different sort.

Finally he sent a Winnipeg photograph back to Russia, with verse which concluded, "From my biography your children will know that there is a God and that he manages the world."

Chiel records that a Winnipegger born in 1883 grew up to remember Nissel Rabinovitch reading the newest stories of Sholom Aleichem very emotionally to Jewish prairie children.

The record concludes with Uncle Nissel among the founders of the Shaarei Zedek Synagogue, and the Rosh Pinah, but later climactically setting up his own older style chapel become known as the Milchige shul, not in the style of Tevye the Milchiger, but presumably to separate from the more bourgeois meat-eaters, the Fleishige.

Montreal had its own Yiddish Writers Club (including B.G. Sack, Moses Shmuelson and Goldstein) which sponsored a 16-page issue of the Canader Yiddisher Shreiber in honour of Sholom Aleichem on May 21, 1916.

THE CANADIAN SHOLOM ALEICHEM TRADITION

Canada, like the rest of the Jewish world, had contributed to the continuity of the Sholom Aleichem tradition.

Remarkably, the Mile End suburb of Montreal pioneered in secular Yiddish education on the continent.

As early as 1915 the young Poale Zionists had a Sholom Aleichem Club in the area.

The following year the I.L. Peretz School of Montreal had the works of Sholom Aleichem on its curriculum.

The 1916 report of the new Peretz School of Winnipeg, signed by J. Hestrin, reported that pupils were sensitive to the unique literary style of such Yiddish authors as Sholom Aleichem. (S. Belkin. The Poale Zion Movement in Canada, 1904-20, Montreal, 1956, Pp. 36, 43, 248)

That year the Montreal and Toronto Poale Zion raised money for a Sholom Aleichem conference and raised funds for a Sholom Aleichem People's Fund.

Sholom Aleichem's Di Fohn was issued in Winnipeg by the I.L. Peretz School in its series Literatur far Kinder (24 p.)

Isidore Goldstick, of London, Ont., translated Sholom Aleichem's Inside Kasrilevke for an edition of Shocken Books (1949, 127 p.). Another edition appeared in 1965 with drawings by Ben Shahn (222 p.). The work was reviewed by A.M. Klein in the Canadian Jewish Chronicle on April 16, 1948.

Rabbi and Mrs. Abraham A. Chiel of Winnipeg translated into English It is Hard to be a Jew for the Canadian Jewish Congress (44 p.)

In 1952 the Canadian Association of Hebrew Schools reprinted (14 p.) Yehudah Goodman's translation into English of Sholom Aleichem's Chanukah Gelt (London, England, Jewish National Fund) as translated into Hebrew and adapted to the stage by I.D. Bercovitch.

Melech Grafstein of London, Ont. was a distinguished activist in the Canadian Yiddish community. His most powerful inspiration came from the Peretz circles in Warsaw but it extended to all phases of modern Jewish literature. He came late in Sholom Aleichem witness literature, but the Canadian merchant who was so loyal an enthusiast of Yiddish literature contributed valuable documentation on its golden age in Poland.

Grafstein's youthful experience with Yiddish writers is illuminated by the recollections of Peretz' passion for youth; the older the great Yiddish writer became the more he longed for his own mostly wasted young years, the more he searched out the shortest, most logical path to surround himself with young people, especially those of the theatre; at best stage artists, the painters, playwrights, the beautiful Polish-Jewish girls who garlanded him like muses. In the circle of Peretz' youth, Melech Grafstein -- a somewhat wild youngster serving at a wine counter, with a booming voice, a passion for the theatre and a powerful pathos, with Bundist idealism -- fitted in perfectly.

One of his intense testimonies recalls his youthful 1912 intrusion upon Peretz in a Toronto assembly of the elite of Yiddish literature in the home of the classic author. This "confession" recorded by Grafstein in his Peretz Memorial issue of the Jewish Observer (Sept. 1945, Pp. 64-66), is a remarkable document on the generations of youth in the century.

Grafstein long recalled proudly that the Mother Superior of a London nunnery called upon this amateur of the stage to assist her in the makeup of the young sisters in an amateur performance in her institution.

In his perpetual effort to bequeath his people with an adequate memorial for the greats of Yiddish literature, Grafstein issued a 110-page memorial issue of his Jewish Observer as a tribute to I.L. Peretz (December 1945). The volume included valuable works on Peretz by A.A. Roback, David Pinsky, A. Mukdoni, Joseph Opatoshu, Melech Ravitch, Jacob Shatzky, Sholem Ash and others, as well as, -- not least -- Grafstein. The book also contained Peretz poems, stories, essays and poems translated by Isidore Goldstick and by others.

Other literary essays included in the work are from the pens of Jacob Isaac Segal, Chaim Greenberg and Israel Rabinovitch.

Grafstein remembers that as a 15-year-old, he could not participate formally in the 1908 festivities in the Elyseum Theatre in Warsaw with Sholom Aleichem. So he joined the mass of enthusiasts outside the Hotel Bristol hoping for a glimpse of the famous humourist, the hero of many legends told in cafés and in the Hazomir art circles.

He retained in his memory for decades these often contradictory tales of Sholom Aleichem's wealth, fame, wit, generosity as well as the vision of Warsaw's leading citizens and literati arriving at the theatre to great Sholom Aleichem: David Frishman, Jacob Dinneson. Even I.L. Peretz, then in friendly rivalry with Sholom Aleichem for literary primacy, came, to the surprise of his considerable coterie among whom A. Almi (Elijah Chaim Sheps) who was soon also to settle in Canada.

In Hazomir musical circles, the Ontario editor of the Panorama later wrote, the rumours had it that Sholom Aleichem had been dissatisfied with the small hall where the major festivities had taken place; he would have been happier to have more of the people meet and hear him. This desire was, in fact, met by the humourist appearing several times in other theatres.

Grafstein was able to buy a standing room ticket for fifteen kopecks at the Muranov Theatre, recuperated by selling Sholom Aleichem pamphlets of The Messerl during the intermission.

Grafstein saw Sholom Aleichem unexpectedly in a remarkable setting which was itself profoundly significant of the cultural secular-religious relationship. The young Bundist habitually attended the Chevrah Shass synagogue on Nalevky St. which was open twenty-four hours a day for prayer and Talmudic study, mainly by Mitnagdim, "Litvaks" who avoided Chassidic garb common in Warsaw.

Sholom Aleichem had heard of the synagogue. He came to visit the place, bringing his phylacteries and prayer shawl. He quietly took a seat in the centre of the hall, and refused the invitation of the aged beadle to a front seat. At the moment of the Kaddish the writer joined the other mourners who subdued their voices.

Grafstein was employed in a well-known Warsaw wine store Danziger's. One day Sholom Aleichem came into the store to ask for an obscure brand of wine which Grafstein did not recognize. The winekeeper was called upon and approached the guest in imperfect Russian and German, when Sholom Aleichem suggested,

"Maybe we had better dispense with foreign languages and try our mother tongue."

Sholom Aleichem noticed a copy of the Hebrew palmistry book, The Science of the Hand. He asked whether Grafstein was reading it. The young clerk disavowed it. "No, I read better books. I read Tolstoy and Peretz and your books, The Pocket Knife, The Pot."

When Danziger returned with another bottle, Sholom Aleichem advised him to read The Science of the Head, "It's a better book."

Soon it appeared that the brand that Sholom Aleichem had requested was a fiction, and the humourist settled for a bottle of strong red wine.

In 1914 Grafstein saw Sholom Aleichem in Toronto, during his last appearance in Canada. "He and his wife had both aged greatly. She was serving him a glass of warm milk in the dressing room and had a white towel to mop his perspiration. I did not have the heart to intrude. Not long after he left this world forever."

"As he left for Canada, he loved to repeat endlessly, for many years, he fell on his knees before the immortal Yiddish author in adoration, kissing his hands. He deliberately assumed the Peretz image which forever continued to seethe in his heart unquenchably. Those Peretz words in literature were like burning sealing wax. It was his perpetual gift to Yiddish in Canada.

"So he compiled and published a memorial volume on his Peretzist comrade, the martyred author Shlomoh Gilbert, and the monumental Sholom Aleichem Panorama." (Adler, Feb. 1, 1960)

In 1948 Grafstein issued the Panorama in 451 luxuriously illustrated pages in English, including translations by Ontario educationalist and historian Isidore Goldstick, A. Mukdoni and Abraham Roback, memoirs by D. Pinsky, I.D. Bercovitch and essays by Roback, S. Niger, S. Liptzin, M. Samuel, N. Meisel, J. Shatzky, A. Almi, D. Rome, Isidore Goldstick and Konrad Bercovici.

Grafstein's compilation includes an essay, "A Gentile Reads Sholom Aleichem" by Irish-American Mrs. Mary Ready Holmes, (Pp. 39-42) -- Bostonian musicologist and littérateur, who came to Yiddish from her studies at Emerson College with Roback.

The excellent illustrations in the album include work by Montreal Jewish artist B. Malchi and drawings by Ontario black-and-white artist Selwin Dewdney.

Graftstein composed one of the excellent Canadian documents of Warsaw Jewry in his report on "Sholem Aleichem in Warsaw," a parallel to Paul Trepman's A Lane in Warsaw.

Grafstein also wrote a very learned essay in which he traced the Hebrew beginnings of the artist even as he was developing his talent in both languages.

The Ontario enthusiast for the bilingual writer was realized in his own not minor literary talent and critical skills and in his enthusiastic work for the perpetuation of Polish-Yiddish literature. His Canadian and American readers may have lost sight of his ability with the pen as he devoted himself too ardently with his gifts to the Yiddish culture. ("The Hebrew Realm of Sholom Aleichem")

Prof. Ruth Wisse, head of Jewish Studies at McGill University. Some 65 years after his death, collaborated with American historian-critic-sociologist Irving Howe in editing The Best of Sholom Aleichem. (Washington, New Republic Books. 1979. XXVII, 276 p.) In their important preface to the collection the authors advanced Sholom Aleichem studies beyond the humourous, the folkloric and the warm nationalist. They extended to the Sholom Aleichem who experienced and conveyed the horror, the tragedy and the anticipation of Jewish life before the world wars.

His stories, with all their profound humour, were replete with tragedy and despair and with the unanswered questions which Judaism shared in asking with the rest of mankind.

WOLOFSKY'S FIRST EDITORS

Strangely, Wolofsky was not fortunate with his selection of his first editors, especially when he sought to draw from the vast pool of the American metropolis. Their own writing for him and their editing was not particularly distinctive. The files of the Adler demonstrate that he might have found equally capable editors in Canada.

On the other hand, when he risked greatly, in 1912, to invite a great literary figure, Reuben Brainin, the result was nearly fatal for the Montreal publisher -- as the history of the period was to demonstrate quickly.

The editorial leader of the Montreal authors was, of course, H. Wolofsky during the entire creative history of Yiddish Montreal. But in his earlier years he also enjoyed, almost secretively, the life of a pseudonymous columnist, under various pen-names which are important for their rare and particular style.

Yankel Schmid was probably among his noms de plume in the Adler, in a rambling and inconclusive style somewhat reminiscent of Mendele Mocher Seforim.

The story of the eighty years of the Adler is the success story of H. Wolofsky and of his team. B.G. Sack remembered the other founders of the Adler such as music lover and maecenas Carl Rosenberg, bookseller S. Wilensky, J. Lecker, S. Greenfeld and S. Sternklar.

The stabilization of the Adler came early. It had begun as an 8-page weekly, then became an 8-page semi-weekly. The transition came to a 4-page daily and rapidly to a 6-page daily and, by October, 1908, an 8-page daily newspaper.

Fortunately the newspaper also enjoyed the favour of the business community, including the French Canadian.

But upon examination it was not always an easy success, particularly in the editorial department.

The position of a Yiddish daily newspaper outside New York was particularly difficult, witness the mortality rate outside Canada. In addition to their intrinsic difficulties, the New York newspapers were, in effect, continental in their scope, and did not hesitate to direct competitive techniques of all sorts at such "provincial" rivals.

The Adler reprinted the plaint of the Cleveland Yiddishe Velt, "The competition of the New York dailies can assume various forms. At times they open an office in the 'provincial' city; at times they distribute free copies; at times they smuggle copies into newsstands. At other times they publish series of articles to show that the local efforts are ineffective and do not interpret their own communities properly."

Such an article appeared in the New York Tog from the pen of A. Wohliner, former editor of the Adler, who emphasized that Jews in other continental centres derive spiritual nourishment from New York through its press which binds all Jews to the broader world. (Adler, Nov. 25, 1915)

Information is not to hand as to the inner workings of the editorial department. Who assisted the editor in the compilation of the reading matter, beyond the writing of the editorials and the selection of contributed articles -- such as the preparation of the news, much of it translations from the English; the translation of advertisements, etc? Wolofsky's son Philip was not helpful in editorial work. Only ten years after the founding of the Adler do we hear of Leon Cheifetz as city editor.

In such an unusually folk-cultured, literate, intellectually and socially seething society the Adler was the first Montreal periodical able to mobilize an especial readership served by sufficient articulate writers kin to the readers. H. Wolofsky early brought to Montreal well known editors, and even a typesetter who was a figure out of the Yiddish cultural elite.

Undoubtedly he assembled these men creatively into a pattern which these same contributors often did not shape without his sometimes rough jostling.

Initially, the publisher sought leadership for his newspaper among the numerous literati in the United States. But B.G. Sack records that during his early days with the Adler, the current editor had rejected one of his articles as not being of general interest. Sack was greatly surprised because the topic was a major sensation of the day in the English language press. Only later did he discover that the editor could not read English. (Adler, Sept. 2, 1927)

Michael Aaronson, the first editor of the Adler (1879-1963), came to New York from his native Zhitomir in 1884 and participated in the editing of the first American Yiddish papers including the Tageblatt. He had published several collections of Zionist and religious poems.

As Bennett remembered Aaronson, "He was physically a little mite of a man, and though by no means a first rate poet, he nevertheless enjoyed a good reputation as a sincere, forthright member of the literary calling. His selection reflected credit on the sponsors, indicating on their part a serious desire to give their provincial clientele as good a product as could reasonably be expected in any

community outside of New York." ("Between Ourselves," in Jewish Standard, Dec. 15, 1957)

"The news part of a Yiddish newspaper was, of course, of secondary importance. The main thing was the literary aura that endows the editorial creations with the glow of imperishable worth... A poet was considered the ideal person to edit the newspaper." (Ibid., July 1, 1967)

The very first issue of the Adler carried the poem "Rabbi Amnon and the Untanne Tokef Prayer" which was hailed as a masterpiece. He long interpreted the classic Talmudic legends and Zionist lore for the readers of the American press.

Recalling the dedication of the Adler to Jewish interests, to advancing the primitive conditions of charity and of education, to developing a higher sense of nationhood and of social justice, Sack drew upon an early issue, of September 20, 1907. "Editor Aaronson was walking on Kol Nidre night on the streets of Montreal when he saw a group of immigrants just arrived carrying heavy packs on their arms wandering aimlessly without an address, nowhere to go. When he approached them, he was surprised to learn that no one of the responsible officers of the community had arranged to meet them, to relieve their burdens on Yom Kippur and to provide for them for the night.

"He took them to a police station but the sergeant said it was not his affair; he told them to search a night's asylum elsewhere. Aaronson took them to the Beth David Synagogue where he left them."

The incident goes beyond the proclaimed program of the newspaper. From its first issue the Adler was physically present at the scene of Jewish suffering and oppression. Its Aaronson and, above all, its H. Wolofsky, its Medres, its J.I. Segal, its Sack, its N.J. Gotlieb, its Israel Rabinovitch, its Petrushka, its Konrad Bercovici, its Samuel Kaplan, H. Hershman and its other associates were on the scene of pain, the crying conscience of the man and the woman of the community who assumed responsibility for the public. In Canadian Jewish history the team of Wolofsky and Ottawa's Lillian Freiman sits as a monument of compassion-not-yet-become corporate which saved men, women and children by the hundreds in decades where lives were becoming more cheapened wholesale by the million.

From its early times the Adler had an English section edited by M. Rosenberger.

Significantly Rosenberger appears in the Jewish record of the day as an activist in the defence of Montreal Jewry. The Montreal Herald of the summer of 1909 headlined that "Anti-Semitic Rowdies Made Bedlam of St. Lawrence St. But When the Arrests were over No Gentiles were in the Cells. Original Victims. He was in Court this Morning with a Host of Witnesses but the Police were not Ready.

"'Come and help me kill the Jews.'"

The Herald reported, "With such cries from a mob, St. Lawrence, near Demontigny, was on Saturday night turned into a perfect Bedlam.

"The traffic was held up. Policemen made repeated attempts to force a way through, and for a long time their attempts were ineffectual.

"The trouble arose over a man who was walking along the Main street. He is J. Lefson, aged forty-two, of 9 Leduc street. He is a rather short man, not more than five feet two or so, and he wears a red beard.

"'I was going quietly along the street,' he said, 'when some young men, speaking French, insulted me. One of them struck me in the back of the neck, and another tried to pull my beard. I asked them in French what they were doing that for, but their only reply was to call me names.

"'I tried to beat them off, to defend myself, but they only insulted me the more. Then a young man of my own people, who was coming past, came to my assistance. But that only fetched more rowdies round the scene. One of them shouted: 'Come on and let's kill the Jews,' and immediately people were rushing out of the stores, and there was a general fight.'

"Ultimately Constable Desmarteau appeared and arrested Larry Lobovitch, 826 St. Lawrence, charged with refusing to move on; Joseph Kingburg, 9 Jubilee Court, charged with fighting, and Jos. Voneberg, 891 Demontigny Street, charged with obstructing the sidewalk.

"Apparently none of those engaged in the original mix-up were arrested. In explanation, the police say that by the time Constable Desmarteau had reached the scene, the combatants had had time to mix up among the crowd, and that so many contradictory stories were told, that the course taken was the only one possible under the circumstances.

"This morning the three men appeared before Mr. Recorder Weir, and all pleaded not guilty. They were represented by Mr. Marcus Sperber, who brought a cloud of witnesses, from Lefson to the young man who interfered in the assistance of his countryman. The police however were not ready for their case, and an adjournment was made till Thursday to permit further investigation to be made into the affair."

The following day the Herald announced, "Vigilance Committee to Protect Hebrews. Outgrowth of Attack on St. Lawrence Street Saturday night. Jewish Merchants and Men of Influence do not Approve of the Idea, However.

"There is a division of opinion among the Jewish citizens of Montreal.

"Mr. Rosenberger, of the Eagle Publishing Company, heads one side; while numerous prominent Jewish merchants are on the other.

"Mr. L. Cohen expressed the views of the second party to the Herald this morning, while Mr. Rosenberger explained the plans of his faction.

"Mr. Rosenberger and his supporters have come to the conclusion that conditions here are such that they must organize to protect themselves. On Saturday as was told in yesterday's Herald, a venerable Jew was attacked by some youths on St. Lawrence Boulevard, and, when two young Jews came to his assistance, a row broke out, which resulted in three young Jews being arrested by French policemen, while none of the French-Canadian disturbers of the peace were interfered with. This led Mr. Rosenberger to express himself as follows:-

"I am organizing a band of 500 young Jews to act as a vigilance committee. Our motto is 'Loyalty to Great Britain and Defence of Our Own Nation.' The trouble of yesterday was but the climax to a long series of insults which have been put upon our race. Wherever we go young rowdies cry 'Sacres Juifs' at us. Our women and children are insulted, and our old men, who believe in following the custom of their fathers, are attacked.

"On Fletcher's Field, and at Lafontaine Park there have been many cases of respectable Jews being attacked. Their whiskers are pulled, their hats bashed over their eyes, and themselves rolled unceremoniously down steep hills. Still the police do nothing. They appear to think it a great joke! There is never any talk at the City Hall of bettering this condition of affairs. We must take the matter into our own hands, and unite against these indignities. It is our duty to protect our aged, our women, and our little ones. We are not a fighting people, but we can defend ourselves if we must.

"Already 150 young men have joined my corps. I myself will lead them. Five hundred volunteers will easily be raised. Among the Roumanian Jews, especially, the spirit of freedom is strong. We will not break the laws of the land by carrying weapons. Every member of our band must be a British subject. We will fight with the Britisher's own weapons, our fists; and it will not be long before the cowardly insulters of the helpless will be silenced. Our band will be divided up into sections of twenty to watch the streets continually, and Lafontaine Park on Saturday afternoon will be very heavily patrolled."

A number of the Adler collaborators -- notably Hirsch and Yampolsky -- were very versatile and able to fill the columns of the Yiddish press with a wide range of journalistic genres, as they proved in Winnipeg and Toronto as well as Montreal.

In particular H. Hirsch, Isaac Yampolsky, B.J. Goldstein and Moses Shmuelson were of the first generation of skillful Yiddish journalists with very facile pens in Canada, to be followed after their departure from Montreal by a great flowering between the wars and by a still more voluminous and sophisticated era after the second of the wars -- all this with a marked impact upon the English-language literature of Canada and its Jews.

The peculiarities of longevity permitted one of their first, the sickly B.G. Sack, to contribute to this newspaper for the nearly six decades as a daily and to see his own classic history of the Canadian Jewish community appear after the Second World War; J.I. Segal's first poems were published in the Adler during the First World War.

Simon Nepom (1882-1939) was the first Canadian poet to appear in the Adler during its earliest years. He had been born in Elizavetgrad, Russia. "During the 1905 revolution he became an active worker for the anti-Czarist cause and eventually found himself in Paris where he studied current French literature while living in the hostel of the Russian émigré society. He learned the trade of a fur cutter. While in France he began to compose Russian and Yiddish poetry, for the Voschod, the Forward and the Varheit. But there was little of Yiddish in his Paris environment and in 1908 he emigrated to Montreal, attracted by its French language and the presence of the family of Mrs. Nepom, sister of Mrs. Lazarus, the wife of the bookseller.

"That store was the nest of the city's Jewish intellectuals and of the personnel of the newly established Adler. There he met a group of anarchists who centred about a Russian newspaper, Novy Mir. Later, he became acquainted with Aleksander Bercovitch and M. Shulemson and later with J.I. Segal, Ida Massey and Nahum Pearlman, who had lived long in Paris and was a scholar in French literature.

"But Nepom found it difficult to earn a living for his family of three children. His work in fur was difficult and deleterious for his health. He became a groceryman, and sold papers without success. In 1917 the family left for Toronto where he was befriended by poet Abraham Nisnevitch (1886-1955). Here he obtained a position as street car conductor which he held for 21 years.

"During these years he contributed poems sensitive to the pathos of poverty to Canadian and American Jewish periodicals and found place in such collections as Leiser Rosenberg's Canada, 1919 and in Noah Steinberg's Yiddish America. His collections appeared in Toronto, Hobbled, 1926; In the Struggle, 1928; In the Barn, 1929, and posthumously, Of My Day, 1940." (Ida Nepom, his wife, in note to H.M. Caiserman. MS.)

Caiserman summarized Nepom's work, "Through his songs we enter into the very sad universe of a poet of fine sensitivity."

In addition to these Montreal authors, the Adler brought its readers the work of Sholem Asch, H. Roisenblatt, Yakir Warshavsky and Peretz Hirschbein in 1908, especially after the advent of Brainin to the editorial direction of the Adler when the Montreal daily became an anthology of great current Yiddish literature. Montreal readers were able to read Peretz, Sholom Aleichem, Mendele Mocher Seforim, David Frishman, etc.

He invited Solomon Shneour, upon his arrival in Canada from Philadelphia, in 1908 to serve as contributor and news editor of the Adler and as familiar columnist under the heading of "Week In, Week Out".

Early in 1908 A. Landau (1877-1942) who assumed the nom de plume of Wohliner assumed the editorship of the Adler and retained it until September 8, 1909, according to B.G. Sack.

A. Wohliner had come to America in 1902 from his native Alt Constantin in the Ukraine. He was one of the early editors of the Kemfer, a U.S. Poale Zion weekly.

"In later years I have read a great deal of Wohliner's writing, in various journals, and entertained a high regard for his stylistic qualities." (Bennett)

"Unlike Aaronson's 'Deitschmerish', Wohliner's literary style was elevating yet warm."

Before arriving in Montreal he had edited the Yiddisher Kemfer, the Poale Zion weekly which still ranks as one of the outstanding Jewish periodicals in the world.

In Wohliner's period as editor he engaged S. Schneour, one of the important figures of Montreal Judaism as news editor and major collaborator. He also added to his staff Isaac Yampolsky, B.J. Goldstein, Abraham Roback, and A. Ossovsky of Winnipeg.

Wohliner's militancy in the Kashruth issue incurred excommunication upon himself, his colleagues, the newspaper and its advertisers at the sacred hands of Rabbi Simon Glazer. (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 36)

His proposal for a Federation of Canadian Jews put forth in the columns of the Adler was taken up seriously by the Baron de Hirsch Institute in the form of a Board of Deputies of Canadian Jews.

His frequent humorous reports on Jewish life in Canada published in the Warsaw Freind was widely read.

A characteristic Passover sketch of Wohliner appeared on April 8, 1908, "Spring Considerations",

Characteristic of Wohliner's editorials, "At home we were enslaved, but we were not slaves because we understood our condition. Here we are slaves because we are put in chains and do not feel them; we are proud of them. Because of our equality of citizenship we have lost our nationality.

"Are we nationalists, compared to the poor religious Jews in Russia or to disinterested Jews in the west? We raise our national funds by personal publicity, by inscriptions in Golden Books, by elections. Do we learn Hebrew? Do we go to Palestine? For one Jewish family in Galicia we have a thousand organizations here to assist them. To plant five trees in the Holy Land we have appeals, leaflets, meetings, debates."

His sketch "We Want to Live" appeared on November 3, 1908. "Can a people live like this?" on May 31, 1909.

Wohliner's "Mashka, a sketch of Russian Persecutors" was printed on November 15, 1908, his sketches "Small People and Great Words" appeared on November 29, and "Lonely" on December 11, 1908. His "A Chanukah Evening" appeared in the Adler of December 20, 1908 and Torn Souls was published in the daily on January 10, 1909.

An anonymous article on Ibsen, "Trends in Literature" appeared on November 29, 1908.

B.G. Sack noted that under his direction the Adler became a serious cosmopolitan periodical of importance. "Wohliner's editorials exude warmth, support towards Jewish nationalism and profound concern for Jewish problems. In style the journalism was excellent.

"Significant are the contributions of S. Schneour who joined the Adler in 1907 after his arrival from Philadelphia. He became city editor and contributed articles marked by humour and satire but also often by a seething enthusiasm and dynamism."

Wohliner also wrote excellent humorous essays in the Canadian Yiddish press such as the Folkszeitung of 1912.

Landau wrote a parody "Dreaming" on November 3, 1908. A similar familiar essay, "The Jew is Coming" appeared on November 22, 1908.

Editor Landau composed a poem "Cheated" for the issue of January 3, 1909. His American utopia, "Happy Land of Icary" appeared on January 6, 1909.

Landau rendered L. Andreyev's "The Lie" from the Russian for the Adler of December 8, 1908 and "Christ is Running" by M.Z. Del Gracia for the issues of December 10 and 11, 1908.

Landau translated Gorky's story "Charlie" in the Adler of January 11 and 12, 1909.

A. Roback assumed the editorship of the Adler in the fall of 1909.

ABRAHAM AARON ROBACK

One of the early collaborators of the Canader Adler was Abraham Aaron Roback, a youth brought to Montreal by his immigrant parents into the heart of this vibrant society, early distinguished by his passion for learning, for his personal integrity and for his concern for various aspects of Judaism.

Abraham Aaron Roback was born the son of Isaac and Leba Roback on June 19, 1890 in Goniandz, near Bialostock.

Barely out of high school he asserted his strong beliefs in Jewish principles vigorously before his colleagues in school and, soon, in the entire young Montreal Jewish press -- in the Adler and in the Canadian Jewish Times -- where he quickly became contributor, editor and ideologist. Within several years his mark appeared on the wider arena as a leading psychologist in America and as a militant exponent of Yiddish and of Yiddishism. He became recognized as one of Jewry's great sons, as scholar, thinker and teacher. Montrealer Abraham Roback enriched the thinking of modern Judaism with precious ideas in new realms of language and nationalism.

Virtually all the innovations and intensities had become fully matured in his mind and in his polemical expression before he left Canada in 1912 as a college graduate.

All his life young Roback treasured the memory and the heritage of his birthplace. Indeed, even as a young journalist, at a time when so many immigrants and their sons, in their passion for integration sought to put out of their memories the experiences of unhappy Europe, Roback submitted several of his contributions to editor A.B. Bennett of the Jewish Times with the signature of Goniandzer.

His parents were both from Goniandz or Osovietz, a fortress village near the Prussian border, which was also the birthplace of Dr. Chazanovitch, the founder of the library of the Hebrew University, decades before that academic institution was opened in Jerusalem. The doctor was indeed the physician who attended Roback's mother.

Goniandz was one of a series of tiny villages in the area which Roback heard about in his Quebec infancy -- Podiw, Vratzenia, Yagustavè, Sekalko, Yanevè, Svalke, Reinrod, Stucken and Greivè.

It is a coincidence not without significance that within three years of Abraham Roback's birth, another child was born in that townlet who was also to be brought to the western world and then to Canada, here also to become one of the outstanding Jewish scholars of the continent: Louis Rosenberg -- another reminder of the phenomenal cultural wealth of the Eastern European Jewish hamlets.

"In Montreal I heard much about the villages and towns in the district such as Greive where the inhabitants spoke with a labial 'R' pronounced with an English 'W.' They spoke of Byalostock as of a metropolis. When I visited there in 1930 I could barely smile at the notion. It is difficult to conceive that today it is known as 'a city and a mother in Israel' among Jews in many countries, if only for the fine institutions which the immigrants had erected in the New World," Roback remembered.

Brought to Canada at the age of two, Roback obtained his schooling in Montreal. He received a Jewish education in the Talmud Torah and from private teachers. He began Talmud training at the age of nine, and became interested in Cabbalistic and other religious studies. On his own he pursued extensive Hebraic subjects, including classic grammar and Yiddish; the latter without parental consent.

"Philology was, indeed, the earliest ambition of our author. At the age of 5, he wanted to know whether the Perizzim of Genesis 15, 20 were the Parisians. In grammar school, the plodding advance of his French class impelled him to take up Greek on his own. At 13, when boys are playing marbles or baseball, Latin stirred the youthful etymologist to collate it with English, French, German, Hebrew, Yiddish, Arabic, and Greek...

"The indifference and opposition of the teachers, however, did not stifle the original interests. For years Roback continued to accumulate knowledge and to put down, in fugitive articles, the ideas taking shape already during his undergraduate years. Not, however, until he became associated with Emerson College, when he was invited to hold a seminar on the psychology of language and semantics, did he have the longed-for opportunity to whip up his amassed data and thoughts.

"The two other passions, psychology and Yiddish, of course, are brought to bear on the subject. The first is, indeed, the underlying basis for the whole investigation which seeks to discover the whys and hows of all language phenomena; that is, to study them from a motivational angle. Thus they are again investigated with a new interest, significance and relatedness hopelessly missing in the dry and sterile researches of recent decades.

"Yiddish comes in for an integral share of evidence and illustration of the thesis advanced. As a language, it had been universally ignored or misrepresented by linguistic scholars. Dr. Roback boldly berates them for not acquainting themselves with a tongue that 'is surely easier to learn than Aranta, Swahili or Tokharian.'" (Joseph Berger. The Destiny and Motivation of Dr. A.A. Roback. Cambridge, Schoenhoff. Pp. 11-13)

At the age of seventeen he entered McGill and won the Prince of Wales Medal when he received the Bachelor's degree in 1912.

By the time he graduated from McGill and left Montreal for Harvard he was already an outstanding Yiddish scholar. This is the less easily understood when we examine the condition of schooling in Montreal where there were no scholars in that field, and where the Jewish National Radical School was barely one year old. Nevertheless, the young professor at Cambridge, emerged from Montreal as a foremost authority on Yiddish and as the militant battler for the preservation and study of this phase of Jewish culture.

Indeed, he claimed to be "the only Yiddish writer brought up outside of a ghetto."

Zalmen Reisen, the encyclopaedist of Yiddish literature and culture, noted that "Roback was one of the very few who appeared in Yiddish literature in the New World from very early youth and notably maintained the purity and folk character of the Yiddish style."

Reisen refers to him as "one of the few Yiddish authors who received his earliest education in the New World; he maintained the purity and populist character of his Yiddish style; a pioneer in Yiddish journalism in Canada. For a time an effective force in this medium, he was one of the leaders of the Yiddish school movement and one of the founders of its Montreal school -- among the first in the world... He wrote on the 'Yiddish Influence on English' in the Canadian Jewish Chronicle in 1914." (Lexicon Fun Der Yiddisher Literatur. Vilno, 1929. s.n.)

Ben Kayfetz notes that "the wealth and diversity of his Yiddish vocabulary is astounding. His style, imagery and idiom are among the richest of Yiddish prose writers." (Letter, March 31, 1986, in Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives)

B.G. Sack, his colleague in Montreal journalism, reminded his readers that "Roback had sucked in his mother's milk the melody of Yiddish song and of her Yiddish speech and idioms. In his thoughtful youthfulness this love became a conviction, a belief and a confidence in the importance and future of the language.

"Yiddish is essential to the future of the people. Those who accept the doom of Yiddish are revealing their death wish of the Jewish people. Those who repeat the decline of the language of its literature are only indicating the death of their own ideals, hopefulness and spirituality." (Review of his Imperiye Yiddish in Adler, June 15, 1958)

An indication of his success in planting Yiddish in Canada comes from Kiev in 1928. The distinguished philologist and critic Nahum Shtiff ("Ba'al Dimyon") recognized A.A. Roback as historian of Yiddish literature and folklore and as vigorous champion of the cultural values associated with this language.

In a letter to Roback written May 24, 1928 Shtiff comments, "I admire your fluency in Yiddish, especially when I am told that you were brought up in Canada, not chez nous." (In Buenos Aires Davke, vol.2, no. 7, Apr. 1951, P.374)

Sholem Shtern is among those who were astounded by the sources of his Jewish learning and his profound familiarity with the Yiddish language.

"It can only be ascribed to his endless devotion and to his love and study of the tongue dating back to his infancy. He wrote Yiddish, defended Yiddish and fought for it during his entire lifetime." (Vochenblatt, Aug. 19, 1965)

There is profound significance in the fact that the early Jewish community in the 1890's -- a decade and a half before the appearance of any Hebrew or Yiddish book or periodical in Canada, before any author in these languages had expressed himself in literature in Canada who might have provided the encouragement, the model and such training -- possessed such structured as well as informal educational facilities that would make it possible for a gifted youth to walk out of Montreal as a full-fledged scholar, into the front ranks of Yiddish and Hebrew scholarship.

B.G. Sack, a life-long friend of Roback, notes that the future Yiddishist was a student of the first Talmud Torah of Montreal where the Rev. M.B. Lauterman (b. 1853), Shochet of the Shaar Hashomayim Congregation, was the volunteer teacher of Talmud.

"The primitive Talmud Torah of the period, crowded, airless, poorly lit was such that its spiritual leader Rabbi Hirsch Cohen wondered in public whether we are performing a good deed in running the institution or whether we are committing a crime against our children." (Adler, July 26, 1908)

Yet Sack noted that the school exerted a powerful influence upon its pupils. It was the pillar that maintained Judaism in the spirit of a great generation in opposition to the spirit of the streets of the metropolis. From those rooms emerged community leaders, professional men to whom world Jewry owes much, such as Roback and Dov Joseph.

Roback also remembered Rabbi A.M. Ashinsky, founder of the Talmud Torah.

Many years later, on a visit to Pittsburgh, Roback called on his Montreal teacher of the Aleph Beth. The incident recalls a beautiful tale of a sage going back to his birthplace. His first visit was to the aged, humble "dardky" teacher of the ABC and reading of his childhood. He explained "I have had many great teachers since then, but I am more certain of the truth of his teachings than of all the profound teachers of my later years."

When principal Chaim Lozinsky set up a student society, Roback served as president. His associate, Joseph Cohen, was later a member of the legislative assembly of Quebec and professor of criminal law at McGill University.

The older pupils of the Talmud Torah organized a Zeirei Zion group which was represented at the National Zionist convention by young Lazarus Phillips, in his maturity a member of the Senate of Canada.

The Paris publisher of Roback's veritable encyclopedia of Yiddish, Der Folks Geist in der Yiddisher Sprach, A. Miednick, notes in his prologue that "the author was virtually born in America. This proves that others can also serve Yiddish, and that the argument about the requirement of a Yiddish environment is false; especially when the author had not studied in Yiddish or specialized in Semitic languages but in philosophy and psychology and in other languages." (P.10)

Roback was sensitive to having been brought to the Anglo-Saxon world at a very early age and therefore having been introduced to the English language at a crucial moment in his life, unlike so many other Jews who were learning English at a mature age. This led him to examine closely the intrusion of English word usages. He applied his linguistic skills to "policing" the growing Yiddish vocabulary even of such highly regarded authors as Melech Ravitch, sometimes with constancy and even with some acerbity.

He later recalls the distortion of his city's name, "a fine city with a fine name, which occurred in his own home in the beginning of the century into 'Montrelach,' and again into 'Montreliuliah' by a visiting relative from New York. Montreal never was a sleepy town even half a century ago, but how else could anyone refer to a city which then numbered some 200,000 souls?

Montreal had developed a local toponymic humour, such as a reference to an overgrown person as "a Kishinev boy."

"I imagine that Toronto had its detractors among Jews, who Yiddishized its name into the elided 'Trante.'" (a rag) (Der Folks Geist in der Yiddisher Sprach. The People's Spirit in Yiddish. Paris, Gapa-Gelden Peacock, 1964. P.340)

So he noted that Yiddish as it was spoken in Montreal in his childhood included a plural noun "Nantzes" which meant nonsense; presumably more than one "nontz."

He also remembers a Montreal joke current at the expense of Quebec Jews who were called "Quebec Yeshuvnikes" referring to Jews in Europe who lived in isolated areas and were therefore seen by the metropolitan residents of the larger towns as backward, ignorant and provincial; this even though Quebec City, Roback notes, has produced a fair number of Jews renowned across the nation. (Pp. 336-37)

Roback recalled that for several years he wrote "taller" in the Adler for the coin of the realm, instead of the more logical dollar.

He noted that the Yiddish pronunciation of a dollar in Russia and Poland was different from the Montreal or New York usage, for the former was not as frequent or as familiar. "In the New World the term is in common usage, whereas in the Old World it retains a sense of the mystic. How often does a Jew in Vilno or Warsaw have occasion to use the word? The question also applies to the term "a Quarter," where Jews frequently omit the first "R."

Roback searched without complete success for the exact origin of the Yiddish folksy term "Particlè" for the English term "Particular."

THE SON OF AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY

Miss Leah Roback, niece to Abraham Roback, recalls that his childhood in Montreal was not easy.

"The family came to Montreal. His father Zada Roback worked in a factory in men's clothing. He was a bit of a cutter, I think, and I think Vineberg had a big factory in those years where my father came to work. My father Moses Meier was a brother to my uncle Abraham Aaron Roback.

"They had two sisters, Zlatta (Lottie) and Leah; the latter married a Helfield in Montreal, and they went to live in Sherbrooke for many, many years, at the time when the Echenbergs lived in Sherbrooke. My grandfather and grandmother on the Roback side had a Jewish divorce. They divorced in Montreal.

It was only a Jewish divorce. Those religious people went to the council of the rabbis. The Jewish divorce was recognized, yet he remarried in the Jewish rites. In those years it didn't matter. It was the Jewish way of doing things.

"Uncle Abe stayed with my grandmother Roback. My Zada Itzhak married a woman who was very good. They lived on Rivard Street. My grandmother Leiba Roback was what I would call a fanatic religious person.

"So Uncle Abe lived with Baba Roback. He used to visit his father on Rivard Street. Baba lived on Upper City Hall. In those years they had long stairs that you went up, and Baba lived in the little 'budka' (a hut) there. Then she moved to Norbert Street, right up at the top where she could see the whole mountain, near St. Lawrence Main. One time there used to be a big brewery, a big grey stone building, and there's a short street, Norbert St.

"Baba was not what one would call one of these fussy housekeepers. Dust rag and broom were not always in her hand. She was a learned woman, mind you; she was undisciplined; she was a strange lady and had her own way. So uncle would have to sit and pray in the morning, even before he got his breakfast, and many were the times she urged him to continue the prayers, "Zog Weiter, Zog Weiter" (keep on saying) so long that he had to rush to school. He was late most of the time, without breakfast, and he had to wear the tsitses and the yarmulka.

"My Grandmother Roback, she used to have expressions, I don't know where she got them, and there was a Jewish magazine in the Argentine which was published in Yiddish, (Davke, no. 26-27, P.242-46; no. 28). I was going to bring them but it's tough when

you walk with a cane, I just couldn't manage that on the buses. In one of them are the expressions that Baba, his mother used. I don't know where she got them."

Yiddish before the end of the nineteenth century, when the continental and transoceanic migration had not yet destroyed the treasury of linguistic localisms, was marked by vast variations in words and expressions. Even when the Montreal community had developed a widespread sensitivity to this vocabulary and speech particularly, Baba Roback's Yiddish was the subject of general comment. It is therefore not surprising that her precocious folklorist son, so close to his mother, should have compiled "From Mother's Lexicon," with precious annotations.

Roback documents his sources of Yiddish knowledge directly, in a manner probably without parallel, in several articles in Davke, the Buenos Aires scholarly journal on Yiddish and on philosophy. He wrote "From My Mother's Lexicon" listing scores of family usages or regionalisms (Davke, vol. 7, no. 28 and 29, 1956),

Roback had long been seriously interested in his mother's vocabulary that her lexicon had become a subject of humorous comment in his circle of friends. One day an editor of the important Yiddish dictionary asked the Montreal scholar for this material.

"Some of the words were of Russian or Polish origin, but in my ears they sounded folk Yiddish. The words which were purified and preserved in my mother's tongue were dear to me.

"She had kept her Lithuanian Yiddish intact, although with Polish and Russian admixture. It was a purified idiom. Neither father nor mother had received any education; she learned many expressions in the homes where she had served and in the books all about her such as prayer books, Yiddish translations of the Bible, the Menorath Hamaor, etc. She had a feeling for language nuances and acquired a rich vocabulary.

"My mother also did not study, having been orphaned young, she did catch the speech of the homes where she served and such women's reading as the Yiddish translations of the Bible, which explains the numerous Hebrew expressions in her vocabulary. She had a fine sense of language, whereas father was very expressive. As he narrated his endless stories it sounded as if he was reading them textually, with all their intonations. But he did not possess the wealth of vocabulary which my mother had.

"Some of the words in my mother's collection may have been forged in Canada." (Der Folks Geist fun der Yiddisher Sprach, Pp. 441-42)

Roback noted that some of his mother's terms were of Canadian development and reflected Montreal living conditions and social attitudes. One such local usage utilized the term "Oisarbeten," to

work out. The Yiddish term also meant additionally working for pay by young girls whose social estate did not permit them to work for wages to maintain themselves. Such girls, nevertheless earned their minor needs -- clearly not for board or room -- such as cosmetics, dresses, petty cash, etc.

H. Zohn referred to Roback in Max Brod's terms, as "Streitbar," disputatious or belligerent; his life was that of a fighter, of an unyielding polemicist.

The well-known Yiddishist Abraham Golomb engaged in a long polemic with Roback in 1957 in regard to parental and environmental influences upon their children. In the course of this debate in Kultur Un Derziung and in the Mexico annual Die Neue Shool the educationalist, formerly from Winnipeg, cited Roback to illustrate his argument.

Roback, in his response to Golomb, outlined his family background to establish that he enjoyed few influences from them.

"My father had barely learned to read a Jewish paper and had never attended Cheder. He married early and had worked at assisting smugglers. He rode well and had many encounters with customs officers in Russia. In Montreal he became a tailor and was often out of work but he never hesitated to insult his employers, never asked for favours, and never spent time on second thoughts. He could out-argue even those who were certain of their information. He signed his name with a cross but I found the name Isaac on an old Bible, his only literary work. His pipe was always filled with stale tobacco except on Sabbaths. He looked a little peasant-like, a sort of Joseph Conrad (who had been born in Berdichev!). His great care appeared only when he carefully repeated, as if from a record, the faithful recollections of his old country adventures with smugglers and customs officers. His only admirable qualities were his independence and the great carefulness which he sought to inculcate in me."

Leah Roback remembered, "Grandfather Roback spoke Yiddish, we always spoke Yiddish to grandfather.

"When Uncle left for Harvard, he couldn't leave all his books with Baba because she was as disorganized as could be; so the books were put in bookcases, with glass doors, and Zada Roback kept them in a room they had on Rivard Street. And in the summer Zada would put these little mothballs, one in there, one there. Nobody could touch those books, but nobody. 'The books are Avrum Aaron's.' Finally Uncle picked out some and some he gave, I think, to the Jewish Library. My Zada Roback had great respect for Uncle's knowledge, for Uncle being the man he was; he therefore respected his belongings. This second wife he had, she was told by Zada that these books were holier than God.

"Perhaps, because Zada wasn't such a great Shulgoer these books were revered, and Zada would clean them. It was like a mother with a child. He would take every book singly to do this and put it back there when it was clean. The shelves were perfectly clean. Zada did that. He wouldn't even let his wife, his second wife, do it. Such was the great attachment he had for Uncle, because he had never had that kind of knowledge, Zada Roback.

"As I said he was quasi-illiterate. In fact I remember we used to go, my mother and I, Mama used to go and write letters for Zada Roback and he would always clean up part of the desk and he would have the inkwell...

"So, Zada, when Mama would come (he called her Fagela) he would have the inkwell -- there were no ballpoint pens in those days -- the inkwell was filled, the pen was there, there was a blotter, there was the paper. Mama would come to write letters for him to the daughter in Buffalo and to Uncle, Mama would read the letters to Zada and then she would answer. Zada Roback came to Beauport for my brother's Bar Mitzvah, my oldest brother."

In his Der Folks Geist fun der Yiddisher Sprach Roback recalls the ungrammatical invitations to meetings, which his father used to receive from his Hebrew Sick Benefit Association in 1893; parallels to such crude Yiddish announcements appear in Roback's collections from the Toronto Shidlover congregation in 1911 where the words and sense are quite unintelligible. (Pp. 91-93)

"My mother, doubtless, had great intelligence, was extremely fanatical and backward in many ways. She would never remove the image of God from herself (she would never have her photograph taken) and was very consistent in regard to all laws and traditions, but was not considerate in regard to her children. A good cook she often set a meal of bread and sugar and would embarrass her children before their friends. In another environment, with her intelligence, rich vocabulary of hundreds of Hebrew words, her unusual sense of humour, she could have developed a talent, with her hundreds of folk songs in Yiddish, Polish and German. But she had never read a Yiddish book or a paper, because all this was untruthful; at middle age she barely learned to write with odd strokes and spelling of her own.

"They were distant from each other in religion. I came to the synagogue one Sabbath day and told father that I had seen a precious dime on the street, but had not picked it up out of respect for the Day of Rest. He laughed at me and made me tell him where it was. On the way home he went and picked it up. Mother praised me for my piety and scolded him."

His niece Leah provides another family version of the episode, not less authentic and interesting as a social document.

"There was one little story I must tell. Uncle, naturally, had been brought up religiously, and so one Saturday he was walking along Main St. near St. Catherine and he saw, on the street, a 50¢ piece. I don't know if you remember those big 50¢ pieces, but you don't pick up money on the Shabbas. What would God think, eh? So he took a little bit of stone and covered it and it happened to be summer, so poor God, he didn't send down the darkness early. Finally I think it was about 8 o'clock or 9, Uncle went back, because they were as poor as church mice, and he went to get the 50¢ piece, but alas somebody got there before him, kicked the stone away and found the 50¢ piece, so he was disappointed."

Roback continues with the family history,

"The children were a world apart from them. My older brother who had studied in the Yeshivah became an assistant cutter (the educated young immigrants were trained as cutters in Montreal). We never uttered a curse in our lives, even though we heard many of them every day.

"My mother arranged for a man from the Yeshivah Reb Isaac Elchanan to examine me as to my readiness for that school. I told him I knew no Talmud, even though I knew the tractate on Witnesses off by heart.

"Of course I heard Yiddish at home and read whatever I could find. My brother was among the first subscribers to the Tzukunft, but I was not permitted to touch his bookcase. I sneaked several glimpses at P. Wiernick's history, but he noticed that one of the volumes was out of place, and he threatened to beat me. My father preferred me to learn French rather than read Yiddish books; my mother wanted me to look into Seforim. All in all, Yiddish was taboo, and if anyone reported that I was reading Yiddish there was trouble in the house.

"When I was eleven I was taken to Quebec City to my brother's wedding. There I saw, in the home of the wedding party, a Yiddish book which I devoured during the two days I was there; it left an impression upon me for life. Only twenty years later did I learn its title: Jew and Christian, the translation of the historical novel about the influential Jew Joseph the Man of Rossheim on which Goldfaden based his Reb Yoselman.

"What led me to become a spokesman for Yiddish? Neither my parents, nor my brother and certainly not my sister; the surviving sister, who still speaks a broken English, was ashamed of Yiddish when she was a girl. She had heard more of it than I did, for she did not come to Canada until she was fourteen while I was a babe in arms. The environment was entirely opposed to Yiddish.

"No wonder that when Brainin came to Montreal he asked me how I came to know Yiddish. At the time I was surprised at his question.

"It seems to me that there are several reasons for this 'attitude'; all are inherited: impracticability, individualism, sympathy for the humiliated, a consistent logic and an interest in language.

"I feel that if I had been brought up in an environment with no Yiddish I would have been drawn to it and would have learned it thoroughly." (A.A. Roback. Di Imperye Yiddish. Mexico City, Mendelson Fund 1958. Pp. 454-59)

A.A. Roback, then an undergraduate student at McGill recalled, as a linguistic phenomenon in changes of consonants, that Jews selling hot baked potatoes on the streets of Montreal called out "O. le pitack," for "le patate." ("Linguistic Notes," in Buenos Aires Davke, vol. 2, no. 7, P. 368)

"My father's speech was a mixture of Russian, Polish, German and English. This was because he had not only failed to attend a Cheder, but because his father had taken him and his elder sister to Bessarabia where they had spent some time."

His father lacked these language refinements, but he had clear expression of sound, and had endless stories of his youth.

His family Yiddish was a constant source of concern for Roback and he documented it profusely. In His "Transmigration of a Language" in 1958 he again cited his sister's language as she had spoken it some half a century earlier in Montreal, full of Hebrew expressions; at least one of them "Herev Had", a sharp sword, for a mischievous child.

"Where did she hear such language? From our mother. Since then she had married; children had come, grew up, and grandchildren. Yiddish became something other. You can still call it Yiddish, but it was not our mother's Yiddish which she had heard; but her grandchildren's language; more than half the words which she now wrote were pure English."

Roback also appended a Yiddish letter he received from his great-nephew Shlomeh Isaac (Eric) Helfield, a third generation Canadian, written in 1944. Both his parents had been born in Montreal; his grandparents had immigrated to Canada very young. The child had just observed his Bar Mitzvah and had received two of Roback's books as gifts on the occasion. He was attending the Jewish People's Schools, as had his mother before him. The letter was in perfect Yiddish.

A decade later Roback saw the young man, now a university graduate nearly completing his legal studies, reading a Yiddish newspaper in Montreal.

"Do you understand it?"

"Why not?"

"Just for fun, how many words did you miss?"

"Two."

"Two? That's not many for a long article." He is already a father, and within years the fourth generation may be writing Yiddish. "Everything is possible with the help of God," Roback concluded in the anarchist Freye Arbeiter Shtimme of April 6, 1956 and in Di Imperye Yiddish (Pp. 50-52)

Forty years after these Roback recollections Eric Helfield still understands, speaks, writes and uses Yiddish. His wife understands the language and has a very strong, positive attitude towards it. One of their children attends Jewish day school; the others did not (which their parents now regret).

One of Roback's earlier books, Curiosities of Yiddish Literature, is dedicated "To the memory of my mother whose natural resistance to the current of assimilation has preserved for her son vistas of a receding culture, thus enabling him to forge another link in the endless chain which keeps an ancient people alive and free."

"THE JEWISH ACHIEVEMENT"

Miss Leah Roback remembers one of the versions of family history, "Uncle was a very shy person as a young man and he wasn't the kind who would fight the situation at home, or tell those boys to go to hell, or sock them the way they socked him. He wasn't that kind of person. He would just keep it within himself and, Uncle, he was a good student, he was a passionate reader and a passionate analyser of things.

"At that time there was a Jewish bookseller; I remember the place. I think Charles Lazarus' family, on the Main St. They had this book shop there and Uncle, he used to do babysitting there so that he could read books, or even borrow them. They were very nice to him. It was something he used to talk about rather frequently.

"There was a cultural group who used to meet at Lazarus' book shop, and then Uncle worked at that Canader Adler. Uncle used to write articles there, but he also worked at the Canadian Jewish Times. That was where he used to write all those articles about Jewish culture and so on. It was a very worthy addendum to the Jewish daily Adler.

"Uncle was able, because of his studious manner, to go to university. He went to McGill, he was an excellent student. I remember we were in Beauport when Uncle got the Prince of Wales medal, and that was something that very few people had, and a scholarship to go to Harvard University in Massachusetts.

"He met a lot of people and he got the love of Yiddish, I think because he felt very close to the Jewish people, and he met an awful lot of such people there.

"Then one day Baba Roback was sick, so Uncle said, 'Come to Massachusetts and you'll see a good doctor there, a specialist; they have good hospitals.' So my mother and my father, they came up to Montreal and they went to the station to see her off. There was a big, big gathering at the station and my mother said, 'What is going on?' It was Lightstone, Madame Donalda, who was going to Paris to study singing. So Mama was there with my father, and they had such naches that this young Montreal Jewish girl was going to Paris, because Sir Donald Smith was paying the money."

Roback has left an unusually important document describing the Montreal of his childhood, perceived by a scholar of sensitive folkloric interests, in Oifn Shvel. ("The Jewish Achievement," April 1946 pp. 16, 22) It is a gem of legendry from the memory of Roback's father who loved to tell of the pioneer Yiddish scholar Getzel

Zelicovitch in Montreal in the nineteenth century. He used to visit a Chinese laundryman here to converse with him in Chinese.

"There comes to mind the days before the emergence of institutions and their effective leaders, when politics were village style, shtetel-manner and families played the role of unorganized structures.

"I recall when the Shapiros separated from the Russian synagogue on Cadieux Street and established a Minyan across the street which in effect became a synagogue unto itself, and attracted many of the veritable scholars. The leaders of this group were Shiye, Joseph and Gershon Shapiro.

"The Glazers were a family of powerful folk types who interceded strongly for their own. Because of them Judah, the son of Peretz Geffen, one of the ordinary melamed teachers, was on the staff of the Talmud Torah for many years. Their vociferous opponent was David L. Lazarus, a simple man with wide influence and a political sense. His son Pishke was not a source of pride for their Hebrew teacher.

"The more marriages the more the families branched out, the more there were to protect, in the style of the Family Compact of Canada's political history.

"Naturally the de Sola-Joseph family was the most aristocratic, followed by the Cohen family with patriarch Lazarus Cohen, an older brother of the leader of the rabbis in the city, Rabbi Hirsch Cohen.

"There were several types in Montreal Jewish society -- such as Mr. Ansell, reminiscent of Moses Montefiore and of a character in La Bohème; Capt. Ryan, the Irish editor of the Jewish Times who wrote on Jewish festivals, that 'We Jews must remember that God gave us the Torah;' the skating artist Rubenstein who shone with his wealth, with his suit-become-green, always prominent in political as well as athletic and sports circles; 'little Chaim Vineberg' called so because he was short, a modern Hebraic scholar who developed an extensive clothing industry with a ladder as the company symbol; he employed only Hebraic scholars as designers and cutters and extended them certain privileges at work.

"Yudel Cars who founded the American Silk Waist Co. was a utopian; he got the French Canadian girls working for him to go on strike.

"Everyone was known in the small Jewish society. Newly arrived immigrants were known by nicknames, their parents first names, by occupations: Itche Chaim Leibele's, Yankel the doctor, Shlomeh the Chassid or Shlomeh the buttermilk, Moishe the long one (or the baby) or Meir the Shochet.

"I attended the first Yiddish theatre presentation in the Monument National when I was five years old. It might have been Ahasuerus. The actors were all Montreal amateurs. Some time later Clara Young,

now a prominent worker for Jewish culture in Russia, played in Montreal regularly, first with Mitnick and later with the Hollanders.

"I recall when there were only several Jewish doctors in Montreal, and that one of them, Dr. Lightstone had distinguished himself in the Boer War.

"Where there are institutions in a community, intellectual forces form about them. Cambridge is a small town compared to Montreal, but because of Harvard and the M.I.T. a large number of great men centre there, naturally including Jews. But the Jewish intellect in Montreal had to develop individually and sporadically.

"Ever since I remember Clarence de Sola he was the most distinguished figure in Montreal Jewry. His aristocratic figure and conduct evoked respect from Jews and non-Jews. His elder brother Meldola was rabbi in the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation but he did not project the prestige of his younger brother, of English manners and Portuguese culture. At first it all appeared strange, but I learned that this alien appearance did indeed derive from Portuguese origin. He was among the first Zionists on the continent and he brought together the wealthy element and the immigrants in the Agudath Zion Society which he founded. It was he who encouraged my brother to become its secretary before the dawn of the century.

"During the retreat of Dunkirk the English soldiers saw one of their officers in the field stop to draw his phylacteries from their sack and don them for his morning prayers. The officer was the son of Clarence de Sola...

"The Jewish community was restricted in its possibilities. No Jewish lawyers attained fame; it was only by community work that they became known. S.W. Jacobs may have become a sound parliamentarian but he was not a great advocate. Later a number of medical men became distinguished scientists at McGill.

"In the realm of music Clara Lichtenstein came to Montreal to become the first director of the McGill Conservatory of Music. Pauline Donalda, grandchild of 'the old Lightstone,' my first Hebrew teacher, became a great opera singer. Another Jewess, Irene Pavloska, daughter of David Levy of St. John, Quebec, was encouraged in her operatic studies by Caruso and Melba before she became a member of the Chicago Opera Company. Ivan Abramson led an operatic group for several seasons, Ellen Ballon and Rose Goldblatt were highly regarded performers."

IN THE QUEBEC COUNTRYSIDE

Miss Roback recalls her family in the Quebec countryside,

Leah's mother had inherited her father's business interests and kept a small store at Beauport from 1905 to 1919, for the father could not earn enough as a tailor in Montreal to keep his family. So he left for Beauport.

The beginnings were difficult for this only Jewish family in the Catholic village. "The neighbours were poor; most of the men were working for parliament. There was poverty in the Ste. Thérèse, St. Joseph and St. Michel concessions. Some of the women were working as cleaners in the Parliament in Quebec. Some were farmers, etc.

"The Robacks were simple people who had been won over by their parents' principle: You have to respect other people if you want their respect.

"At Beauport I have seen the courage of the farmers. In all the struggles I have come to know the courage of citizens."

The mother took ill and returned to Montreal. Leah was sixteen by then and went to work for the first time in a cleaning plant on "conditions that weren't funny at all," in a smelly, dirty place at \$8.00 a six-day week, from 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. every day. (Lucie Leboeuf. "Leah Roback, ou l'organisation syndicale est indissociable de la vie de quartier," in La Vie ouvrière, no. 128, Oct. 1978, Pp. 461-70; Histoire des femmes au Québec. Montreal, Le Quinzaine 1982. P.301)

"But the Jews in Quebec, those business people who had stores, they were afraid, because you see they were the ones who were being attacked in the papers.

"There was a good deal of neighbourliness. Mother's soupe au poulet was standard remedy for the women in the village after an illness. The teacher, who was our neighbour, held my brother down on our kitchen table while the doctor operated on him.

"During Corpus Christi parades we were told to come into the house when the eucharist passed because we would not kneel, being Jewish. We were the only Jewish family in Beauport; all the five children belonged to the one Roback family. The village curé commented that this was the Jews' mark of respect."

In his Der Folks Geist in der Yiddisher Sprach Roback recalls the Corpus Christi processions in Montreal when the archbishop marched at the head of the pious demonstration, acolytes carried the train of

his robes. Some Jews, he remembered, used to comment, "They are pulling the priests." (P.211)

In this last major work in Yiddish Roback recalled Canadian school children cursing Indians for their strange place names such as Hochelaga and Caughnawaga which needed to be learned, in French spelling as well as in English, names which had no human connotations, sounds or humour. (P. 334)

"Some of the Jewish people, a few had come in as immigrants. Now that they were here the Jews would go to the docks to meet new immigrants and would take them to the synagogue and help them find jobs. These people became customer peddlers, and some used to go up to the north of Quebec to get the furs from the Indian trappers.

"The Jewish people in Quebec were a group, an ethnic group. Most of the people were Catholics. Some Irish Catholics were there too, but they were at loggerheads with the French Catholics. The Jewish community was very closely knit; they had some poor people there, there were a few families very poor, and the people who had made it in Quebec looked after them. There was no such thing as letting them go without proper food on a Shabbos, 'to make Shabbos,'" Miss Roback recalls.

The family was traditional but not strictly observant. Leah Roback recalls that in her childhood during the first decade of the century Friday evenings were festive, and her father Moishe Meier read Sholom Aleichem and Mendele Moicher Seforim after dinner. Yiddish was inculcated into the children who continued to speak it with no alien accent for eighty years.

"My mother," the niece of Abraham A. Roback recalls, "in Beauport was kosher. There was no pork, no bacon in the house, two sets of dishes, but sometimes if one got broken we just washed the other one. We were very, very kosher in Beauport when Baba Steinhouse would come. The Steinhouses were my maternal grandparents. They would come for a bris, and when Mama had another child and another child... They came every time a new baby was born. That was the time it was very difficult for us because Baba Steinhouse was so religious. Her name was Sarah Charna Steinhouse."

THE STEINHOUSE IN-LAWS

Leah Roback, whose mother's maiden name was Steinhouse, speaks of her maternal grandparents,

"They were not rich but they were comfortable. Zada had come here from Poland, from Prushnitz, where they had lived. Apparently it's a village near Warsaw and he had had it up to there, because at that time it was in the hands of the Russians. He had gone into a post office one day when they started getting very edgy in Poland.

"He wore his cap, naturally, and the officer there said, 'Zhid' (kike), 'take off your hat' and Zada said 'What for?' and there was the picture of the Czar Nicholai, you know the way we have the Queen, but here people don't have to take their hats off, but there, in Russia, he had to take his hat off. So he walked out. It rankled him, so Zada came to the States, first in New York."

(Vancouver oral history includes a parallel immigration recollection dated 1911 by the founder of a local family.

(While a teenager in Zoslya in Lithuania he had been walking on the rails when a railway worker -- therefore a civil servant for the government transportation system -- came to the Jewish lad with his oil can and smeared him across the mouth. This being the age of nascent Jewish resistance -- and the boy, Aaron, being made of the stuff that western pioneers were made of -- the lad picked up a rock and smashed the head of the uniformed servant of the czar.

(Followed a manhunt, with many characteristic incidents -- for one, Aaron's refusal of the indignity of leaving Russia on the false passport provided him, but eventually he reached the end of the western railway line, in Canada. -- Canadian Jewish Archives, national headquarters, Montreal. British Columbia Papers. Aaron Rome notes)

"Young Steinhouse got a job as a presser in those bedroom factories they had, in sweatshops, owned by very religious chosen people. They were fire traps, terrible.

"He was a presser, so he carried his pressing iron on his shoulder and he had to carry it, already filled with the charcoal, and that's what he worked on. And they worked from 6:30 in the morning until it got dark. There was Shabbos eve, and those people were so religious, they used to send them off to shul.

"Zada found this very difficult and there was a Mr. Klineberg here in Quebec, a beautiful family related to the Sheffers, Bennetts and

Myerovitches (Myers). Louis Klineberg, Otto's father; we knew Otto very well.

"Klinebergs were a wonderful family. One of them married Archibald B. Bennett of Toronto, that was Otto's sister. She was the oldest. In fact, Louis Klineberg and his wife were godparents to one of my brothers, Joseph, who died.

"They were living in Quebec first and then moved, as most of the Jews did. When the children were getting older they would come to Montreal.

"Mr. Klineberg at that time was building up this customer peddling business, and he saw Zada in New York, and he told him to come to Quebec, and he would get a job. Klineberg had a group of customer peddlers; he actually brought up or set up customer peddlers. Klineberg had gone to the States to get immigrants to come to Canada.

"Zada agreed and he became a customer peddler there -- in the country. Zada had a black beard. I have pictures at home of him as a young man. That's the father of my mother.

"Mr. Steinhouse became a customer peddler, not for too long a time. Zada was a good customer peddler and he was loved by the French people. Zada used to tell us those stories, you know. We've been very, very fortunate: we've had on both sides wonderful stories told to us, wonderful stories of their lives. Zada when he went, brought his tallis, his tefillim. He never ate their food.

"You see, those customer peddlers would go to the countryside. They called Zada, 'le grand patron noir.' He had a black beard, black curly hair, and he didn't have a horse and buggy when he first started, so he carried his pack on his shoulder. And then they'd come in a big yard, they'd set up their display and the people, the villagers would come and the women would buy material by the yard and they measured it by the arm's length. They really liked him.

"Many of our Jewish peddlers -- some of whom we knew very well -- they would say, 'chazer ahin, chazer aher,' but they would eat it, you know. But Zada told them very definitely, 'I'm a Jew, I do my religion my way. Now, I will stay here and I will pay you' because they used to sleep there for the week and then they would go home for Shabbos. He'd say 'Give me hardboiled eggs and I don't eat any meat. I will eat bread. I don't eat anything, that is, none of your soups. I'll take milk.' And he managed. he managed.

"At one time he did very well as a customer peddler, and so finally he convinced, with the help of the rabbi in Warsaw, that my Baba had to come to Montreal, from Prusnitz. She wouldn't come. She said they are all goyim there, and here she had Mama and she had

three daughters and two sons, and whom were they going to marry? So Zada went to Poland and he gave her an ultimatum that if she doesn't come out they will divorce. Poor Baba, she had more trust in the rabbi there, and he told her that she had to go. And when the girls got older they could come to Poland and get Jewish husbands and there would be Jewish women for the sons.

"Finally the rabbi convinced Baba Steinhouse that all was going to be well and she decided to come. And the trip on the boat, Mama told us that. Of course Baba was so kosher, even God wouldn't ask anyone to be kosher that way. So Baba brought her candlesticks of silver and Baba had a clean, freshly washed sheet, and she made lochshen for the boat, and kept cutting it and cutting it and they had that with water. The sailors or the deck help, they would sort of, they would offer a cake, but Mama said no. They had to eat messy noodle stuff with boiled water. Mama remembered that one of the pursers, a lovely man dressed up, with gold stripes and everything said, 'Here, take that, it is good bread, it's clean and you need it.' So Mama said 'Thank you but I have already eaten.'

"First of all, when Steinhouse decided to open up his business they opened up in Montmorency Falls because there was the Montreal cotton plant there and there were workers.

"My father had left Poland. He too did not want to become a Russian conscript. So he travelled to Canada pennyless to join grandpa Roback who was already at work in Montreal. The Robacks were related to the Steinhouse family. My father married Feigel, the daughter of Berel and Sarah Charna Steinhouse who played an important part in the founding of Montreal's social institutions to aid the homeless, particularly the elderly, early in the century.

"My mother was in Montreal here with three babies and Pa was working for Vineberg, and Pa hated that bloody job like poison. So finally Zada decided that they must get my father a business. They opened up a store in a small village called Beauport, where we lived. There would be a good place because there was a brewery.

"Zada was up in Montmorency Falls and we were in Beauport, which was a few miles away. My father opened up a place with the help of my Zada Steinhouse. He is the one who helped them in that crisis.

"So what happened was Zada and Baba decided it was enough already to stay in Montmorency Falls. The sons were young men and one married daughter was living in Montreal. An unmarried daughter was living at home. So they moved to Montreal and they opened up a furniture store on Ste-Catherine and rue Dorion, right near the bridge. We used to love to go to the store and visit, and the sons worked there with Zada. They did well.

"Probably the Steinhouses were influenced in their decision to act on behalf of the aged by the conditions in the Hachnosat Orchim

Hospitality Society which was one of the early institutions set up by the Montreal immigrant society."

Formed primarily as the Welcoming of the Guests Society, it was simultaneously also an orphanage and an old people's home. The conjuncture of the three functions might have been economical, but it was bitter for its beneficiaries, not least for the orphans, as brilliant journalist Konrad Bercovici of the Adler wrote in October 1912.

"They didn't open up right away on Esplanade Avenue. There was a house that Baba bought. She used to save, you know, she had a little bag of her own, and she used to take the money from her housekeeping that Zada gave her," Leah Roback remembers.

"And then they had a few friends. When they opened up it was on Tara Hall, a short street off St. Urbain. There was a house. It was a small place and Baba had Madame Legault who used to come. In those years you had a seamstress who came home and she would sew, and Madame Legault used to come and do some sewing, do her cleaning for her, wash the curtains and so on. She was a lovely person. Baba at the time lived on Drolet Street near St. Louis Square, right near there. They went to Victor's dry goods shop on the Main St. and Baba bought material by the yard and Madame Legault sewed sheets.

"They had naturally the people there from the Shul and with their help they maintained the house. Baba started with her savings and with Zada handing in from the business, they were able to have women, older people who were not treated the way they should be by their son-in-law or daughter-in-law and they had no place to go. There was no such thing as an old people's home.

"They established the first old people's home, Jewish, on Tara Hall Avenue. It would have been in the early 20's I think."

In the annals of the Hebrew Sheltering Homes, the Nachlath Zkeinim and later the Moshav Zkeinim -- now the Maimonides Geriatric Hospital -- the name of B. and S. Steinhouse figured for many years.

Bernard Figler records in his Rabbi Dr. Herman Abramowitz (1968) that "There were in Montreal two institutions for the aged, the B. & S. Steinhouse Sheltering Home and the Nachlat Zkeinim, competing with each other in appeals for funds, each claiming exclusive right to serve the aged. H. Wolofsky initiated a movement to bring about a merger of both groups. The Canadian Jewish Chronicle declared editorially, 'To Mr. Lyon Cohen credit must be given for taking the leading part in bringing this about.'

"In 1927 Cohen became chairman of a committee to amalgamate both institutions and in October of that year he presided at the breaking of ground for the new Old People's Home (Moshav Zkeinim) on Esplanade Avenue." (P. 124)

CRISIS IN BEAUPORT

"My older brother celebrated his Bar Mitzvah and had learned Hebrew for the occasion. Jewish friends and relatives came from Quebec with gifts. One of them brought a standing ashtray for the lad. The boy did not smoke, nor did anyone else in the family. They had paid much money for it then, possibly \$30. People had all sort of ideas at the time.

"In our house it was books. When I told my mother I was bored, she would say 'take a book and read,' and she would repeat it in Yiddish. That was the end of boredom. That was how we were brought up.

"My uncle would come to Beauport from McGill. He was a writer, a Yiddishist to the marrow of his bones. He was a strange man; not easy, but a great man. Every time he came to Beauport he would tell mother, 'keep on speaking Yiddish with the children in the house.' That was the gift he left with us." (Leah Roback in CBF-FM program with Victor Teboul, Mar. 15, 1982)

Moses Meier Roback, brother of Aaron Roback who had settled at Beauport, P.Q. three miles from Quebec by electric railway, was the victim of the notorious anti-Semitic campaign led by the parish priest in 1910. The period is one of the blackest in Quebec ultramontane anti-Semitism, when Plamondon preached Jew-hatred in Quebec and a priest sought to purge the St. Denis St. area of Montreal from Jewish tenants and property purchasers.

Leah Roback remembers, "For us in Beauport, a few miles from Quebec City by train, it wasn't frightening, it was, I would say it was a very dramatic situation. We were the first Jews in the village; for that matter the first anglophones. The people there wondered if we had horns. But Steinhouse got a loan from the parish at St. Gregoire. We rented a store at Beauport from Langlois who introduced our family to the community. But we were not allowed to build on Main St. Later, in 1918, a Quebec Jew, Smilowitz, bought our general store."

Leah Roback remembers the Beauport crisis of 1910, "We had been reading in the Quebec City press of the local condition as the local correspondent of the Quebec City paper wrote sarcastically that 'the Jewish merchant attends to his business and is doing quite well.'

"He wrote, 'This Jew likes the people of Beauport who, for the most part, are French Canadians. These good people fall over themselves to please this great friend of our nationality. They buy from him, sell him their property. They are not to be blamed, these decent Canadians who are not pushing for extreme chauvinism.

"Everybody is to look out for his own good and finds it. The Jews sell cheap and the terms are easy. It is all very attractive and the good patriots... they would not be good patriots if they did not take advantage of the exceptional opportunities.

"But there is a small question: what does selling cheap mean? Is it to offer you an article for five dollars and then selling it for one? If you are intelligent, will you say that any merchant can give a discount of four dollars; and when this happens not once but several times? It is most reasonable to believe that the merchant is asking two or even three or four times the real value of the goods. Does not this way of acting seem like throwing sand in your eyes? Is it not clearly to trick you into thinking that he is selling cheap?

"As to the easy payments. You pay 25 or 50 cents a week. Have you ever added up all those quarters you are giving? Is it not true that for such sums you could have bought the same goods from your neighbouring storekeeper, your French Canadian compatriot, three or four times over? And you call yourselves businessmen?

"Is it not true that the Jews become rich in our countryside at the expense of the French Canadian merchants who live there? Don't you feel that the Jews are laughing at you in their privacy? When will the good people of Beauport understand this elementary truth?

"The next letter from Beauport should report to Action sociale catholique that the parishioners have organized against the Jews." (Action, Feb. 14, 1910)

There was a sequel the following week -- and another on February 21, Action reported,

"Our Jewish merchant is beginning to notice that his French Canadian clientele is diminishing. He finds it strange, because he sells so cheap and on good terms. Have the parishioners come to understand that their most effective campaign against Jews is to stop buying from them? Some have made this decision."

Abraham Roback recorded the case, without naming the principals, in an editorial in the Adler March 2, 1910 entitled "The Victory of a Jew."

"It is almost incredible that in the twentieth century, in a land under English domination, a landlord should bring into court a tenant for renting his house to a Jew, as happened in Montreal. It is still less to be believed that a priest would testify in court that he had instigated a group of Catholic citizens not to rent their homes to Jews.

"But imagine how painful, how shocking it is to learn that a priest was so influential that he could drive a Jew from a village where he had been residing for four years.

"It is a fascinating story, and an instructive one. For one thing, we can understand our position in the world, especially in this province. It further demonstrates the power of the Catholic Church here. Thirdly, it can serve as an example for how Jews should act in such cases. We will set forth the details of the incident.

"In Beauport near Quebec there resides a young Jewish storekeeper who was not only highly regarded when he lived in Montreal and in Quebec, but was also respected by the French Canadians in the village. His relations with them were always excellent. His private life was exemplary, and they could not complain of his dealings with them.

"However, the descendant of Torquemada could not rest before the possibility of a Jew continuing to live in a village where a French Canadian is also doing business. No, this must not happen, and the priest decided to drive the Jew from the village.

"Having so decided, he felt that this was no occasion for silk gloves. So he made his wishes clear in church. For which platform is more appropriate than the church to preach love of humankind?

"The church at Beauport is the largest between Quebec and Ste-Anne de Beaupré where numerous 'miracles' occur daily. It is the meeting place not only of the residents of Beauport but also of the neighbouring villages. There, in the course of the prayers, the pious priest strictly forbade anyone to rent or to sell a store to a Jew.

"The French Canadian landlord who owned the store occupied by the Jew was present in the church at the time. He was on friendly terms with his tenant, but he hesitated to inform him of the ukaze from the priest, until rumour became current that the Jew is leaving the village. The Jew then asked his landlord to extend the lease.

"At first the landlord evaded the request, but when pressed he admitted that 'for various reasons' he could not renew the arrangements. These reasons became clear only when the Jew's father-in-law, who is widely respected in the region, elicited from the landlord that the priest had on several occasions repeated his strict injunction, and he was afraid to arouse the hostility of the cleric.

"The storekeeper began to search for other stores, but who was ready to antagonize the priest? The Jew faced ruination and would have to leave the village.

"As a last resort the storekeeper and his father-in-law made another effort. They called on the priest and begged him to delay the ban at least for a year; but the representative of Jesus Christ in the parish would not move. 'It has been decided so, and it cannot be withdrawn,' he said darkly.

"In the face of this harshness the storekeeper and his wife determined that that scheme should not succeed. The sympathy of the villagers was on the side of the Jew.

"Soon there appeared one resident ready to defy the priest and to sell a lot near the store for a fat price.

"Now that a store and a home are being built, it is most probable that the despised Jew will not soon bid farewell to the 'tolerant' priest.

"No particular comments are in order. But we must say that if every Jew acted as courageously as the storekeeper of Beauport, anti-Semitism might be reduced in this province, and we might be regarded differently."

THE ADLER

"The place of Montreal as a Jewish literary centre is the achievement of H. Wolofsky, a man of endless energy and patience who held out with his Canader Adler when his partners were prepared to throw in the towel. On the other hand, if the community had not been ripe for this achievement, a dozen Wolofskys would not have sustained the newspaper. Boston's community is much larger than Montreal's, yet it does not possess even a Yiddish weekly. Even the English-language weekly which Wolofsky also came to publish, is Yiddishist, or at least populist, in its content.

"The composition of the literary group in Montreal is unique both in quantity and in character. This becomes evident when compared to Chicago which is four times the size of Montreal," Roback wrote in Oifn Shvel.

He enjoyed many friendships and much respect from the intellectually rich immigrant community. Among his youthful friends was M.L. Sack, the Poale Zionist pioneer. His brother B.G. Sack long recalled the day when Roback came to the Sack home to meet the family.

He began to publish in Yiddish on December 10, 1907, on the first pages of the Adler. Possibly quite informally the young man was given responsibility for editing the newspaper even as he was beginning his university studies. Later that year he succeeded Wohliner as editor but retired from this function, to be replaced by Ezekiel Wortsman.

During his term of office he added A.M. Mandelbaum and the distinguished M. Shmuelson to the contributing staff in the Adler. Roback called himself one of its earliest editors and the predecessor of Israel Rabinovitch. (Letter to Jewish Public Library, Nov. 19, 1954)

Roback recalled an early interview with Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky when he questioned the older philosopher, who was present at the Poale Zion convention, about the neologisms which he was introducing into the Yiddish language.

Zhitlowsky responded in character, "Let each man write as he was accustomed to speak at home. We will find a language developing consisting of the best elements."

"At that time I began to change. My new standard became not the journalist with his language of the Egyptian magicians, but the people," Roback confessed. (Der Folks Geist, P. 309)

Ever the student of psychology and anthropology and intoxicated with research in all phases of Judaism, Roback turned the pages of the Adler into the scholar's bench and desk, the platform for his readers' aspirations.

In fact, his columns in the Adler were a reflection of his lectures at the college, where he often repeated, at least thematically, the published works of science.

This was no new role for the Yiddish periodicals of the immigrant society where readers, journalists and authors were in step in the great, millenia-old passionate quest for significant learning, never making any distinction between the religious and the secular, the teacher and the pupil.

Suddenly the Adler found a passionate audience among the proletarian immigrants assembled at random, hungry to feed a native intelligent clientele which was grateful for any scraps from the tables of their teachers who were themselves students at various schools.

Not surprisingly the Montreal Yiddish paper became one of the best on the continent, and respected as such, an unwitting adjunct of the Jewish student society of McGill University.

As historians examine the preeminent place occupied by Montreal in the roster of Jewish North American communities it becomes clear that its distinguished literary school of the first decade of the century -- with Roback far from the last of its members -- contributed to this tradition by setting a high public standard in its society. It was no less creative in this sense than the de Solas, Cohens, Ansells, Jacobs, Goldsteins and the other men of the establishment of the Baron de Hirsch Institute.

The Jewish college environment at McGill was remarkably advanced. This academic community included Adler contributors like A.B. Bennett, Louis M. Benjamin, translator of Jean Christophe and Yehudah Kaufmann, who quickly became one of the great scholars of twentieth century Judaism.

Roback's class included young men who were destined to play fine parts in the community in later years. There were not a dozen Jewish students at McGill in 1904 when Louis Fitch, S. Ortenberg, Feinberg and Solomon helped found the Maccabean Circle. Fitch was awarded a silver medal for public speaking after an oration on Zionism in March, 1909. He was named head of the Circle and became the first Jew to represent McGill against Ottawa in the Inter-University Debating Contest. (Dec. 31, 1909) These students met in their rooms and their meetings at first dealt with general literary subjects.

The student society presented the college library a sizeable collection of scholarly books which to this day enrich the McGill Library. Christian scholars in Near Eastern Studies spoke on ancient Hebrew

history at meetings together with Nathan Gordon and Rabbi H. Abramowitz.

Soon the group removed to the Baron de Hirsch Institute and, in 1910, as membership grew, they rented quarters on the corner of St. Catherine and Crescent streets. The topics of their discussion became limited to the Jewish. Increasingly the Maccabeans exerted a Zionist-Hebraist and nationalist influence on the campus and on the community. On their petition the university ceased to arrange examinations on Jewish Holy Days.

The Young Men's Zionist and Literary Society in the community also consisted largely of McGill students.

"There was no particular interest among the students in Yiddish which not all recognized as a language. Hebrew was universally regarded as a sacred and as a beautiful tongue but often with such awe as to be untouchable. It is therefore neglected by the Jewish students while so many other sciences and languages are studied.

"Hebrew courses are given at McGill for Christian students who have no conception of the language but need some measure of it for ordination as priests or ministers. All they can acquire in this tradition is some grammar and familiarity with several psalms and some chapters of Isaiah.

"The Jewish students rate academically far above the average. Few of them fail their examinations, and they often lead their classes. But they are at the bottom in other phases of student life such as sports (except swimming). This is related to the nature of the anti-Semitism which is rampant at McGill; not the piercing race hatred which is so ostentatious but the silent and concealed discrimination which is yet clearly visible.

"Jews are never insulted publicly, but a certain prejudice against them is constant. Conversation is courteous and cheery with them in the university buildings, and students work comfortably together. But a miraculous transformation occurs as they leave the campus; Jewish students go home together and Christians walk together. They greet each other as they meet on the street. But seldom does a Christian slow down to wait for a Jewish student whom he knows well as he walks behind him.

"This discrimination is more evident in student union and organizational life. Jews are not admitted in fraternities; this is not recorded in constitutions, but in fact there are no Jews there. Until now no Jewish student has been interested in any of the societies which are open to students. But no Christian member has ever proposed a Jew to any office, and a Jewish member never proposed another Jewish student for fear of being ridiculed; certainly such a nomination would be futile.

"This has a bearing on the sports where a place on teams such as tennis and football are honours sought by all students. Jews know that they have little chance of succeeding, and they therefore stay aloof.

"A breakthrough came this year when Jewish students managed to elect Feinberg as vice-president of the Students Literary Society. This occurred when most Jewish students attended the elections and voted for him.

"In the light of these conditions in the fraternities the Maccabean society considered establishing a student home." ("Michael," in Adler, May 10 and 11, 1911)

Roback was a frequent contributor to the Yiddish daily Adler before he entered McGill. It was natural for him to record his impressions of Jewish student life when he entered the McGill campus.

Roback reported that "the 60 Jewish students on the McGill campus in the spring of 1910 were expected to grow to 75 by the fall; by 1920 the number will doubtless reach 200.

"They are distinct in their excellence in economics and such modern languages as French and German.

"Relations with Christians are friendly with no evidence of any hostility, even though they are not generally invited to the fraternities. Only one Jewish student has been initiated; he does not associate with the Jewish group.

"Jewish pupils in the public schools prominently lead their classes in their studies; less so in the high schools, and much less in college. This may be because their study programs are in law and medicine, although if it were a matter of choice, they might have preferred to specialize in mathematics or languages. Conditions were worse several years ago, for now some are studying the arts and the abstract sciences before entering professional specialization.

"In the past, students could enter directly into professional training. Clearly the Jewish students who entered on postgraduate studies did very well; among them Miss Bella Marcus, M.Sc.; Nathan Feinberg and Rabbi Nathan Gordon, M.A., of the Reform Temple Emanuel who was named lecturer on rabbinics and oriental languages in January 1909, three years after his arrival in Montreal; and botonist Simon Kirsch, now also lecturer and demonstrator. He is the fourth holder of the McGill Ph.D.

Two Jewish students won gold and silver medals from the McGill Debating Society. (Adler, Mar. 19, 1909)

"Three Jewish girls attended Victoria College, Hannah Rosenberg, daughter of Carl Rosenberg, won her B.A." (Ibid., June 30, 1910)

"Within two years the Canadian Jewish Times reported that among the sixty Jewish students at McGill Roback had won the Prince of Wales Gold Medal in Philosophy; Goldblatt received the gold medal in Biology, and Nathan Feinberg a prize for his work in second year Law." (May 24, 1912)

Roback wrote on the significance of Succoth and on the laws relating to this festival in the Adler of October 15 and 16, 1908; another article on the Jewish festivals appeared on December 26, 1909.

Typical of Roback's writings for the Montreal press was his translation into Yiddish of Horace' "Ode to Chloe" which he published in the Adler on March 17, 1910.

In April he wrote several articles on "Symbolism" (Ibid., Apr. 11) His theme on May 22 was "Exaggeration"; on May 29, "Slang"; on June 1, "Haley's Comet" and "The Passing of King Edward VII"; on June 9 on "Confusion", and on "Ruth"; on June 28, on the "Curse of the Artist"; and on July 13 on the word "Mister".

He continued his contributions to the Adler even after Ezekiel Wortsman was named editor in mid-July, 1910.

On July 10 and 18, 1910 he wrote on "Reducing Automobile Accidents"; on July 19 and 21 on "Foretelling the Future"; on July 27 on "Superstition"; on July 22 on "Astrology"; on July 26 on "The Prime Minister's Visit to the West"; on August 3 on "The Royal Oath"; on August 11 on "Our Board of Control" and on "Women's Logic"; on August 12 on "Catholicism in the New World"; on August 15 on "Titus"; on August 17 on "Language and Intellect".

He wrote an extensive critique of the Yiddish poems of I.L. Baron in the Adler of March 4 and 6, 1910.

"Our Civilization Needs a Doctor", Roback wrote in the Adler of June 25, 1911. Roback urged "We Need Playgrounds for Our Children" as he recommended that the Baron de Hirsch Institute open the lot behind the building to Jewish children.

He wrote on "Punishing Children for Disobedience" on July 14, 1911.

During the hot weather in the summer of 1911 he wrote on "The Most Burning Subject". (July 16, 1911)

Roback's vast erudition did not pass without fraternal irony and humour from the pens of his colleagues on the pages of his Adler, not least of Sholom Aleichem's kinsman Isaac Yampolsky. ("Bananas", Aug. 23, 1910)

The New York Yiddish poet Leib Glanz remembered meeting the young Yiddishist scholar Abraham Roback in Montreal in 1911. ("Profile of Idealism", in the New York Tog, April 20, 1959)

Archibald B. Bennett, one of the Toronto founders of the Canadian Jewish Congress, remembered "that some misunderstanding developed between the editor and the publishers, and Dr. Wortsman left his post precipitately. In an atmosphere of unpleasantness the chair was taken over temporarily by Abraham A. Roback, then a philosophy senior at McGill and a frequent contributor to the Yiddish as well as to the Anglo-Jewish press.

"Later I heard stories that he had already mastered many of the traditional mannerisms of the philosopher, and often used to extend his deadline limits unduly. At such times a diligent search failed to locate him anywhere near the editorial sanctum; emissaries would be sent out to Parc Lafontaine, known as one of Roback's favourite haunts, to shanghai him and bring him back to the editorial chamber. He was usually found in a row boat on the artificial pond which formed part of the park setting, communing with nature, totally oblivious of the disastrous consequences which might flow to the cause of Yiddish journalism from his thoughtless indulgence in aquatic sport when his brain and pen should have been at work providing the editorial gem for which an eager readership was waiting with bated breath.

"Actually Roback was serving as a stopgap in the interregnum between full-time, permanent editors. Dr. Wortsman had gone. Mr. Wolofsky, head of the publication, was looking for a new editor, a real one. Wolofsky set his sights high. He wanted the best. He succeeded in his quest. Reuben Brainin, famous Hebrew writer and editor, a world-renowned figure in Hebrew letters, had condescended to take editorial charge of a Yiddish daily in a provincial centre, Montreal."

Under the pen name of the Goniandzer, Roback commented on the proposal of the great Zionist tribune Nahum Sokolov that the Jews petition the pope to clear them of the ritual murder accusation levelled against them. The Montreal editor pointed to the extreme indifference and even ignorance of the pontiff in regard to the Jews.

Like his friend B.G. Sack, Roback felt that the Quebec Jewish community could learn much from the French language movement on behalf of their language and, more specifically from its language congresses and from their sense of nationalism. "They need no bells or drums. In spite of the ignorance that the heavy hand of capitalism has imposed upon them, the sensibility of their group and their tongue are deeply rooted in each of them.

"French students in English schools speak French among themselves, whereas Jewish students in such schools do not deign to speak Yiddish among themselves."

Roback commented on the superiority of French Canadians over the Jews in their dignified nationalism. "Their ancestors of centuries ago had left them a heritage of ignorance and had prevented their

spiritual development. Yet their sense of nationhood is deeply rooted, and each is conscious of French as his language. Many refuse to speak English, no matter at what cost, out of a determination not to add to the power of that language.

"The 1912 Congress for the French Language highlights francophone awareness and ambition in Canada and contrasts with Jews' neglect of their own linguistic heritage.

"Eighteenth century paintings of a village or a local type fetch high prices because the national sense awakens competition between the bidders, but our wealthy Jews will never buy pictures whose mood is the Sabbath before Maariv. On the contrary a Madonna appeals to them as does a Rembrandt. They do not rise to their nationalism but to mimetism.

"So their Homer Gouin, a premier in Her Majesty's colony, does not hesitate to address his people about 'the language which we began to prattle on our mothers' laps deserves every sacrifice. It deserves academies and universities, schools where our children will study it as well as English which they require, together with the beauties of the French.'

"Thus speaks Her Majesty's minister at a time when our alleged aristocracy will know nothing of the language in which their mothers rocked them to sleep, the language which must remind them of their childhood. Or did they have no childhood? Have they no memories of old friendships? In which case we cannot address the ossified who are steeped in fifty-cent charities." (July 1, 1912)

"Why, only this week, the Pope in an Encyclical address to the Roman Catholic Bishops of Central America reproved them for neglecting the Jews and recommended that the Archbishops employ their influence in favour of unfortunate Jews of Central America.

"What sort of misfortune it is that befell the Jews of Central America we don't know, but evidently the Pope has discovered that they are in a pitiable plight. But why the handful of Jews living in Central America should receive more attention than the millions of unfortunate Jews spending their lives in misery in Russia, Austria, and Roumania, is beyond us. We surmise that His Holiness has his reasons for his special solicitude in the case of the Central America Jews, and we shall be greatly interested to become acquainted with these reasons. Perhaps he would also throw some light on his indifference with regard to the Russian Jews." (Canadian Jewish Times, June 28, 1912)

Roback encouraged the proposal for a congress of Jewish teachers in America. (Ibid., June 21, 1912)

Even as he mourned on the anniversary of Herzl's demise, he noted the French Canadian Congress on the French Language,

"We find the greatest French Canadian assembly convoked to appeal to their people not to use any language but their own. The clergy and statesmen living in an English province do not hesitate to admonish the French Canadians to dispense with the English language except on rare occasions. These French Canadian celebrities do not fear to incur the displeasure of the English speaking people.

"Would that matters stood the same in our ranks. But alas, our prominent men are prone to be too loyal to the language of the country in which they reside, forgetting that Jewish nationalism does not exclude the loyalty that one feels to his country.

"We can only deplore the fact that among us the cultural factor is being treated so slightly. Whatever we think of Bourassa's political views and his occasional anti-Jewish insinuations, we cannot help admiring his eloquent and instructive address on the subject of 'Race and Language,' wherein he pointed out that the characteristics of a people must be warped if there is no language to unite the disconnected members." (Ibid., June 29, 1912)

Roback also questioned the propriety of the Jewish religious society organizing into the anti-Zionist Agudath Israel, convinced that they would only be advancing assimilation and reaction. (Ibid., June 28, 1912)

Nor was he enthused over "The Quest of a Chief Rabbi" proceeding in England.

"A good many of our communal leaders and congregational officers are under the impression that they can invest a man with authority only to deprive him of it whenever it pleases them -- nay worse, they appoint him as captain and steer the vessel for him; and when the captain is at variance with the pilots, it is the latter who invariably triumph over the former. What should we think of a state of affairs where the judges were responsible for their decisions to the government officials? How can the rabbi regard himself as a spiritual leader if his sermons are to be submitted to the administrative heads of the congregation and are subject to revision?" (Ibid., July 5, 1912)

Roback commented on "the long delayed decision of the Montreal authorities to establish a public library that would be a credit for the citizenry. But the city aldermen are deliberately slow in beginning the project and on designing its cultural physiognomy." (Ibid., July 8, 1912)

He wrote on July 16, 1912 in the Adler on "Courage and Sacrifice."

For Tisha B'Av (July 26, 1912) Roback questioned, "Conquerors or Conquered?"

Roback was deeply disappointed with the profound Parisian philosopher Henri Bergson who disavowed his Jewish affiliation. (Adler, July 19, 1912)

He wrote on "Mysteries" in the Adler of July 23, 1912; on "The Divine and the Animal" on August 16, on "The Human Race" on August 26. His essay "August Rodin and his Thinker" on October 11, 1912 portrayed the gifts of the savant, artist-creator and philosopher-architect. Roback relates their respective responsibilities and the attitudes of society to these social types.

One of his last regular contributions to the Adler before leaving Canada, on September 25, 1912, dealt with "The Meaning of Knowing".

"Words do not always have a single meaning. A word is usually an uncertain thing whose meaning is usually not clear until the sentence is complete. Sometimes the word is unclear, a mantle to cover something inner, deeper, to hide a totally other. Few pause to analyse the various meanings which can be evoked by the word laden with the same sound. The word is often a form in which a variety of contents can be placed.

"One of the shapes that quickly reveal the variety of contents that can be placed in the form of the word is "Know". The most obvious is when people speak of knowing a person or of knowing how to do something. The intentions vary between understanding a subject or familiarity with a language, or being able to write it or to ride or to spell or to compare poetry or carpentry or an opera or jump from a roof or fly an aeroplane or breathe under water, or pardon a criminal, or divorce our child, or tolerate bad manners or spend unduly or insult a friend or a lady, or wear that dress or do something for someone.

"How many meanings are in the words "Can" and "Know", how many feelings, relationships, differing laws, how many physical situations describing the operational laws are implicit here? Relationships become social and legislative."

Roback dealt with the tenses in his series on "The Past" (Nov. 1, 1912),

"We yearn strangely for the past, the earlier. We bear in mind the ever future, the ever distant, and as we approach it, we find it is not what we had longed for. From the distance the bird had appeared blue; from close it was only black. The dissatisfaction with the present and the call for something different is rooted in us.

"For some the future is unclear; it draws them with their dreams, and if they cannot envisage the desired good fortune they create a new earth and a new future where all will be right. For such mystics, the more mysterious, the more beautiful is the ideal.

"Others see a longer distance in the past. None of the last seconds will return from eternity, so they deify the past which is clear and colourful in spite of its distance from us.

"The past is a gift. The present is vulgar, dry and common. Great and rare events occur now, but they appear banal. The now is an unwanted child; its time has not yet come; it must become the past. Then it will be honoured. Later generations will pause to examine the effect of the revolution of the present decade. We who live in it cannot conceive it. We can live only in the time of Napoleon."

A DEBATE ON THE CAMPUS

On Sunday May 2, 1909, the Board of Directors of the Baron de Hirsch Institute "received an application from A.A. Roback, one of the teachers in the Institute Hebrew School, asking for permission to open an evening school in one of the rooms of the Institute. On the motion of Messrs. Louis Vineberg and Feinberg, it was resolved to grant the use of one of the rooms to Mr. Roback for this purpose for one month on trial, and to notify Mr. Roback that in the event of the room being granted permanently, it would be subject to cancellation at any time by the Board of Directors."

In collaboration with a number of young intellectuals he founded a Self-Education League in 1908 which met at St. Joseph's Hall. (Adler, Oct. 12, 1908)

Roback was not unique in his day, at the period of the Czernowitz Conference on the role of Yiddish in modern Jewry, but he was certainly the first militant Yiddishist in Canada, and he was virtually the only sophomore in Montreal to entertain this social ideal seriously. How he reached or learned these concepts while a sophomore in Montreal is a mystery.

His controversies on this score while at college overflowed the campus. Only the high esteem he enjoyed from the beginning saved him from ridicule. He continued a lifetime of leadership in world Yiddishism.

The debate on the primacy of Yiddish was reflected in the Adler in a letter from Poale Zionist leader S. Schneour which reviewed the attitudes of Yiddishist I. Yampolsky and Hebraist B.J. Goldstein. (Nov. 8, 1908)

In the spring of 1908 Roback was advertising his private school where he was teaching English and French at the Baron de Hirsch Institute. He was giving instruction in languages and preparing students for McGill in Latin, Greek and German. (Ibid, May 31, 1908 and in 1910)

In this journalistic and student ambiance Roback came to urge the students to embrace a Jewish nationalism of his own vintage, a Zionism and Hebraism which were topped with academic and ideological Yiddishism.

As is not unusual, this student controversy has a vigorous youthful language of its own, but in the case of Roback his Yiddish in particular was so rich, idiomatic, erudite and Hebraic as again to raise the question, which has not been answered, as to where he had learned it.

His articles on "The Tactics of the Students" (Adler, Jan. 5, 7, 1910) open with a parallel to a sixteenth century Reformation work The Dark Man. This satire dealt with anti-Semitic Dominican priests who were persecuting Reichlin for defending the Talmud which these clergymen were then destroying in large numbers.

Roback had learned that a dozen students had worked for days to compose a letter to the Yiddish Adler in a language not familiar to them. They had even considered physical violence against him. He found this surprising, "although it has been established that genius often accompanies insanity.

"A Talmudic expression counsels silence in the face of an error that cannot be corrected. But silence in the face of a wrongful condition merely out of indifference or fear is a crime and an act of cowardice," he argued.

"Frequent criticism and fault-finding is naturally unpleasant, but serious and sincere criticism, more or less soundly based, should be welcomed, especially in an organized society. It is one of the pillars of progress. What would the world be like without Luther? Copernicus? It is almost axiomatic that no improvement can come about without criticism; or at least it would come much more slowly. On the other hand, self-satisfaction, especially in higher spheres of society, is an undesirable condition."

The stand taken by Dr. C. Zhitlowsky at the 1910 Poale Zion conference on the language problem marked the entire community for decades. The debate between Yiddishism, Hebraism and the equality of both these languages was passionate. Although the historic problem was settled in favour of the equality position, such Yiddishists as L. Zuker maintained their position for very many years in spite of the stand of such leaders as Y. Kaufmann. (S. Belkin. "L. Zuker, the Course of his Life and his Environment," in Zuker book, 1968. Pp. 42-43)

Roback's call to the Jewish students in particular for the primacy of Yiddish was rejected by his colleagues who were angered by his arrogance, particularly since Roback publicized the student debate on the legitimacy of Yiddish as an essential Jewish language in the columns of the Canadian Jewish Times, the Jewish Tribune and in the Adler. They declared a boycott of the Jewish daily and issued an offensive statement criticizing it for carrying Roback's version of the controversy.

Fitch responded to Roback in a letter to the Canadian Jewish Times,

"It is a first principle of decency for a member of a fraternal society to confine his criticism to its own portals, even if it be not so emphasized in its written regulations. Of the unwritten law which constitutes gentlemanliness, we respectfully submit that Mr. Roback

has much to learn. We believe that virulent 'leaders' require unadorned replies.

"We have given Mr. Roback several opportunities to come and give vent to his opinions at our meetings, but without success. He has not sufficient backbone to come to us and speak up like a man, but prefers to hide beneath the sanctity of his editorial wings. So much for his actions if viewed as those of a fellow-student.

"It is but a lame excuse to pose as a journalist while you stick the knife in your neighbour's back. Viewed as a newspaperman, however, he is equally to blame. I respect the publicist who can see and write fairly and without prejudice, and not him who writes with motives of personal aggrandizement, and a mean desire to 'get back at.' A careful perusal of his arguments will bring to light many misrepresentations, delusions, pure fabrications and general tommyrot.

"What fault does he find with us? He would have us do more, say more, be more. He claims that we are not enough nationalistic. If by that he means neglecting Zionism, let him remember that about eighty per cent of our members are Zionists, and that two of the local Zionist societies are controlled by our members.

"If by nationalism he means a lack of interest in it, let us remind him that at every one of our meetings we discuss absolutely nothing but Jewish topics, and it would do your heart good, Mr. Editor, to attend some of our meetings and witness what keen enthusiasm marks these discussions.

"If by non-nationalism, Mr. Roback means a lack of pride or a sense of shame in Judaism, does not the very existence of our Club indicate the falseness of this argument? Surely it is no evasion of Judaism for one of our members to discuss Zionism before the faculty and students of the College.

"We have always done everything that was possible to obtain for the Jewish students what seemed necessary for them, and which was in our power; and there I venture to assert that we have done more to make Judaism known and respected at McGill than our critic ever has done or is capable of doing.

"Mr. Roback would also have us be more in the community. Pray, are there not more capable and more influential men in this city to look after the School Question, the Sunday Observance Question, etc., than we? We frankly admit our own great importance, but until we shall all have reached our critic's eminent position in learning and in power, we must remain satisfied to limit our spheres of activity to attending lectures, passing examinations and looking after our own business.

"We are next blamed for not studying Hebrew while at College, as he, Mr. Roback, does. In reply to this, we would say that there are three or four in the second year, out of a total of six, who take Hebrew lectures. Some of us know already what is offered in the second year Hebrew course, while others have other necessary work which prevents them from studying it." (Canadian Jewish Times, Jan. 14, 1910)

A pseudonymous Ben Yehoshuah added to the response to Roback,

"I cannot for one moment agree with Mr. Roback when he says that you cannot be national without knowing the Yiddish language. It is nothing short of a revelation to me, for I have always considered myself an ardent nationalist, despite the fact that my Yiddish would put a Dutchman to shame.

"In America, England, and other countries where the Jews mix freely with their neighbours, Yiddish is a language that is but transient. It is used by the first generation, gobbled by the second, and forgotten by the third. In the European countries where the Jews are less free in their relations with the rest of the populace, Yiddish is essential.

"It is today the common means of communication of several millions of Jews, it is true; but Mr. Roback must surely know that it is anything but the Jewish national language. It is only used by Jewish littérateurs in their attempt to revive the true Jewish national tongue -- Hebrew.

"Mr. Brainin, in his lecture last week, distinctly said he regretted having to use Yiddish on the platform, and would only do so while Hebrew, the true mother-tongue, was not as well known as he hoped it would shortly be -- and Reuben Brainin is as good a nationalist as Mr. A.A. Roback." (Canadian Jewish Times, Jan. 28, 1910)

Roback closed the discussion,

"I am not so unreasonable as to say that a thorough knowledge of Yiddish is required in order to be called a good nationalist, but I have said that those who do not care about knowing either Yiddish or Hebrew are ignorant of Jewish thought, know very little about Jewish history, and do not possess even a sneaking acquaintance of either the Jewish or Hebrew literature -- that such are not nationalists no matter if they are members of a hundred Zionist societies." (Ibid., Feb. 2, 1910)

This debate places the Montreal campus as the scene of a complex ideological conflict of great cultural importance. Possibly as the discussion continued, in English as well as in Yiddish in the Quebec metropolis, it may have had its clearest formulation from the pen of Roback.

As we read it four score years later we must remember not to fault him for not foreseeing the world wars, the holocaust aimed selectively at the Yiddish population, the sudden fulfillment of Herzl's dream in Israel and the unexpected birth of anglophone spiritual Judaism. Nor did Michael Garber, who argued with his friend Roback at the time, foresee that future. We need to read Roback in his Montreal time.

And what Roback saw in his anglophone Canada was that Jews were not imbued with true national spirit, without the knowledge of Yiddish which was fading in Montreal. Roback set forth his thinking about Yiddish within the core Jewish nationalism. This analysis had led him to the conclusion that assimilation threatens the Jewish people, and that only nationalism founded on Yiddish can save the people.

"Yiddish or Assimilation"

"The heading of this article will, no doubt, sound inappropriate to many readers who will be startled at the implication that Yiddish and assimilation are mutual enemies; and what would, perhaps, be the more interesting, that if you undermine the former you let the latter have free play.

"Some, we are aware, will even be scandalized to find such a thesis propounded in an Anglo-Jewish journal. 'What?' they will say. 'Are we not good Jews?' -- No, their great zeal will lead them to accentuate their indignance by making personal references -- 'Are we not as good Jews as the writer, at any rate, even if we cannot talk that jargon?'

"We shall begin by requesting these people not to allow themselves to be influenced by sounds but rather by reasons, and to reserve their judgment to the end.

"Those who read Yiddish journals and newspapers require no reminders of the importance of the much-despised language. It is just in these Anglo-Jewish newspapers that articles of such a kind are in place, and where, unfortunately, they are too seldom given place.

"As to the contention that Jews might be imbued with true national spirit without the knowledge of Yiddish, we are not only prepared to deny emphatically that such could be the case; but even further maintain that, with one or two exceptions, in houses where Yiddish is not read, the modern Jew remains an X, an unknown figure.

"It is the fashion now-a-days to be proud of one's Jewish descent. People who would never have taken the trouble to find out whether they are Jews or not have become ardent Zionists because they have been told that others superior to themselves have joined the ranks of Zionism. Young folks generally share the opinions of their fathers if these command respect or play an important part in the community.

"If they are not so fortunate with their parents they begin their Zionist activities independently. There are a number of inducements for young men and women to become members in Zionist societies.

"But, alas, Yiddish is either forsaken or neglected. It has no inducements to offer except that of knowledge and feeling -- hence the consequences. The older folks take their first step to Zionism by renouncing Yiddish and extolling Hebrew -- why Hebrew, the language of our fathers, the language that was spoken three thousand years ago on soil that Turkey is now in possession of, and probably seems to keep for itself. These people are transported over the idea that Hebrew is our national tongue and not Yiddish -- Hebrew, which they never knew except the reading of the characters and perhaps the translation of some scriptural words.

"But they must not be blamed. After all, they have performed one part of their duty. They would no longer tolerate the hateful jargon. They will not have a word of it spoken in their houses. They must not corrupt the minds of their children by having them taught the 'Golos' language. Of course not. What is more natural than that such patriotic Jews should speak the language they themselves have chosen as their national tongue?

"But here's the rub. Yiddish they will not speak, Hebrew they cannot speak. They have but one alternative and must necessarily resort to it: they have to speak to their children in English, very often in broken English. Their children are ignorant both of Hebrew and of Yiddish, and further generations don't even know whether Hebrew and Yiddish are different languages.

"Poor enthusiasts! They have not yet learnt the sense of that proverb in the language of their fathers, viz, Yiddish 'Until thou has pure water, do not pour out the impure.' They fail to realize that besides lapsing into a most glaring inconsistency they are destroying the materials out of which they intend to build lofty towers. They are so taken up with the remote future, so absorbed in the quixotic schemes that they do not see the ground slip from under their feet with every new move.

"If some of our Zionist friends were told that they are paving the way for assimilation they would consider themselves greatly offended. They would ridicule the notion. They would become furious, perhaps, on hearing such an impudent statement. Yet, this venturesome statement we do not hesitate to make. It must be said sometime, why not now?

"It is the irony of fate that the radical movements for the last quarter of a century should have greatly helped the development of a Yiddish literature and a Yiddish press in America, thus preparing the way for a universal nationalist movement; while enthusiastic Zionists should bring up a generation of assimilators estranged from the history and traditions of their people. The children of these

Yiddish-baiters will, perhaps, be well posted in the Arthurian legends, in the Holy Grail literature, but will not even be aware of the fact that we, too, have a wealth of folklore, that we, too, possess a national poetry which for purity and elevation rivals that of the Englishman or German.

"No, of course not. Peretz has not written for them or their fathers. Besides can anything of quality be written in jargon? They haven't the faintest idea that a writer like Peretz is the true builder of nationalism. In perpetuating the beauty of the Jewish national tales he has done what hundreds of societies can never hope to do. He has made the mass feel Jewish. He has created Jews. Into many a piece of clay he has breathed a national soul. He has exercised a mighty influence on the whole Yiddish literature and produced new writers, who in their turn transmitted some of the impetus to other minor writers.

"It is these outbursts of national spirit that bring about a lasting effect on the masses; not the meetings and conventions of societies, not even the cries of Hedod! Hurray! uttered by people who would not be able to tell you whether the word is Hebrew or Russian.

"It is these Peretzes, these Mendeles, these Sholom Aleichems, these Ash's and Reisens and Rosenfelds that educate the mass for the reception of the nationalistic point of view, that help to build up the Jewish culture in which the national idea manifests itself.

"These authors and poets must be credited with having shown the world that the Jews possess a national wit that is as wholesome at any rate as that of any other nation. These writers have brought out into prominence the manifold phases of Jewish life. These have disclosed before all the latent qualities of the Yiddish language -- the expressiveness of the idioms, the simplicity and humour of the popular speech, the ingeniousness of Jewish devices, the adaptability of the words, etc.

"In short, these men who are either unknown or ignored by our upper classes have found the Jew by the aid of their talents, and more than that, they have made the Jew find himself. They have given him some information which he has never known before. They pointed out his capabilities and stirred him to action.

"Every Jew with an open mind, who has not stood aloof from the masses, must admit that if the common people at large began to consider themselves a nation and not a misfortune, if the radicals among us who were always preaching the gospel of assimilation began to stagger and finally chant the palinode -- if such events came to pass -- then it was only due to the inspiration gathered in the writings of our Yiddish litterateurs.

"Those, however, who are not conversant with the Yiddish literature, and to whom Yiddish is entirely foreign can never hope to learn the

Jew. They can possibly obtain all the information they care to get in histories and encyclopedias. They will have the information but not the inspiration so requisite for the national experience. Why, how can an episode in Jewish history be fully understood without one's living himself into the particular place and period? And in order to do that one must have acquired a general grasp of the character of the people he is studying.

"Before the qualities of the Jew can be appreciated to the greatest extent, the Jew must be studied from the inside, not by the mere reading of cold and dry facts. The facts have life in them only for those who are acquainted with the characters, those who have taken the trouble to learn the modern Jew, who are familiar with his language and literature, including the legends, folklore and national or popular poetry. If such were the case, assimilation would worry us no longer, it would rest in peace till the millenium or the entropy of the world.

"Unfortunately, however, a good many Jews have not yet learnt their duty. Yiddish they have rejected, and Hebrew they are neglecting. For them or, rather, for their children, the Jews have no language. The latter are being initiated only into the religious rites and ceremonies of Judaism. Need we be surprised to hear later on that they have cast off the stamp of their nationality and call themselves Canadians, Americans or Englishmen of the Mosaic faith?

"Furthermore, if Judaism is to signify the Jewish religion, what is more natural than to expect a gradual falling away from the Jewish people as a result of the decline of religion in general? If we desire to obtain results, if we wish to stem assimilation we must pin our fate to something more stable than religion. Religion, we must remember, is only one phase of the Jewish culture. We must extend our scope to embrace every phase and aspect of Jewish life and Jewish activity.

"The procedure of the people we have in view should be reversed. They act before they know and feel. Such actions can bring no fruit because they are not actuated by reason. The thinker, the theoretician must be behind the man of action. The word or thought must precede the act; for otherwise there is no distinction between beast and man." (Canadian Jewish Times, June 21, 1912)

In his debate with Roback, Michael Garber, the cool rationalist of Lithuanian origin, was not convinced by the Peretz heritage.

"The tales of Peretz would go no further; they only tell us obsolete things which might have occurred among a certain portion of the Jewish people, namely, the Chasidim. Will these tales induce us to love the Chasidim? Let us say yes. But what then? Would we like to see these Chasidim reproduce their ways -- of which Peretz tells -- on this continent? Certainly not.

"There are works in Yiddish which can rival the best of other literatures. But, I emphatically deny the statement that Yiddish and assimilation are 'mutual enemies.' Yiddish literature may be valuable without being indispensable. We may admit, for the sake of the argument, that Yiddish strengthens our nationalism, but is it the only criterion of nationalism?

"What about Zionism? What even about religion? Mr. Roback asserts that religion is unstable, but has not the Jewish religion more than proved its stability by existing for so many thousands of years? The Jewish religion may weaken sometimes but it never fades away.

"But our best guardians against assimilation are none other than the Goyim themselves. It always takes two to make a bargain.

"In the pogroms these authors were beaten by their best friends, with whom they wanted to assimilate. We hear again now of the revival of nationalism among the youth of Germany, Italy and other European countries. Were these young men inspired by the writings of our Yiddish *littérateurs*? No, they never read them, but they discovered that they were outcasts of humanity: they abandoned the Jews and the Gentiles did not take them in, and they, therefore, determined to return to their people." (Ibid., July 7, 1912)

Like so many adults, the youthful Roback was totally formed by his late teens in his views and temperament. Before leaving McGill he saw himself as a proponent of an ideology and expected others -- his readers in the Adler, his colleagues on the campus and his teachers at McGill -- to have their own ideologies, to be prepared to defend them or to change them. He exerted the pressure of his arguments on their experience. Himself a young man of learning, he did not in consequent years change much. His training in psychology and in logic did not equip him to convert large numbers to follow his own unaltering conclusions.

From his college debating days we get to know him as a Jew dedicated to Judaism and to its survival under perpetual threat; a Judaism that deserves defence at the hands of the sons who are born into the family, by the instruments of logic and tradition which he defined and refined for himself, never by adoption, never by popular convention. He was thus never a follower of major ideologies or mainstream currents; scarcely ever describable as religious, though a profound scholar of the faith; seldom related to the Zionist structure, he was confident that future generations of Israelis will fulfill the dream of Zion; though appreciative of Israel; an iconoclast in the face of what is established, he early recognized in Communism the Russian ally of Hitler in the annihilation of Jewish culture.

"Almost from their very inception as a separate group, they were in close contact with other nations. More than that, their very birth as a separate group is alleged to have taken place while in slavery under the yoke of a foreign tyranny. At no period were they

isolated or insulated like the Teutons who knew only their own hordes. All the myths and legends, even those which have come down to us from the Talmud, the Midrashim and the Cabbala books refer, in one way or another, to the relations between Jew and non-Jew. National solipsism is unknown to the Jew," he wrote.

THE FUTURE OF JEWISH MONTREAL

Shortly before leaving Canada for the world academic scene, on August 2, 1912, Roback wrote a far-sighted article in the Canadian Jewish Times,

"Is Montreal Destined to be a Jewish Centre?"

"In the course of history countries and large cities have waned into insignificance, while small towns -- villages, perhaps -- have risen to become considered as metropolises. What was this transformation due to? The common people would see no causes at the bottom of it. For them it is all a matter of chance, and we can well understand their thinking. They confuse chance with purposelessness; and besides, in historical events it is so difficult even for the more enlightened to trace a causal connection. So many circumstances, such a multitude of details must be taken into consideration that the investigator becomes entangled as if in a maze, and cannot decide exactly whether certain occurrences bear on certain facts or not.

"There is a little bit of chance mixed in every event. Chance in the absolute sense, it is true, we do not recognize. But we may understand the word in a relative and limited sense; for instance, a man may become wealthy after finding a treasure. We should then say that he is rich owing to chance. But surely we do not mean that the finding was without cause; for had no one lost the treasure or hid it, there would be nothing to find. The effect was not without its cause, and yet we are inclined to consider the incident as a chance event, sometimes attributing it to luck.

"It is just the case with the growth and decline of cities and countries. Situation, climate, natural resources, and several other things are very important factors, but not the only factors...

"In neglecting, however, to look into causes, many people fail to realize what is taking place almost in front of their eyes; for many things remain insignificant until they can be connected with one another; and only then is it established that one single principle is at the root of the disconnected facts, and that one force is pervading them all. The direction is traced; and the work of either cooperating with the force in action or resisting it, begins.

"Montreal is one of the cities that has been undergoing tremendous changes within the last decade. The Jewish element, especially, has increased out of proportion with the rest of the population. The transformation has been noticed by everyone who has been living here for some years, but too frequently only the physical aspect of the change was taken into account. The social and cultural phase was either overlooked or totally neglected...

"There are larger communities than ours in the United States, and yet they have not attained nearly so much as we have. To what can we attribute it all? Is it chance?

"If we take up a narrow standpoint, perhaps it is; but if we examine the question closely, we shall find that we are dealing with a force. Montreal is becoming a centre of gravity for the Jews on this continent -- hence the number of well-equipped and influential institutions among us.

"The average man is too indolent to think. No sooner do people discover that they cannot explain a certain course of events than they take refuge in that final word 'chance,' or 'accident' -- final because it requires no explanations and will satisfy the ordinary human being without extending his inquiry any further.

"Let those who are but too ready to dispose of reasons by imputing phenomena to chance just ask themselves: how does it come about that Montreal should have four rich Jewish newspapers when larger communities have but one? Does it not point to the strength of the community if it can boast of a mighty press?

"Again, is it mere chance that one of the largest Jewish sanatoriums in America should be situated at a short distance from Montreal? Without mentioning here the Baron de Hirsch Institute, with its varied activities, and the several other institutions which we are in possession of; let us but reflect upon the success of the Y.M.H.A. campaign, the recent establishment of a dispensary, and after some consideration we should have to come to the conclusion that our community here is progressing by leaps and bounds.

"That such great advances should have been made betokens an unusual activity among us -- an activity out of all comparison with other large cities across the border; and we should not hesitate to say that there is a great future in store for Montreal.

"It is true that some occurrences may only be coincidences. But when we come to deal with a number of coincidences? It is well to become suspicious and to look for a common cause.

"The various recent achievements, the social spirit that is observed among all classes of the community, from the radical to the extreme conservative, show that the Jews in our city as a whole are imbued with true public spirit. Is it at all to be wondered at that the question of a United Judaism -- a Kehillah -- has just come up? It seems to us that a more propitious occasion than the present could not present itself for considering the matter.

"Up to the present we have had in this city a divided Judaism. The two classes constituting the community could never be reconciled. The 'downtown' Jews have always been sulking at their more prosperous brethren, while these have always been looking askance at

what they considered the rabble. Although there were no open conflicts between the proud patricians and refractory plebians of our community, we would hardly ever see them work together. Not that there was any real difference of opinion between them, but because they would usually decide beforehand that it were impossible for them to agree.

"The result of this keeping aloof from one another, as might easily be imagined, has been detrimental to the community in every respect. Instead of all working in one direction, very often the forces would be exerted at two diagonally opposite points, and consequently clashed.

"Furthermore, owing to the same obstacle, a combined effort was never available; and what might have otherwise been very conspicuous lost more than once a good deal of its importance because there was lacking a uniting principle, a bond connecting all the members. The activities were diverse and many. No zeal was wanting among the workers. The public was not sparing of encouragement and sympathy. Yet there was one thing amiss: all these activities and enterprises did not spring from one and the same source. Indeed, sometimes the groups of workers would compete among themselves. Some would make believe that the cause for which the others were labouring were not as important as their own. Such means and methods could not but affect the good work of the community as an integer.

"It is true that before we can have one great movement, we must have several minor ones. But about these minor activities we cannot complain. We are at present in possession of all the links necessary for the purpose. Now who will weld them together into one great chain?

"That this will eventually take place we have not the least doubt. The question is only this: has the time come yet? A substantial community can only be produced by uniting the curbing form of the 'Uptown' with the recalcitrant matter of the 'Downtown.' Who is to be demiurge that will perform the task?

"Is it not remarkable that there is a large number of leagues, organizations, associations, societies and groups, all with a definite aim in view, the realization of which is a matter of uniting these aims into one grand and central aim with a view to regulating all the side-issues and side-tracks? The people seem to require a stirring to feel its necessity." (Ibid., Aug. 2, 1912)

GOODBYE MONTREAL

As Roback recalls in Destiny and Motivation in Language, this intense involvement in Jewish concerns affected his work in school and he could not pursue his studies in philology; he entered the field of philosophy and psychology.

Roback graduated from McGill in 1912 with first rank honours in philosophy and with the Prince of Wales Gold Medal (the first awarded in 14 years), winning first class marks in all subjects during his third and fourth years, 1910-12: 78% in Comparative Philology and 91% in Moral Philosophy in his third year and 84% on the Philosophy of Kant; 85% on Hume's Treatise; 90% in Theory of Knowledge; 95% in Experimental Psychology and 97% in his seminar on psychology in his fourth year.

Before his graduation, in February 1912, Dr. Tait of McGill University recommended Roback to the Harvard Graduate School for a scholarship. "He not only deserves financial aid, but actually needs it. He gives every promise of doing eminent work."

The Montreal community bade farewell to Abraham A. Roback on September 15, 1912 on his departure for Boston, in the hall of the Baron de Hirsch Institute under the chairmanship of Reuben Brainin. Three hundred men and women attended on the invitation of the Adler.

Roback spoke on "Philosophy and Life." Isaac Yampolsky told of his impressions of Europe whence he had just returned, and L. Mitnick, actor and theatre impresario, sang from his repertoire.

The Adler staff did not forget their former colleague when they assembled the Purim satire, 1913, and included "The Little Idiot à la Roback," based on the ancient Holtzkoff Kleptomaniac on the identity of a handkerchief and a Fachailah, a shawl; as is illustrated by a Jew with a pushcart laden with bottles and rags on St. Dominique St. who wipes his sweating face with a rag, or a Fachailah.

"But the same holds for a man in a car who is trumpeting his nose in a Fachailah as is denoted by our speazking of him as a gentleman blowing his nose in a handkerchief."

Roback wrote "Impressions of an Inexperienced Man" about leaving home (Oct. 7, 1912),

"I could not sleep for a week, the advent of an uncertain process. I remember things long forgotten, poems I had not heard for fifteen years, the faces of old time friends, old masters. I am saying

farewell to the first great chapter of my life. The pages turn; I would but glance at those faded leaves.

"When I wake I want to know the city of my arrival. My own city is distancing itself from me, familiar spots are beginning to be strange. Streets I had passed a dozen times a day now appear different, darker, and begin to fade.

"I think of the new city, I look for the letter B in the newspapers, and when I find it, it is a new landscape, other streets, other people. On my day of departure I am busied when all who remain are peaceful. But I cannot see enough of what is about me, larger, more beautiful, more precious. The stores wink to me, 'Glance at your native land. Henceforth you will be a guest here.'

"In the evening I see acquaintances, friends. Acquaintances have now become friends. They know the future that is put before me and they expect much. What do they expect? I become sad. I am become their delegate. I badly want not to disappoint them. One can be visible in a city, but one must grow in a world.

"Two friends accompany me to the station, my natural old best friend and my best acquired friend. The car rolls over the paving slowly past the school which was the home of my ABC, past my high school now being rebuilt, past the college and the building on the hill where I loved my studies so. When I return there will be another building on the hill."

Roback records his impressions of his arrival at the North Station, (Oct. 14, 1912.) In the midst of a milling crowd he noted a policeman holding a Negro whose arm is raised over his head. The elevated train outside the station makes him wonder which is the waking state and whether the railway station is a dream.

After questioning many pedestrians for directions to Harvard Square he found himself in Cambridge. The long street is marked by signs Silverman, Bornstein, Kirschen; "there are many Jews here, so I feel better."

A Gothic building turns out not to be a church, for the statuary is of Plato, Demosthenes, Aristotle and other Greek celebrities rather than of the saints. It turned out to be the centre where over a thousand students have their meals.

"I descend when the conductor calls out Harvard Square, at a gate with a Latin inscription, the entrance to the several square miles of the oldest university in America. Thousands of young people including Chinese, blacks, Japanese, Hindus and Jews were pacing about, wearing various types of headgear, footwear and collars -- breathing the free and equal air of democracy. Harvard Yard looks like a park, with hundreds of squirrels climbing up and down its trees and armies of doves walking about on the grass and flying low.

Every few minutes trucks laden with trunks; you would think Cambridge is constantly moving, and groups of its inhabitants were always meeting in renewed friendship -- the medalists of all universities competing with the best.

"Harvard, the melting pot of the spirit. A wondrous process in the wondrous machinery of Harvard."

Roback's "Letters from Harvard," Oct. 24 and 28, 1912, were so ideal they might have come from a pre-teenager rather than from a very learned sophisticated scholar. The very walls of the square reassured Roback of the level of philosophic learning, of the long predominance of the institution, of the resonance of its authoritative scholars implanted in his mind by every book he had ever opened in his McGill days. The fence about the Yard seemed to assure Roback a separation about the ethereal Harvard. (Adler, Oct. 24 and 26, 1912)

The faces of the young men passing the campus seemed to prove their special intelligence; he had not encountered such features before.

"Eventually I came to a four storey building: and my joy is indescribable: Emerson Hall. Large letters announce that this is the centre of Philosophy, a word which has come to mean as many colourful ideas as art. But to see the word in such large letters was beyond my expectations, a secret lore for adepts. Nor is such a structure devoted to a dozen students, as the large halls testify.

"Three entrances cite the Psalms: 'What is man that you should be mindful of him?' Emerson Hall is one of the lesser Harvard buildings, so named for America's greatest philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, the peer of William James."

One of the first to receive Roback was Assistant Professor Perry, a youthful 25-year-old -- friendly, democratic, lively, smiling. The second was Prof. Münsterberg, a man of military bearing who received each new student separately, a man of powerful constitution and personality. More aristocratic than the other professors, it becomes clear why he is persona grata in the Kaiser's court. He has the appearance of a high military officer. But his conversation was friendly as he inquired about McGill faculty men. He knew that these men counted on my future success. When I told him that I have been twenty years in Canada, he recalled that he, too, had come to America twenty years earlier. His speech has perfect German tones, but his English flows ceaselessly like a spring.

"There is no great distinction between faculty and students at Harvard, and it is possible to err between them. In the philosophical library I asked a young man to autograph my document under the impression that he was Prof. Bakewell of Yale, but it turned out he was himself a student.

"There is a strict ethic among the faculty and profound respect even for the students.

"Prof. Santayana has recently resigned to continue his studies in Idealism. He presented many of his books to the library of the philosophical department where students are able to examine his personal notes on the works of his colleagues."

Roback was a student at Harvard Graduate School of Arts, September 1912 to commencement, 1916 and from September 1923 to June 1924. Originally he intended to study philology at college, but he changed his choice to philosophy and psychology.

He received scholarships ranging from \$150 to \$750 each year. His marks were nearly always A's.

After receiving his master's degree he lectured in the Boston School for Social Sciences. In 1916 he was sent as fellow from Harvard, and taught at Princeton on the recommendation of Prof. Münsterberg. He was awarded his doctorate in 1917 by Harvard and taught at the University of Pittsburgh, Northeastern University, the University Extension Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Emerson College in Boston.

The readers of the Adler, who had been following Roback's daily progress since his school days in Montreal, continued their contact with this scholar after he reached Harvard. His Canadian admirers were virtually living his experiences with him as he arrived in the world capital of learning. They were with him as he was registering in the college, as he met with such giants of psychology as Münsterberg and Royce, even as he was familiarizing himself with the corridors of Emerson Hall. ("Old and Young" in Adler, Oct. 20, 1912 and "Letters from Harvard" Oct. 24 and 28, 1912)

An American scientific journal described him "in a certain sense as a hermit scholar. For more than forty years he lived successively in three roomy attic apartments in Cambridge. Books reached from floor to ceiling. The top of his desk was buried in correspondence and manuscripts."

Roback's reports on Harvard coincided, probably unintentionally, with the Yiddish writing of his Canadian colleague Aaron (Archibald) B. Bennett (1891-1980) another Yiddish Canadian intellectual of the period.

A year younger than Roback, Bennett had also come to Canada as a very young child from the Brisk area of Lithuania and received his early education in Kingston. Like Roback, he was a serious scholar of philosophy, an intense student of modern Judaism, a devotee of Yiddish and a creative figure in Canadian Jewish journalism since 1911. He saw Yiddish culture as a major pillar of contemporary

Judaism, contributed richly to the Adler from its early years and edited the Canadian Jewish Times after 1911.

Bennett was an intimate colleague of Reuben Brainin since the great editor settled in Montreal in 1912 and shared the exciting saga of the Congress and of Canadian Zionism of the decade. That period featured Bennett's participation in the first Canadian Jewish Congress in 1919 and in the Canadian Zionist revolution during which he, together with other young Turks, toppled Clarence de Sola from leadership of the national organization which the distinguished son of the Rev. Abraham de Sola had founded decades earlier. De Sola was succeeded by A.J. Freiman of Ottawa.

Bennett continued his leadership of the Canadian Jewish community, largely through his journalism in the Canadian Jewish press and through the Canadian Jewish Congress.

His writings on the principles of Jewish communal policy, since his presentation at the first Congress, and his analytical reminiscences are important documents of Jewish Canadiana.

Within months of Roback's arrival in Harvard in 1912, Bennett wrote parallel descriptions of his own Queen's College in Kingston in the Adler and an important essay on the school's conflict regarding the legal status of its Jewish faculty and students. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series no. 37, pp. 83-127)

Even after he left Canada Roback was a frequent visitor and lecturer in Montreal for many years.

His departure for Harvard did not sever Roback's connections with the Montreal Jewish press. At the end of May, 1914 Roback returned to Montreal from Harvard to edit the new Canadian Jewish Chronicle which began publication in May 1914, but he soon returned to Cambridge to continue his studies. He had organized the editorial department of the Canadian Jewish Chronicle, with himself as editor and Hyman E. Edelstein (Hineni, pseud.) as assistant editor. The contributors' list included A.B. Bennett of Toronto, Dr. S. Vineberg, S.W. Jacobs, J.A. Budyk, Louis Fitch, M. Garber (Zioni), A.J. Livinson, S. Talpis, L. Dainow, Ida Seigler (Judith) and Mrs. K. Cohen (Sheila Rand) of Winnipeg.

In September 1919 he came to Montreal to lecture at the Baron de Hirsch Institute on "Jewish Folksongs in Comparison with the Songs of Other Nations." His researches prove the particular character of these Jewish creations. (Adler, Sept. 11 and 16, 1919)

In 1922 Roback came to Montreal for the 15th Jubilee of the Adler. On the occasion he lectured on "Intelligence and How to Manage It" at the Baron de Hirsch Institute.

Roback retained a close epistolary relationship with his Canadian family and with his close friend, historian and journalist B.G. Sack until death parted them. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series no. 4)

HIGH PRIEST OF YIDDISH

Roback's major academic and professional concern was, of course, in psychology, the field in which he attained world prominence and to which he contributed scores of major works.

He was also a leading graphologist, and wrote the introduction to H.A. Round's Graphology, A Handbook. (1947, 1961)

But simultaneously he also figures as one of the remarkable men of Canada, and particularly as a great Canadian Jew who left a durable impress upon Jewish scholarship and upon the ideology of the century.

Roback became a prominent figure in the world realm of Yiddish studies within the first decade of his departure from Montreal. He applied his scientific training and discipline to the hitherto rarely researched Yiddish field.

This is especially true because of his precocity. He left Canada in his early twenties to proceed with his studies in psychology, with his investigation of the Yiddish language and folklore and his militancy in Yiddishism. Yet he was the fully formed leader and thinking man before he left Montreal; he had already begun his battle for his ideas as an undergraduate in college.

Roback recalled the maturation of his Yiddish concern during his first days at Harvard where he found himself walking on the very footsteps of Leo Wiener, the true pioneer of Yiddish science.

He wrote "The Story of Harvard's Yiddish Bibliotheca, on the Centenary of Modern Yiddish Literature" in the Jewish Forum,

"The original Yiddish collection of 325 books and 1200 pamphlets, which Leo Wiener had brought with him from Russia, adding perhaps another hundred items to those he had deposited in the Harvard College Library -- compare it with the over ten thousand volumes, nearly all well bound, and far exceeding in number all the books in the several Celtic languages and probably even the books in Arabic -- we can then gain an idea as to how Yiddish literature has grown, and how well supplied the Harvard College Library is in that respect.

"The only two histories of Yiddish literature in English have been based on this collection, Wiener publishing in 1899, and the present writer in 1940 and 1958. Without these books and periodicals, the histories would not have come about. By some strange coincidence it so happens that both of these historians were born within fifteen miles of one another, Bialostock and vicinity in White Russia,

although the present writer spent only the first year of his life in the Old World, having been brought to Montreal in infancy. Neither Wiener nor Roback had any Yiddish training. The former taught Slavic languages; the latter -- psychology. The only two historians of Yiddish literature were both associated with Harvard, but while Wiener lost interest in Yiddish after the publication of his book, in 1899, when Yiddish literature had not yet come of age, the later historian continued to give much of his time to it, publishing two large volumes in Yiddish (556 pages and 730 pages) in addition to hundreds of articles.

"It was sometime in 1912 that in an obscure part of the old library, Gore Hall, I chanced upon a tatterdemalion collection of pasteboard boxes plus several scores of rickety bound volumes, under the general heading of Judeo-German, and as I began to examine the contents of the containers, the paper would crumble, so that I thought it best not to disturb the contents. It was frustrating, of course, after the first thrill that the despised Yiddish, even under its patronizing designation of Judeo-German, as if it were some corrupt dialect, had found a nook in the great University Library. It was evident that the collection had gone to seed, or to change the metaphor, had been stored as a conglomeration of fossils with tags attached, describing, in some instances, the chief features of each. One might gather from the descriptions, done apparently by an autodidact engaged for the purpose, that these booklets were the relics of an extinct folk literature, especially as no additions had been made since the turn of the century... There were more immediate problems to cope with, what with earning enough to complete his education, preparing a doctoral thesis, securing a teaching post, setting up a household. Besides, Yiddish at the time exercised no more than a sentimental flourish upon the shaping cultural pattern."

Mordecai Ginsburg, scholarly journalist of the Adler, called Roback "The Guardian of the Walls" and "The High Priest of Yiddish."

Moshe Starkman describes him as "the romantic knight of Mamme Loshen,"

His biographer formulated Roback's perception of the language, "Yiddish is, in a sense, unique in its ubiquity, competing in that respect with world-wide English; it is remarkable in that it derives its vocabulary from both the Indo-European and Semitic families and that its speakers have been identified as an ethnic unit for at least 3000 years; furthermore that its morphology and, to a slighter degree, its grammar are influenced by the pristine language of its speakers, Hebrew. Linguists might discover an unlooked for mine in its euphemisms and phylacterisms, its morphology and syntax, its semantics and idioms, paragogics, parasitics, diminutives, and pejoratives, its value-gradations and subtle nuances as expressed in prepositional prefixes, and might even wish to explore its extensive and valuable literature, which of itself would be sufficient to refute

the absurd view that Yiddish, at the present stage, is a German dialect." (Joseph Berger, The Destiny and Motivation of Dr. A.A. Roback. Cambridge, Schoenhofe, 1957. Pp. 13-14)

In a letter to Miss Seigler, editor of the Canadian Jewish Chronicle on its tenth anniversary, (June 8, 1924) Roback pointed out that he has been voicing his indignant protests and other unconventional comments on 'The Great Defect of American Jewry,' the intellectual neglect and poverty of the community.

"Jewish publishers are continually complaining of the nonchalance of the Jewish reading public. Important contributions are not printed because of the lack of funds, and what has puzzled me is the fact that a Jewish businessman who will pay a book agent from fifteen to twenty-five dollars for a set of English books, which he will never care to read, will not contribute a dollar toward the publication of a valuable book, if it is on a Jewish subject. Our wealthy Jews such as Marx, Schaffner and Hart and others, are eager to establish funds for the awarding of economics prizes, but the man who sacrifices his professional activities and takes time from his recreation to engage in some Jewish research will not only have to forego the winning of prizes. He will, after paying several dollars for the typewriting, find that there is not a suitable publication to accept the article or series of articles. In case it is accepted, the honorarium is usually little more than the amount paid for the typewriting, but quite often, as in the case of a New York Jewish monthly, the article will be extorted under false pretenses. The promise of payment is made in black and white but that is as far as the transaction goes, and in addition to spending a week or so delving in scores of books for his material, he is, unless he composes on a typewriter, minus a few dollars. In this way, the Jewish scholar must be a philanthropist not only with his time, labor and energy but also with his money, of which he has not a superabundance, as may be surmised."

His genetic studies led him to the conviction that immigrants inherited blood and cell components of persons that brought talent and wisdom to the land where they settled and where they added to the national treasure of the nation. So in 1918 he addressed an open letter to biographers, bibliographers and encyclopaedists, headed "The Cultural Pogrom on the Jews" when these compilers ascribed the qualities and talents of their subjects to the newer countries of their residence. (Jewish Forum, 1918)

Isaac Reisman of Detroit recalled Roback as the proud Jew, erudite, eternal battler for truths which he elevated to sanctities; which, in turn he saw as elevating the honour of the Jewish people, "sanctifying the Sacred Name before the many."

Poet Leyeles Glanz comments, "I have been seized by Roback's seriousness in regard to Yiddish at the moment when from all sides of Ashkenaz it has been deserted and when in some regions, as in the Soviet Union, Yiddish has been meeting not passive neutralism, but

the active and malicious force which a mighty government can exert. Elsewhere, the attitude was, 'Who cares? Let it disappear!' All this time Roback did not swerve from his faith in Yiddish, from love and from faith or in faith. He kept on writing and fighting in the Americas, in Europe."

The often noted fact that he was virtually unique in not having any direct European background made him distinctive among the growing number of Yiddish scholars, but it also separated him from these specialists. But Roback did little to ingratiate or identify himself with the considerable establishment of Yiddish culture even though he more than shared their ideals and their ideology.

Indeed he studied and adopted the principles and the mechanism through which the profundities and the survival of the language could be ensured and put to the service of the Jewish people, to its enrichment. It is a remarkable cultural phenomenon to observe Roback at his dedicated role of edifying the Yiddish language as a national function, elevating the poems and the thoughts of the prophets of the new Judaism, mobilizing the ranks of youths and philosophers into the army of those who would cherish the words of the language in all its connotations, idioms and localisms and, at the same time, policed the inconsistencies of those of its users and of its writers who knew not the logical and scientific disciplines; all this particularly in a social realm where virtually none of the populist creators and writers (miracles of social and cultural miracles) had academic or formal schooling.

There was a quality of the cantakerous in the man that found expression in this area of his numerous concerns. He became the constant critic of the Yiddish cultural scene, even as he contributed to all its workings -- to its reviews, libraries, dictionaries, conferences, institutions, literature. His controversies were principally with such of its giants as the outstanding critic, Samuel Niger.

Early in his career he published in the Yiddish Dos Naye Lebn, Literatur un Lebn, Dos Yiddishe Folk, Warheit, Die Literarische Welt, Der Yiddisher Kemfer, Die Freye Arbeiter Shtimme, Der Tog and Forward and to the Yiddish press outside New York. He edited the Boston Yiddish weekly Der Yiddisher Journal, 1922 to which Montreal poet J.I. Segal contributed.

His "Euphemism in Yiddish" appeared in the Jewish Forum in 1919 and in vol. 4, no. 2, Feb. 1921, Pp. 736-49)

In 1929 he instituted the first course on Yiddish in an American university, in the event in Massachusetts.

His Story of Yiddish Literature was published by the American branch of the YIVO in 1939-40. The work was one of several that "led to endless epilogues in the form of Streitschriefften like "Reviling is Not

Reviewing" and a Yiddish pamphlet called Kritik un Kritzenish ('Gritting as Greeting').

Ever a rationalist and possessed of a Jew's burning sense of justice, Roback frequently felt called upon to undertake the thankless task of polemicizing with reviewers, including young men fresh out of graduate school who were eager to win their critical spurs by attacking those outside the 'Establishment.' In this instance, Roback was criticized for excessive zeal, for being an apologist and propagandist, for 'sins' of both commission and omission. In his booklet Psychology Through Yiddish Literature, subtitled Apologia pro vita idicia in its Italian translation, Roback replied to the 'Blitzcritique' of men like S. Niger and A. Mukdoni and claimed he had "learned more about human nature in the months following the publication of The Story of Yiddish Literature than in the four years I spent in the most famous psychological laboratory in America -- at Harvard, under Hugo Münsterberg."

"Roback's lifelong love affair with Mammeh Loshen was based on the conviction that Yiddish was 'the most enduring medium of expression which the Jewish people, i.e., the masses, have had...It contains nearly all the elements of other languages which the Jews have employed.'

"Roback tempered love with scholarship and strove to establish order in Yiddish orthography and transliteration, including diacritical marks and foreign accents, in addition to coining or suggesting numerous locutions. Contemporary Yiddish Literature, a pamphlet published in London in 1957 in severely truncated form, is but one of many pamphlets on Yiddish and Yiddish letters, dedicated to the memory of martyred Yiddish writers and actors in the USSR." (H. Zohn, Pp. 58-59)

Roback's record of controversy, particularly concerning Yiddish, included his response to Dr. Daiches and Dr. Robin, British critics of Yiddish literature less enthusiastic than Roback about the language. This vigorous response was published in the London Jewish Quarterly, Spring 1956.

From the beginning he became the militant champion of Yiddish in American schools and colleges. His controversy with Reform Rabbi David Phillipson in the Nation in the fall of 1918 sounded a new tone in North American Jewish discussion. He early encouraged Harvard's libraries to become a centre of Yiddish studies. In 1928 he was the principal organizer of the Yiddish collection at Harvard University Library. He travelled to Europe in the 1930's to acquire books for this collection.

When a lecturer at an Oxford convention of philosophers discussed "When Did Jewish Philosophy Disappear?" Roback responded that Jewish philosophy never disappeared. It was only that the French appropriated Bergson, the English Alexander, the Germans Husserl

and the Dutch Spinoza -- all of them components of Jewish philosophy. (Isaac Reisman, "Mourning at the Grave of A. Aaron Roback," in Adler, Jan. 26 and 28, 1966)

Remarkably unaware of the difference between his own Canadian background and that of the leaders in European and New York Yiddishism, Roback deeply resented the difficulties he had in getting his Yiddish books published at a time when many books in that language were appearing in America.

"I began writing Yiddish and English at the same time, but I was very anxious to appear in a Yidish volume. In 1914 I saw Yiddish books appear on chemistry and on astronomy. I suggested that the Workmen's Circle commission a work on elementary psychology. I had already published hundreds of articles in the Jewish press and had reached a certain position in the profession. My suggestion was rejected.

"Several years later I was ready to issue a Yiddish work on Peretz. The publisher had published hundreds of books and pamphlets in Yiddish, but he asked for guarantee; this at a time when I would walk four miles to get a cup of coffee and a roll for 5 cents.

"I published the Peretz book in English myself when I could bear the cost and not be swollen from hunger."

"It was not until 1957 that my ambition to see my Yiddish book was realized; this came to pass when a man sensitive to cultural potentialities, Mr. Ferdman of the Bund in Mexico, chose to publish this book at his expense." (Preface to A.A. Roback. Die Imperye Yiddish)

Roback noted that the Canadian Jewish Congress pioneered on the North American continent in its recognition of Yiddish as a measure in restraining assimilation. (Die Imperye Yiddish, 1958. P. 305)

His "Aspects of Jewish Protective Phrases" was published in the Bulletin no. 4 of the Jewish Academy of Arts and Science, 1938.

"Being Polite in Yiddish" was the title of his article in the Chicago Jewish Forum, vol. 21, no. 1, Fall 1962, Pp. 21-25)

Roback wrote an essay on "The Yiddish Proverb, A Study in Folk Psychology" (18 p.) and later, in Medical Leaves, on "Physicians in Jewish Folklore."

Roback surveyed the course of Yiddish literature, 1933-61, in the Institute Anniversary Volume, 1941-61 of the Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress in New York. (Pp. 237-85)

Poet Melech Ravitch, for many years a resident of Montreal, refers to him as the fanatical lover of Yiddish, the ambassador for Jewish and for all human culture.

Ravitch, who had been the secretary of the Central Yiddish Literary Club on Tlomatzky Street in Warsaw, recalled meeting Roback for the first time when the Canadian psychologist visited the centre in 1925.

"He came in like a fish swimming from an artificial pool into a living stream. He was soon familiar with all of them; whoever would tell him anything would find that Roback had heard it all the week before the last. They invited him to lecture on Freud, but he insisted on speaking to us, the men of Yiddish Poland, on Peretz; we compromised: he delivered two lectures, on Freud and on Peretz.

"Slight and blond and sharp-faced and speaking with a bit of a lilt, he showed not a bit of professional snobbishness. As we met many times over the years -- in Boston and Montreal and New York -- I saw the narrow forehead become higher and the professorial baldness spread; his last hairs became whiter, the eyes more restless and framed in red, the hands paler. But put a deeper kippah on his head, add long payoth and a thin beard and you have one of Peretz's Cabbalists, pure spirituality; and that was his reality.

"I was amazed to hear him tell me that he stemmed 'from pure working people,' the simplest of the simple. I wondered to myself how he grew out of them. Of course, this could apply only to his immigrant generation, and not of the American generation of his kin.

"Thinking about this, I told Roback, 'Possibly this origin was the source of the literally elemental love of the language of the simple and hearty folk?' Roback heard me out and complimented me, 'A sound psychological observation.'

"I visited him once in Cambridge. He had sublet several rooms from an old couple in an old house with creaking steps; bookshelves to the ceiling; all tables, benches, chairs piled high with papers, a house erected from a million cards. He knew each of his papers, but at a stranger's touch all would tumble. He loved to tell stories and to illustrate and document them in the telling. I would listen and trembled for the piles of papers.

"He corresponded much, in long letters, full of complaints and problems, Yiddish problems, in a thin script, as with a pen etched from a match. He is destined for the ledger of the Miracles of Yiddish, as one of its seven basic principles; the 1700 pages of his last two books probably glow more brightly with love of Yiddish than any other literature." (M. Ravitch. My Lexicon, Intimate Pen Profiles)

In 1924 Roback reviewed Z. Reisen's Grammar of the Yiddish Language in the Journal of English and Germanic Philology (vol. 23, no. 1, Pp. 131-34).

Roback's Curiosities of Yiddish Literature which appeared in Cambridge, Mass. in 1933 (227 p.) was followed by a sequel, Contemporary Yiddish Literature (London, Lincoln-Praeger, 1957. 110 p.).

Among his studies in Yiddish was a paper on parasitic letters in the Yiddish language, in Unser Buch (vol. 4, no. 1).

The Jewish Academy of Arts and Science published his bulletin on Psychological Aspects of Jewish Protective Phrases, 1938 (18 p.).

His essay on "Why Yiddish?" printed in 1958 by Oifleb which was dedicated to the promotion of Yiddish as "one of the main forms of Jewish creative expression outside the State of Israel; Yiddish and Hebrew supplement one another in maintaining our existence as Jews." was reprinted from the Adler in Yiddish, on Aug. 23 and 24, 1910.

Dr. H. Zohn of Brandeis notes "Max Brod's phrase 'streitbares Leben' comes to mind when I think of Dr. Roback. 'Streitbar' means both 'belligerent' and 'valorous', and the phrase might be rendered as 'a fighter's life.' A.A. Roback was a master of the art of polemics, as reflected by his truly staggering, fascinating, worldwide correspondence; and since the causes that he championed (such as Yiddish) were not always popular, since he was essentially a rationalist and idealist who expected reason and truth and justice from everyone, he was often hurt and had to speak out, felt impelled to set the record straight. It bothered him, for example, when a smart-alecky young man barely out of graduate school was assigned to review one of his books and did a hatchet job on it, when he was given the runaround by editors and fellow scholars and journalists and ignorant administrators, when he had to submit to all sorts of trivial indignities in everyday life. Yet his philosophical bent of mind and sturdy sense of humor, his pronounced 'Yiddishkeit' helped him over all sorts of minor crises.

"Personally, I never found him overly egocentric or querulous or cantankerous. On the contrary, he often cheered me up and made me see that my own position was much better than it often appeared to be. For all his self-centredness, I remember him as a man of genuine humility and warmth, with a deep and sincere interest in others. If Mr. Roback, despite our long acquaintance and closeness, never called me by my first name and never omitted my degree, I attribute this to an almost Germanic sense of style and propriety, a genuine respect for titles and academic standing, a true sense of 'dereckh ertz'."

His study of Jews' names "Sarah to Sylvia to Shirley" appeared in Commentary, September 1946.

Roback contributed a folkloric study of the Jewish conception of the world to the festschrift issued in 1950 in Jerusalem in honour of Rabbi Yehudah Leib Zlotnick, the great anthropologist and Hebraist also known as Elzet and Avida who spent a decade in Montreal and in Vancouver.

Zlotnick enriched Canadian Jewish literature greatly before leaving the dominion for South Africa and, when the Jewish state was restored, for Israel. The sacred city named a street off King George V in his honour, Avida St.

In 1951 Roback published "The Jew in Modern Science" in the collection The Hebrew Impact on Western Civilization.

In 1964 Roback wrote his 711-page Yiddish tome Der Folks Geist in der Yiddisher Sprach, (The Popular Spirit in the Yiddish Language, with an English subtitle page, The Genius of the Yiddish Language.

Like his other Yiddish tome Die Imperye Yiddish, which appeared in Mexico on the sponsorship of Mr. Ferdman, a private enthusiast for Yiddish, the Folks Geist is a product of Parisian fabulist and Yiddish lover, A. Miednick -- both generous businessmen, residents of moderate-sized communities distant from the great centres of Judaism such as New York and Israel.

Die Imperye Yiddish reprinted Roback's articles on the language which had appeared in the Frei Arbeiter Shtimme.

Roback dedicated the Folks Geist "To my unknown heir in the battle for Yiddish, probably of a later generation, who will, I am confident, come with greater powers of organization, will awaken the overbusy community workers who do not understand that the Jewish people (except those of Israel) can have no means of survival other than their own instrument of expression and ensured culture, and that it is easier and historically more natural to continue in Yiddish which has already been the language of the creative tribe of the world people for a thousand years."

The secularist author concluded his book colophon-style: "The book is concluded with the Aid of Faith."

On the appearance of Der Folks Geist poet Leyeless Glanz noted, "Roback has remained faithful to Yiddish, a language so often offended yet ever splendid. There has been a rare romantic knighthood in his chivalry and exceptional fidelity in his constancy with himself."

Leyeless Glanz recalled the regrettable reception which Roback's work on The Story of Yiddish Literature had received upon its publication because of some typographical and other minor errors. The sponsors

of the volume -- Z. Reisen, Z. Calmanovitch and Max Weinreich, all of the YIVO -- supported Roback in his pioneering effort." (N.Y. Morgen Journal, Nov. 15 and Dec. 13, 1964)

The first fifty pages of Der Folks Geist are sharp comments on the language of the major New York newspapers and on Bashevis, Bialik and on the poet-journalist-spiritualist B. Sheps who adopted the name of a Montreal department store for his nom de plume (A. Almi), and a score of other authors. In the following sixty pages Roback devoted his encyclopaedic erudition to destroy the Algemeine Yiddishe Encyclopedia which had begun to appear in Yiddish and in English.

Half-way through his thick volume Roback defines the masters of the matrices of Yiddish, "in the midst of the conflict between the intellectuals who sought to assimilate themselves and others and imported various impurities into the language, and others who sought to continue the tradition of the people. In the tenth century our hero was Elijah Bachur Lewites; in the seventeenth such men as Witzzenhausen; in the eighteenth the hero of Yiddish was Mendel Lepin; in the nineteenth such battlers as Ettinger, Joshua Lipshitz and Mendele who set out to clear the Yiddish of such wild weeds even as the earlier intellectuals had collected as they pressed into the broad world free of persecution and who looked upon the people as uncivilized men of darkness, for whom Yiddish appeared as a corrupt German jargon, until Yiddish literature became a collective force. The Czernowitz Conference of 1908 impelled the first drive, but only a decade later did the litterateurs force upon the Yiddish writers the certainty that the language was so stable but demanded a sense of responsibility and of respect." (Pp. 302-3)

It is presumed that since Bible days and outside of Israel places are generally not named by Jews. But Jewish folklore has given a particular strong semantic to some names, and has created associations, changed the form and sometimes even changed names completely, as Dr. A.A. Roback has shown in his "Humour in Jewish Place Names" in "Our Library, 1914-57" issued by the Jewish Public Library in 1957 to mark its 45th anniversary, under the editorship of D. Rome and J. Grossman. (Pp. 115-25) It appeared in extended form in his Der Folks Geist, 1964. (Pp. 353-47)

Roback presided over the Greater Boston committee for the Yiddish Encyclopedia.

On May 23, 1937 he read a paper on "Euphemistic Phrases Among the Jews" before the Jewish Academy of Arts and Sciences in New York.

He lectured in Yiddish on "The Sense of Inferiority in Theory and Practice" and, in English, on "Psychoanalysis Shaping the World" under the sponsorship of the Jewish Public Library early in 1937.

Roback lectured on May 25, 1921 at the New York YWHA on "Folk Music Among Jews and Other Nations," with song illustrations by his wife, Mrs. Esther Roback.

Montrealers long remembered his appearance at the Peretz observances in the Monument National in 1944.

Roback spoke at a dinner of the building committee of the Jewish Public Library at the Mount Royal Hotel on August 1, 1944 which initiated the erection of the library at Mount Royal and Esplanade. The dinner was sponsored by Moe Brainin and Moshe Myerson.

He spoke on "The Language Humour of Yiddish" in the Jewish library on April 1, 1965, shortly before his passing.

Roback served on the academic council of the YIVO.

In one of his vigorous actions in defence of Jewish rights Roback addressed Prof. W. Swietkawatski, the Polish Minister of Education, a protest against the segregation of Jewish students in university halls.

He had addressed the Philosophical Society of the University of Warsaw. A native of Poland he remembered, he had sent his works to universities in that country and had entertained Polish professors in the United States.

"What then," he wrote on October 29, 1937, "in view of all these Polish leanings, must be my pain and anguish to learn that the Polish Government had officially submitted to the medieval demands of the Indek students and decreed that the Jewish students be segregated from their Gentile classmates in the lecture halls.

"We have a saying in English 'Cutting one's nose to spite one's face.' This measure, however, seems to be 'Cutting one's face to spite the nose'; for there can be no semblance of doubt that Polish prestige will suffer in every democratic country because of this attitude, which is calculated to undermine the ideals of science and to defeat the very purpose of education.

"I admire the resistant stand of the Jewish students, many of whom will reflect credit on Polish scholarship in the years to come; and I trust that you and my friends, Professors Kotarbinski, Lukasiewicz, and Witwicki, together with other liberal educators in Poland, will do your utmost to remove a stigma from the fair escutcheon of Polish university life.

"I can understand mob spirit in creating excesses, but it seems unbelievable that a Government, which had come into being after the repressive role of a foreign aggressor had subjected the Poles to similar indignities, would not heed the principles on which the new post bellum status had been established, and would bestow its official sanction upon an unmistakable barbarism in the educational sphere.

"I feel quite certain that your great Marshal, General Pilsudski, who in his younger days worked together with Jews in many capacities, would, had he lived today, not countenanced such a move.

"It is difficult to see how I, if invited again to address an academic gathering in Poland -- and if I should not be invited again, it would not be because my standing as a psychologist has dropped, or because I have lost caste -- could possibly accept the invitation under the circumstances....

"A division of students on a ghetto basis in American lecture halls and laboratories is unthinkable; and I can well imagine what the late champion of Polish rights, Woodrow Wilson, who was President of Princeton University, would think of such treatment to an integral portion of the academic body.

"I can assure you that American educators as a class are decidedly grieved at a situation which is a distinct anachronism in our day."

ROBACK'S PERETZ

Roback was at Harvard during the Passover of 1915 when I.L. Peretz, whom he adored as one of the greatest sons of Israel, passed away in Warsaw.

A. Roback, the passionate Yiddishist and nationalist, was "fearfully doleful," as he eulogized Peretz, "the spiritual sovereign of the Jewish people, the man of soul and force, now more than ever peremptorily needed, the greatest Jewish writer for centuries, the greatest to write in the Jewish language.

"His people will be affected by his work perhaps centuries hence. Time will only add to the appreciation of his worth, the literary genius ranking with some of the greatest names in the history of literature. He found lifeless bones and animated them; he has infused new blood into withered bodies. He had an invigorating influence on the depressed and the melancholic; the hopeless he imbued with a new spirit. His expressions breathed with the intense feeling of a great poet and the profound thought of a great philosopher. Given clay, he turned it into human life.

"A world of poetry was waiting until Peretz came and drew the curtain aside. The public looked on and wondered. Admiration mingled with reverence came to his lot. But there was only one Peretz; as everything that made Peretz was contained in his very person... Hence our indescribable sorrow, hence our unspeakable grief." (reprinted from the Canadian Jewish Chronicle in his 'I.L. Peretz, Psychologist of Literature. Cambridge, Sci-Art Publishers, 1935. Pp. 154-60)

Within a couple of years of leaving Montreal, by 1915, Roback entered the circle of foremost Yiddish critics of the world when he participated in a Yiddish collection on I.L. Peretz which marked the passing of the great Yiddish playwright and poet, with a 6-page essay on "Peretz as a Psychologist." Here he collaborated with C. Zhitlowsky, H. Leivick, I. Opatashu and Ber Borochoy. (N.Y. 128 p.)

Twenty years later Roback expanded his 1915 study of Peretz into a 457-page work in English, I.L. Peretz, Psychologist of Literature. This essay on the writer who is a towering beacon of Yiddish literature coupled a remarkable analysis of the Yiddish artist with the person of Roback as the Montreal critic intertwined the artistry of Peretz with his own particular method of study of psychology. Out of this twinning Roback emerges as a remarkable personality in Judaism and in science.

The Peretz volume is a close psychologist's analysis of his giant case.

Here, too, the clinician was fortunate to have on hand an early autobiographical document from the pen of the excruciatingly honest artist. In Roback's hands Peretz, often little known and misunderstood, becomes a subtle artist, complex in each of his scattered words and tales as he documents his elaborate formation.

Linguist-grammarians Roback read -- and translated when necessary -- Peretz' work as he reconstituted the atom elements of speech and memory into the making of the twentieth century literary thinker and the ultimate modern leader and the model Jewish citizen of his age.

Roback's I.L. Peretz, Psychologist of Literature is probably the most serious Jewish study that came from his pen, and stands in a very particular relationship with his other work in the realms of psychology and literature.

It is very much the work of a psychologist rather than a work on a psychologist. It is the work of a particular psychologist whose research is in the patterning of particles of words which have psychological import, not necessarily integrated in the manner of psychologists who integrate data or to reintegrate persons.

To read Roback is to marvel at the particle fragments which may be assembled by examining Peretz and sharing the multiplicity which Roback in all confidence finds in Peretz, with the unwitting assistance of Viennese doctors and later therapists and philosophers.

In this fragmentation of Roback's reading there lies a demonstration of Peretz' style, where series of periods serve not for punctuation, but to stimulate the arrangement of paragraphs, sketches and episodes in surprising levels on a single painting which has or does not have a unity.

There was a logic and a normality all its own to Roback being able to establish the mind structure of this Polish Jew of distant Sephard origin by the psychological method which he had adopted in his late teens in Montreal and had elaborated on the pages of the Adler and of the Canadian Jewish Times and had developed later in his Harvard personality charts. His Peretz study not only reveals Roback's vast erudition, but relates it subtly to Peretz' own profound roots which are deep in the world of philosophy.

It is the same national logic that led Roback to find the handbook of psychology by a professor at McGill University among Peretz books' in Zamosć in 1888. (Prof. Clark Murray, by the way, was the English translator of Solomon Maimon's Autobiography. In this universe of academe the highways bind Canadian universities. Roback and Zamosć and Roback and Maimon and McGill and Peretz and Münsterberg and Beauport and Yiddishism.)

Roback examined in detail much of the work of Peretz to observe the artist's application of psychology. To this end he translated a lesser

known but valuable sketch "The Precipice" and followed it with three chapters on Peretz' technique. (I.L. Peretz, Psychologist of Literature, pp. 301-26)

Roback concluded his summary of psychology, mysticism and transcendentalism in the western world by pointing to the wealth of this lore in the work of Peretz. He detailed the significance of Peretz as the collective psychologist of the Jewish nation which has gone through so much in the four thousand years of its existence.

"It is generally supposed that the circumscribed life of the Ghetto had reduced the range of activities in the Jew; that the long chain of suppressions and restrictions has resulted in squelching his inner life.

"Only a smattering of psychology is necessary for one to be convinced that this popular view is quite erroneous. Although the overt activity of the Jew was checked, his thoughts and feelings remained free. He could still take attitudes, and the more restricted his range of activity, the more intense was his inner life. Every suppression, and consequently inhibition on his part, produced a marked effect on his mental make-up. He could not put up any resistance against his oppressors, but the emotion had to find an outlet somewhere. The result was, in many cases, the origin of a new proverb or song, afterwards adopted by the people as a whole.

"Every ban, every libel, every restriction had become a theme with thousands of variations. Jewish life is far more diversified, far more colourful, than the life of perhaps any other people; for it must be recalled that the Jew in every single country lived his own separate life and had altogether a different set of relationships with the dominant element in each country.

"We must also bear in mind that not only are we dealing with the people or nationality as such, but there are to be added two further group constituents, viz., religion and race. Together combined, they form a sort of trinity. Thus, the Jewish chain of relationships in all countries and at all times, since the destruction of the Temple, with religion acting as a control guard, seems to be a never-ending one.

"The Jews have had no hunting parties or knightly tournaments, but they had the romanticism of the Spanish Passover and the thrilling life of the Marranos to compensate for the void. It is true as individuals they would be glad to forego such experiences...

"The Jew has been burdened with two separate loads of precepts, those which religion had imposed upon him, and those with which his oppressors had saddled him. Self-conscious by nature -- and probably that will account for the larger proportion of nervous troubles among the Jews in the form of morbid brooding and endless self-dissection -- religion tended to make them even more self-conscious...

"There is evidently nothing mechanical in Jewish life. Every precept and every transgression, every religious inhibition finds a response in the Jewish mind; and this reaction eventually expresses itself in the folklore and other collective productions of the people.

"This holds true, also, of the social barrier which confined the Jew in a closed Ghetto. Every prohibition and every restriction enriched the Jewish spirit; for there was an impulse to pause and reflect on it. In this way the consciousness of the Jew was deepened. The average non-Jew could walk wherever he pleased without the slightest restriction, so that trivialities like the manner of walking, or even the place, would not occupy his mind. The Jew, however, always had to consider whether it was legal for him to go to a particular place or not. He always had to bear in mind a list of those parts of the town which he would have to avoid if he would not lose his freedom altogether. Even the time of the day was a serious matter with him in that respect.

"Many of the most common acts that the Gentile performed day in and day out, either unconsciously or subconsciously, e.g., the act of putting on his coat in the morning, furnished the Jew with food for deep thought and intense feeling. In donning his distinctive gabardine he could not help reflecting on his relations with his oppressors; and if, perchance, he happened to grow unmindful of his lot, the likelihood was that he would soon recover his racial consciousness on venturing outside the precincts of the Ghetto. The yellow badge was not to be forgotten.

"Under such circumstances, his introspective bent of mind would tend to become re-inforced, and his psychological insight would become all the clearer, partly because of the thousands and myriads of occurrences that plunged him into a reflective mood, and partly because he was obliged to cultivate some quality through which he could understand his persecutors and, by eluding them, escape their malice.

"It is my contention that the cramped Ghetto not only failed to impoverish the Jew's inner life, but if anything, has enriched it. The effect was the reverse of what is commonly supposed. In physiological language, every social restriction has led to an inhibition of movement. Before this inhibition becomes habitual or mechanized so that it takes place automatically, it must be accompanied by higher processes in the cortex of the brain, or what amounts to the same thing, conscious states.

"In other words, the very restraint and interference, instead of paralyzing the brain, only lead to further stimulation of the nerve cells. New pathways are opened for the nerve currents which were barred from actual motor expression, as a result of the restriction. Now, since every inhibition must have an outlet, and the original desire or intention is blocked, the motor processes must proceed along other channels. A displacement ensues, and this involves not

only the action of the glands, but the calling forth of new acts, new gestures of an extremely circumscribed nature, and also arouses new impulses and leanings, new emotions and sentiments, new thoughts and verbal expressions, which must necessarily be altogether strange to the Gentile. What the latter performs either unconsciously or unwittingly, will, because of the double line of impositions referred to, evoke a restrained attitude which, in its turn, will give rise to a reaction consisting of specific thoughts and feelings.

"The homely example may be offered of one who is thwarted in his movements by a bully, and can only express himself in violent language or imprecations. Again, if this substitute is too risky, the victim resorts to the method of assailing his oppressor in thought.

"Much of what the Jew has developed in the course of his Ghetto experience finds a place in this somewhat artificial system of neural pathways and connections which underlie, or form the matrices of, the more obvious elements of the specifically Jewish culture -- I say more obvious elements, because the mould through which these experiences pass and are shaped is ab ovo Jewish; and should not be confused with their content.

"One corollary is that the more restraint and restrictions, the more external life takes on the aspect of forbidden fruit to the Jew, the more vividly will the prohibited tendency enact itself in consciousness and become part and parcel of the Jew's inner life. His mental experience will then be specifically Jewish. The difference between him and the non-Jew becomes sharper, and the awareness of himself as a being different from all other peoples becomes accentuated in the concept he always seems to have before him, of 'race consciousness', which is usually bi-polar in nature, harboring both the 'chosen people' complex and the inferiority complex.

"To the primary series of reactions, we must add the secondary series, consisting of derivatives. First of all, there is a disposition to reflect on the better conditions that obtain for the Gentiles. Then follows a definite attitude or adjustment toward that situation, and then the Jew begins to appraise himself and analyse his own feelings about his plight or attitude toward life under such conditions. Thus the character grows on different planes until there is fashioned a specific Jewish ideology...

"This is essential to reaffirm the achievements of diaspora Jews. Jewish life has been deepening and broadening ever since antiquity. Every generation in every separate country where Jews have sojourned -- and where have they not been living, or rather, existing? -- has added its own particular facet, so that Jewish culture is the stone of a myriad facets..."

"A Psychologist Evaluates Peretz" was the title of his article in the December 1945 number of the Jewish Observer, issued by Melech

Grafstein of London, Ont. on the 30th anniversary of the passing of J.L. Peretz.

Characteristically linguist Roback pointed to Peretz' name which has the meaning of "Crasher through" in Hebrew, in rebellion against the set ways in themes and styles, in setting problems, adding hues, in constant quest of new forms and outlets of expression. "He took the initiative in transforming colours like a chameleon, revolting against the colours of realism or stagnant convention.

"So his stories are often a record of transformations, as of a melody.

"He broke the barriers between Jew and Gentile, descended to the depths to rise with his find, soared to Olympia to crystallize it to a literary creation, moved to his predecessors and successors."

REMEMBERED

Dr. Harry Zohn remembered, "He was easily the most stimulating person I have ever known, being not only erudite in the field of psychology, but straddling several scholarly disciplines -- a true polymath, or, in the self-defining German term, a Universalgelehrter. Psychology, music, literature, philology, Yiddish -- these are but some of the things in which I received an informal education from A.A. Roback. His attitude toward all these disciplines was a refreshingly unorthodox one, and I did not always agree with him. I remember, for instance, that he once sprang one of his numerous tests on me, his Sense of Humour test, in which he had used himself as the norm; I scored poorly on it and had reason to question the validity of all such tests.

"Another example of his intellectual integrity and uniqueness lies in advocating a closer study of graphology. In America this field of psychodiagnostic investigation has been neglected and disparaged. But Roback was no lackey of fashion. He felt that a person's style of handwriting (being unique and permanently accessible) must have its roots in the physical and mental constitution of the whole person. Hence he experimented, taught, published, and encouraged others to work in this area. I suspect that his own interest grew in part from his doctoral dissertation on The Interference of Will Impulses, supervised by Münsterberg and published in 1918. In this investigation he measured individual differences that occur when people, given somewhat confusing and conflicting tasks to carry out, make manual movements. Handwriting itself represents a confluence of many nervous impulses and mechanisms influenced by attitude and habit.

"I think he never forgave me for my failure to learn to read Yiddish fluently -- a language that I have heard all my life and speak quite well. I learned to read Gothic and Middle High German, but not Yiddish. And yet Dr. Roback kept plying me with evidence that Yiddish was a great vehicle for research, and that many important articles in my own field of German literature were being published in it. For myself, I can say that his unflagging efforts on behalf of this language were just one of the many things that attracted me to him.

"Dr. Roback early recognized the greatness of Albert Schweitzer long before 1949, the year of Schweitzer's visit to America and breakthrough to international fame. It was symptomatic, I think, that on a hot August day in 1949 Albert Schweitzer, who had invitations from numerous local scholars and clergymen who were anxious to have him play on the organs in their churches, instead chose to climb up to Roback's cluttered attic apartment on Prescott Street and spend several hours there -- and nowhere did time pass as quickly as in

Dr. Roback's rooms: first on Prescott St., then on Mt. Auburn St., and finally on Sacramento St. My customary one-hour telephone conversations with him seemed like minutes, because even scratching the surface was bound to be a lengthy, leisurely, rewarding process. The busiest of men, Dr. Roback was yet extremely generous with his time.

"He did not have an easy time of it in all those years. Having to leave his long time abode on Prescott St., so crowded with books, papers, letters, and other treasures, was almost a traumatic experience for him. That was in the hot summer of 1955, and unfortunately I was in Europe and unable to help him. Having to move, being disrupted in his habits, facing undesirable neighbours or neighbourhoods, being subjected to the vagaries of indifferent landlords and inefficient post office clerks were anathema to his sensitive soul.

"Nor was it granted to A.A. Roback to live out his life as an honored member of the faculty of a major university. But he gave his best to Emerson College, where he inaugurated a notable special course on Albert Schweitzer.

"I know just how much his students got out of him. He used psychology, his basic subject, as a fulcrum for the dynamic presentation of language, literature, history, art, music -- virtually all of human culture -- and to the very last he enriched the lives of his students by giving so richly of his knowledge and of himself. He had an almost Prussian sense of duty. He would not dream of ever cancelling a class or of letting inclement weather deter him from setting out on an arduous subway ride."

Dr. Albert Schweitzer wrote to a common friend, G.T. Keating of Palm Desert, California in January 1964,

"How fine that you are friends with Roback. I consider him to be a great thinker and I am proud to have his friendship. It was a great experience for me, when I got acquainted with him and he defended my thoughts. So many good friends I have in this world. It would be right if I could retire now and correspond with them and get in contact with them. That would be a wonderful ending of my life. But my old age is quite otherwise. I must stand in my work until my death." (Keating letter to Roback, Jan. 11, 1964, in Montreal Jewish Public Library)

Gordon W. Allport, a friend of forty years, recalled Roback as "a gallant man of sturdy care, productive and loyal.

"Three times a year we had lunch together, followed always by a climb to his skyward dwelling where we settled ourselves for a long chat. Books reached from floor to ceiling. The top of his desk was buried in correspondence and manuscripts. Some of the accumulation

dealt with the publishing business of the Sci-Art Company which he managed almost single-handed.

"Part of the accumulation was his current correspondence with people in many lands, some of them little people and strangers, casual readers of his books, who sought his advice and help. But much of his correspondence was with the truly great figures of our time. Freudiana (1957) contains the text of letters he received from Freud, from Pavlov, Romain Rolland, George Bernard Shaw and others. He compiled and edited two books on Albert Schweitzer with whom he conducted a longtime correspondence.

"He enjoyed his exchange of letters with prominent figures, not so much for borrowed glory, as for the intimate insights into personality, into lives as actually lived, into what he called 'the personal idiom'.

Roback has had a book written about his work and his person, a critical essay, The Destiny and Motivation of Dr. A.A. Roback by Joseph Berger (Cambridge, Schoenhof's, 1957, reprinted from the Jewish Forum, July 1955-June 1956)

Berger situates Roback at the side of William James and Sigmund Freud as the spellbinder of psychological writing.

"He stands alone in another terrain -- Yiddish. He has, consequently, two reading publics. No doubt many devotees in either group know of his dual pre-eminence. English readers, at any rate, will know that the psychologist is also the author of Curiosities of Yiddish Literature (valuable for its syllabus on a college level), The Story of Yiddish Literature, and I.L. Peretz, Psychologist of Literature; and Jewish readers are aware, of course, of his fame as a psychologist. Nevertheless, there are followers in both camps who do not realize that Dr. Roback not only writes about Yiddish but writes in Yiddish. Currently he is serializing an apologia, in which he champions the language and castigates its prophets of doom.

"Though brought to Montreal in infancy and reared in a French environment but educated in Anglo-Canadian schools, he has written enough articles and lengthy essays in Yiddish to fill about ten volumes. In a dictionary of Hebraisms in Yiddish, published in Wroclaw, Poland (formerly (Breslau) by I. Steinberg, in 1949, more than a dozen illustrations, serving as models, are taken from Dr. Roback's idiomatic expressions. Little wonder that the editors of the great Yiddish Dictionary, now in progress, have invited him to serve as consultant.

"He voluntarily organized the Yiddish Division of the Harvard Library and supervised the collection, which from a mere thousand brochures and a hundred or so volumes has grown to a small library of over 10,000 items, many of them rare.

"Though he enjoys an international reputation as a psychological scholar and writer, his Yiddish is even more trenchant and idiomatically expressive of his folk spirit. In this respect he is unique, the *sui generis* of our age.

"We recall the onomastic pebbles on the other bank -- in particular, Abraham, and then, involuntarily, Aaron. One is the namesake of the first man of faith. The other, Talmudic tradition associates with the first-born of Amram and Yokheved, as a lover and pursuer of peace, as a lover of his fellow-men.

"Dr. Roback keeps faith, embattled faith, with Yidden and the Yiddish they forged in exile and now spurn, though in golden bloom. Proudly he writes the record of Jewish Influence in Modern Thought; passionately he chronicles Jewish martyrdom under Hitlerism in Psychodrama. And just as Columbus took moving note in his log book, on the very day he set sail, of the expulsion of Spanish Jewry, so does Dr. Roback, in charting the psycholinguistic expedition, memorialize in solemn inventory, on the dedicatory page, the liquidation of Polish Jewry.

"There exists an intimate account of the dramatic meeting between Dr. Roback and one of the two great Alberts of our age, Dr. Schweitzer. (The other is Einstein). The psychologist's reception of the humanitarian symbolizes his own humanitarianism, the Aaron.

"In the same study, the reporter relates, the scholar often works away during the hot summer months, forgetting to turn on the fan that a solicitous daughter had installed. Her gentle reminder, we imagine, would go unheeded by that industrious father in the sweltering heat.

"Seldom has a man's study been battleground, cultural cross-roads and laboratory. Yet this is not the only scene of action. Most of the livelong day the stage shifts to the classroom for the professor, to the printing house for the publisher (like Freud), and to the public platform and scientific convention, here and abroad, for the lecturer and scholar. As journalist he reaches into scores of editorial offices.

"He has written close to 2,000 articles and reviews for periodicals and papers. And as writer, of course, and correspondent, he reaches into school and home. The world is his window.

"His fidelity, his charity and his everlasting search for the noble and heroic in man and society are not compartmentalized. They overlap each other and illumine and interpenetrate, like the sky-sweeping shafts of projectors, all his activities."

In the final years of his life he wrote to an early and true home, "I still have a strong desire to visit Montreal where it may be said I was born, to look again at the scene of my childhood memories before I

became one who can see but no longer can be seen, but during the cold winter months I would prefer to delay my voyage to Passover." (Letter to Jewish Public Library, Dec. 22, 1964)

Boston Rabbi J.S. Shubow noted that throughout Roback's pursuits there shone a luminous love for the Jewish people and its fabulous literature, including the creations of the Jewish genius in our own day, this peculiar Jewish Am Segulah (the People of Election) to which he was proud to belong.

"He was the true ruler of Die Imperye Yiddish by virtue of his mastery and penetrating insight into the giants of Yiddish literature and their mighty Jewish spirit as authentic voices of the masses of the Jewish people." (N.Y. Tog)

He was a specialist in folklore, psycholinguistics, ethnic and systematic psychology and mental tests.

When he died in Cambridge, Mass., on June 5, 1965, ten days before his 75th birthday, he had more than 1700 published articles and other texts to his credit.

On his deathbed he was planning a visit to Montreal to deliver a lecture.

He was survived by his daughter, Mrs. Miriam Lazarus, three grandchildren and a sister, Mrs. Esther Kovshansky.

INDEX

- Aaronson, M., 24, 52-53, 57
Abramowitz, H., 18, 88
ACTION SOCIALE CATHOLIQUE, 82-83
ADLER, 86-87, 90
Agudath Zion, 16
Allport, G.W., 134-35
Almazoff, P., 31
Almi, B., see Sheps, A.C.
Anglo-Jewish Association, 3
APOLOGIA PRO VITA IDICA, see PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH YIDDISH LIT.
Asch, S., 24, 36-37, 47, 57
Ashinsky, A.M., 16-19, 21, 30, 63
Austrian Ladies Aid Society, 3
Baron de Hirsch, 1
Baron de Hirsch Institute, 6-8, 15, 34, 36, 38, 87-88, 90, 96, 109
Baroness de Hirsch, 14
Beauport, 76, 82-85
Belkin, S., 25, 35
Ben Zvi, I., 34
Benjamin, L.M., 25, 87
Bennett, A.B., 25, 31, 52, 57, 60, 78, 87, 91, 112-13
Bercovici, K., 25, 37, 49, 53, 81
Bercovitch, A., 56
Bercovitch, J.D., 40, 49
Bercovitch, P., 30
Bercovitch, S., 24
Berger, J., 61, 116-17, 135-36
Bergson, H., 94
Bernstein, J.E., 4-5
THE BEST OF SHOLOM ALEICHEM, 49-50
Beth David Congregation, 4, 18, 53
Blumenthal, A., 35
Bnai Jacob Congregation, 4, 16, 17-19
Board of Guardians, 6
Brainin, M., 125
Brainin, R., 21-22, 24, 26, 30, 32-33, 37-44, 51, 70, 99, 109
Brenner, H., 32
Bronstein, E., 31
Brown, M.G., 18
Budyk, J.A., 113
Caiserman, H.M., 24-25, 56
Calgary, 8
CANADA, 31
Canadian Jewish Congress, 120
Carin, H., 20
Cars, Y., 74
Chaitman, A., 25

- Chashin, A., 26
 Chazanovitch, L., 25, 38
 Cheifetz, L., 24, 33, 52
 Cheifetz, N., 24
 Cherniak, A.J., 8
 Chiel, A., 44-46
 Cohen, A.I., 17
 Cohen, H., 18, 21, 30, 38, 63
 Cohen, K., see Rand, Sheila
 Cohen, Lyon, 13
 CONTEMPORARY YIDDISH LITERATURE, 119, 122
 Cornblitt, Z., 24-25
 CURIOSITIES OF YIDDISH LITERATURE, 72, 122
 Dainow, L., 113
 Darwin, R., 37
 DAVKE, 63, 66
 De Sola, C.I., 17-18, 75, 113
 De Sola, M., 18
 Denenberg, M., 17
 DESTINY AND MOTIVATION OF A.A. ROBACK, 61, 109, 116-17, 135-36
 Dewdney, S., 47
 Dickstein, M., 24
 Dolitzky, M.M., 34
 Dorcas Society, 3
 Edelstein, H., 113
 Elberg, Y., 23
 ERZIUNG BEI YIDN, 13, 21
 Ezras Nashim Society, 3
 FABLEN, 22, 31
 Federation of Zionist Organizations, 14, 16-17
 Feinberg, N., 89-90
 Fitch, L., 87, 97-98, 113
 FOLKS GEIST IN DER YIDDISHER SPRACH, 64, 67, 69, 76-7, 86, 123-4
 FOLKSZEITING, 22
 Fox, C.H., 12, 21, 27
 Freierman Bookstore, 38
 Freiman, A.J., 113
 Freiman, Lillian, 53
 French, 91-92
 FREYE ARBEITER SHTIMME, 118
 FUN MEIN VELT, 22
 Gallay, J., 22
 Galsky, H., 31
 Garber, M., 25, 103-4, 113
 Geffen, Judah, 74
 Gilbert, S., 49
 Gilletzt, J., 29
 Gilletzt, S., 20
 Ginsburg, M., 116
 Glace Bay, 31
 Glanz, L., 90, 117-18, 123
 Glasman, J., 41

Glazer, S., 18, 30, 57
 Glickman, S.M., 17
 Gold, S., 25
 Goldman, L., 38
 Goldsmith, M.L., 32
 Goldstein, B.J., 25, 30, 36-38, 43, 45, 56-57, 90
 Goldstick, I., 46-47, 49
 Golomb, A., 68
 Goodman, J., 25
 Gordon, J., 31
 Gordon, N., 36, 88-89
 Gotlieb, N.J., 53
 Gouin, H., 92-93
 Grafstein, M., 31, 46-49
 GRAPHOLOGY, 115
 Greenfeld, S., 51
 Greenspan, M., 32
 Gurofsky, L., 19, 24
 Hachnossat Orchim Society, 80-81
 Halifax, 16
 Hamilton, 31
 Hanson, E., 8
 Harkavi, A., 6, 12
 Harvard University, 109-13, 119
 Hebrew Sick Benefit Association, 69
 Helfield, Eric, 71-72
 Helfield, Leah, 66
 Heller, N., 18
 Hermalin, D.M., 12
 Hershman, H., 20, 24-25, 28-30, 37, 53
 Hestrin, J., 46
 Hirsch, H., 22, 25, 30, 33, 43, 55-56
 Hirshbein, P., 37, 57
 HOBBLER, 56
 Holmes, Mary, 49
 HUNDERT TROPEN TINT, 22, 43
 Husid, M., 23
 IMPERYE YIDDISH, 62, 71, 120, 123
 IN THE BARN, 56
 IN THE STRUGGLE, 56
 INSIDE KASRILEVKE, 46
 Isaacs, A.S., 21
 IT IS HARD TO BE A JEW, 46
 Jacobs, S.W., 13, 30, 113
 Jewish Democratic Organization, 20
 JEWISH FOUNDATIONS IN CANADA, 18
 Jewish National Radical School, 24
 Jewish Public Library, 34, 125
 JEWISH TIMES, 17, 30
 Kage, J., 6-7
 Kaplan, S., 53
 Kaplansky, A.L., 12-15

Kastoff, M., 31
Katz, I.L., 16
Kaufman, Leah, 41
Kaufman, N., 25
Kaufmann, Y., 24, 26, 33, 87, 97
Kayfetz, B., 31, 62
King, W.L.M., 19
Kingsburg, J., 54
Kingston, 16
Kirsch, S., 89
Klein, A.M., 46
Klineberg, L., 78-79
Knights of Labor, 29
Komaroff, A., 24, 34-35
Korn, Rachel, 23
Kornfeld, I., 18
Kruger, C., 33
Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society, 3
Landau, A., 24, 38, 52, 57
Lauterman, M.B., 63
Lazarus, D.L., 74
Lazarus Bookstore, 37-38, 73
Lecker, J., 51
Lefson, J., 54
Leivick, H., 34
Levin, E., 13, 21, 25
Lichtenstein, Clara, 75
Lightstone, Donald, 73
Lightstone, M., 37
Lipton, I., 41
Liptzin, S., 49
LITERATUR UN LEBN, 48
DI LITERARISHE VELT, 118
Livinson, A.J., 113
Lobovitch, L., 54
London, Ont., 31
Lozinsky, C., 25, 64
Maccabean Circle, 87-88
Malamuth, J.L., 24-25, 30
Malchi, B., 49
Mandelbaum, A.M., 24, 86
Marcus, Bella, 89
Masliansky, Z.H., 34
Massey, Ida, 56
Matenko, P., 31
McGill University, 87-90
Medres, I., 22, 33, 53
Meir, Golda, 34
Meisel, N., 23, 49
Meltzer, L., 33
Mendele Mocher Sephorim, 38
Miednick, A., 64

MILCHOMEH VEYEN, 22, 31
Miller, M., 31
Mitnick, L., 25, 36-37, 109
Montefiore Benevolent Society, 3
Montmorency Falls, 80
Montreal, 106-108
Mosoomin, 1
Mukdoni, A., 47, 49
Murray, C., 128
Myerson, M.H., 25, 40-41, 125
Myerson, N., 25
Myerson, Y., 25, 37
Narinsky, D., 35
National Council of Jewish Women, 3
DOS NAYE LEBN, 118
Nepom, Ida, 56
Nepom, S., 24, 56
Niger, S., 49
Nisnevitch, A., 56
Noveck, H., 24-25
OF MY DAY, 56
OIFLEB, 122
OIFN SHVEL, 73-74, 86
Old People's HOme, 81
Ortenberg, S., 37, 87
Ossovsky, A., 31, 57
Ottawa, 3, 16-17, 21
Paris, 18
Pavloska, Irene, 75
Pearlman, N., 56
Peretz, I.L., 23, 31, 47, 127-32
PERETZ, PSYCHOLOGIST OF LITERATURE, 127-31
Petrushka, S., 53
Phillips, E., 17
Phillipson, D., 119
Pinsky, D., 34, 47, 49
Poland, 125-26
Polish Ladies Aid Society, 3
Progressive Dramatic Circle, 38
Pruzhansky, I., 24
PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH YIDDISH LITERATURE, 119
Rabinovitch, I., 11-12, 17, 23, 26, 47, 53, 86
Rabinovitch, N., 44-45
Rand, Sheila, 113
Ravitch, M., 23, 47, 64, 121
Reisen, Z., 62
Reisman, I., 117
Roback, A.A., 12, 19, 30, 47, 49, 57, 59-137
Roback, Isaac, 66, 68
Roback, Leah, 66, 68-70, 77-84
Roback, Leiba, 66-69, 72
Roback, Lottie, 66

Roback, Moses M., 66, 82-85
Rocker, R., 32
Rosenberger, M., 53-55
Roisenblatt, Rebecca, see Rubin, Ruth
Rome, D., 49
Rosenberg, Carl, 51, 89
Rosenberg, Hannah, 89
Rosenberg, J., 30
Rosenberg, Leiser, 31, 53
Rosenberg, Louis, 60
Rosenbloom, M., 17
Round, H.A., 115
Rubin, Ruth, 34
Rubinstein, L., 24
Russia, 119
Ryan, C., 74
Sacher, A.S., 25
Sack, B.G., 21, 24, 30, 45, 52, 62, 86, 114
Sack, M.L., 86
Samuel, M., 49
Sarahson, K.Z., 17
Schneour, S., 24, 35, 38, 58
Schneour, Z., 43
Schubert, J., 30
Schweitzer, A., 134
Segal, J.I., 22-23, 26, 47, 53, 56, 118
Seigler, Ida, 113, 117
Selchen, S.M., 6, 8, 31
Shaar Hashomayim Congregation, 2, 4, 11-12, 18, 23
Shapiro's Minyan, 17, 74
Shatzky, J., 49
Sheps, A.C., 26, 33, 47, 49
Shidlover Congregation, 69
Shmuelson, M., 23-25, 30, 45, 56, 86
Sholom Aleichem, 22-23, 25, 31, 38-50
SHOLOM ALEICHEM PANORAMA, 48
Shtern, S., 63
Silverman, M., 17
Shtiff, N., 62
Shubow, J.S., 137
Small, B., 32
Sokolow, N., 34, 91
Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, 4, 18
SPARKS OF A LITTLE MAN, 31
Sprince, S.B., 18
Starkman, M., 116
Steinhouse, B., 78-81
Stern, J., 36-37, 39
Sternklar, S., 51
Stilman, A., 24
THE STORY OF YIDDISH LITERATURE, 118-19
Sudbury, 31

Swietkawatski, W., 125
 Syrkin, N., 22, 34-36, 38
 Talmud Torah, 17
 Talpis, S., 17, 24, 113
 Temple Emanuel, 4, 18
 THREE GENERATIONS, TWO WORLDS, 31
 Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem Congregation, 4
 Toronto, 2-3, 6, 16, 22, 31
 TRADER ED, 8
 Trepman, P., 49
 Typograph, M., 24, 32, 36
 DER VEG, 22, 33, 41, 44
 Vineberg, C., 74
 Vineberg, L., 96
 Vineberg, S., 113
 Voneberg, J., 54
 Wapella, 1
 WARHEIT, 118
 Weiner, Leo, 115
 WHY YIDDISH?, 122
 Wilensky, S., 51
 Winnipeg, 2, 6, 22, 31
 Wiseman, M., 24
 Wisse, Ruth, 49-50
 WITH FAITH AND THANKSGIVING, 6
 Wohliner, see Landau, A.
 Wolofsky, H., 9, 21, 24, 31-32, 51, 53, 86
 Wolofsky, P., 52
 Workmen's Circle, 20, 30
 Yampolsky, I., 25, 30, 38, 41, 44, 55-57, 90, 109
 Yampolsky, M., 25, 30, 41
 Yampolsky, R., 41
 Yehoash, 34, 37
 Yiddish, 96-104
 DOS YIDDISHE FOLK, 118
 YIDDISHE GAZETTEN, 17
 YIDDISHER JOURNAL, 22, 118
 YIDDISHER KEMFER, 57, 118
 Young, Clara, 74-75
 Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society, 3-6
 Zerubavel, 38
 Zhitlowsky, C., 34, 36, 86, 97
 Zionist Territorialists, 34
 Zipper, J., 23
 Zlotnick, J.L., 123
 ZOHAR, 30
 Zohn, H., 68, 120, 122, 133-34
 Zuker, Esther, 34
 LEISER ZUKER GEDANK BUCH, 34-36
 Zukerman, B., 34

NATIONAL ARCHIVES of the CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS
PUBLICATIONS by DAVID ROME

CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES, New Series:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	Early Documents on the Canadian Jewish Congress, 1914-1921, 69 p. (1974)
2	Inventory of Documents on the Jewish School Question 1903-1921, 118 p. (1975)
3	On the Jewish School Question in Montreal, 1903-1931, 136 p. (1975)
4	Canadian Jews - Early in This Century (by B.G. Sack) 95 p. (1975)
5	Our Archival Record of 1933, Hitler's Year, 112 p. (1976)
6	The Congress Archival Record of 1934, 131 p. (1976)
7	Jewish Archival Record of 1935, 119 p. (1976)
8	The Jewish Congress Archival Record of 1936, 148 p. (1978)
9	On our Forerunners - At Work, 94 p. (1978)
10	On our Forerunners - At Work - Epilogue, 98 p. (1978)
11	On Jules Helbronner, 98 p. (1979)
12	On Mackenzie King and Jewish Sweating Labor, part 1, 91 p. (1979)
13	On Mackenzie King and Jewish Sweating Labor, part 2, 77 p. (1979)
14	On Sunday Observance, 1906, 126 p. (1979)
15	On the Early Harts, part 1, 105 p. (1980)
16	On the Early Harts, part 2, 118 p. (1980)
17	On the Early Harts, part 3, 100 p. (1980)
18	On the Early Harts, part 4, 99 p. (1980)
19	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 1, 110 p. (1981)
20	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 2, 152 p. (1981)
21	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 3, 132 p. (1981)
22	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 4, 124 p. (1981)
23	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 5, 136 p. (1982)
24	Benjamin Hart and 1829, 120 p. (1982)
25	Samuel Becancour Hart and 1832, 165 p. (1982)
26	Anti-Semitism I - The Plamondon Case and S.W. Jacobs, part 1, 104 p. (1982)
27	Anti-Semitism II - The Plamondon Case and S.W. Jacobs, part 2, 121 p. (1982)
28	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 1, 98 p. (1983)
29	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 2, 100 p. (1983)
30	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 3, 108 p. (1983)
31	Anti-Semitism III - Early Anti-Semitism: Threats to Equality, part 1, 111 p. (1983)
32	Anti-Semitism IV - Early Anti-Semitism: Across the Dominion, part 2, 112 p. (1983)
33	Anti-Semitism V - Early Anti-Semitism: The Voice of the Media, part 1, 121 p. (1984)
34	Anti-Semitism VI - Early Anti-Semitism: The Holy Land; Tardivel, 151 p. (1985)
35	Anti-Semitism VII - Early Anti-Semitism: The Imprint of Drumont, 124 p. (1985)
36	The Immigration Story I - The <u>Jewish Times</u> , etc., 114 p. (1986)
37	The Immigration Story II - Jacobs' Opponents, 134 p. (1987)
38	The Immigration Story III - The Yiddish Theatre; the <u>Adler</u> , 108 p. (1987)
39	The Jewish Biography of Henri Bourassa, part 1, 112 p. (1988)
40	The Jewish Biography of Henri Bourassa, part 2, 108 p. (1988)

CLOUDS IN THE THIRTIES, ON ANTI-SEMITISM IN CANADA 1929-1939, 13 Sections

For further information: National Archives
Canadian Jewish Congress
1590 Ave. Dr. Penfield
Montréal, Qué. H3G 1C5

BNQ



000 325 916