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# 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 45

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

## THE EDUCATION LEGEND OF THE MIGRATION

Compiled by  
**DAVID ROME**

NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, CANADA

1991

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## THE EDUCATION LEGEND OF THE MIGRATION

*With the glowing migration from Eastern Europe, Canadian Jewry entered autonomous education legendry, distinct from the De Sola heritage and from the links with civic and Quebec government and with Protestant structure.*

*Other institutions with origins possibly in Muslim and Koranic schooling and in Rashi French-Germanic orthodox traditions, now struck roots in the Montreal which were alien to D. Ansell and to Maxwell Goldstein.*

*Even the mass migrants who brought the Melamdim and Talmud Torah founders to Canada were unaware of their own ancient roots. But they revered their East European traditions which they identified with their Yiddish religion. These educational traditions which they considered sacred were created in Montreal by the orthodox immigrant community activists such as Rabbis M.A. Ashinsky and Hirsch Cohen and by such dedicated teachers and activists as M.E. Levin.*

*It was a religious program competing for the school hours and for the idealism of the child-clients in schools distinct from the revered public schools which gave their children the key to the other education in the Three R's, in French, English, mathematics - the keys to Canadian success.*

*This was the beginning of the Montreal Talmud Torah system which grew into the orthodox immigrant society and remains to this day the major portion of independent Jewish schooling, by now consisting of dozens of observant Hebrew schools, centering on the Faith, the Bible, Hebrew, Zionism, Jewish history and current Jewish affairs.*

*However, long before the mass migration of Jewry began, Jewry became marked by the secularism of an increasing portion of its numbers. This secularism became ever more divisive in its beliefs, programs, policies, languages, speech, activity, organization, ethics*

*The divisiveness within this migration became a feature of western society and of broader humanity in new generational and continuing diversification and in the conflicts which are still the hallmark of humanity.*

*In Canada's ghetto, too, educational activity was divided along religious lines ranging from the profundities of faith, institutional loyalties and a score of orthodoxies and theologies, to militant atheisms and ideologies of substitutes in idealisms, in nationalisms, each of them formed in the century before the vast trans-continental and transoceanic migration of the 1880's.*

*By 1890 the Montreal Jewish community began to range by scores of family biographies of newcomers, with their observant, orthodox Jewish parents and the hundreds of incredulous working sons who were members of radical unions, associated with enrolled socialist political parties, active in ignoring religious institutions and building linguistic and social structures, making unnecessary the orthodox institutions which had been the bulwark and the substance of the nation in durable exile.*

*For a decade the immigrant society became increasingly hostile to religion in its social, culture and institutions, often uncommunicative within families - except when parents and children retained filial links and when younger learned radicals remembered the treasures of culture within the ancestral Hebrew and Yiddish lore at the roots of nascent Herzelian Palestine loyalism.*

*In this truly miraculous prescient age of the shaping of many Jewish cultures on five continents, several dozen nameless youths created a program of Canadian and American Judaism, modern Yiddish-Hebrew education, Jewish Congress, Labour Israel, the Jewish Legion, the Histadruth, Hashomer and Tzva Haganah, Kibbutzim. Among these were the persons of Ben Tzvi, Ben Gurion, Baruch Zukerman, Kaufman, Moishe Dickstein, Shloimeh Wiseman, S. Belkin, L. Zuker, H.M. Caiserman, J.I. Segal, Chaim Greenberg; among the Canadian first, C. Schneour, the Adler journalist and ideologue of the immigrants.*

## THE UNITED TALMUD TORAHS

The Jewish community schools were called Talmud Torahs, the term used overseas for charity schools.

"There were few Melamdim, and none took the occupation seriously. They peddled most of the day, teaching evenings. The street was the educational institution of the Jewish children. It is easy to imagine the conception they had of Judaism and of its history." (Kinder Erziung bei Yidn, P. 111)

These Talmud Torahs began as organized Chadorim, as private arrangements between the Melamed teacher and the parent. Their history as community sponsored schools in each city is the story of a cause, a dedication. It is the Canadian story of the institution succeeding the Cheder.

A characteristic formulation of the ancient view on teaching comes from Toronto. Kayfetz records the objection of a senior Orthodox rabbi to the teaching of the Bible by translation into Hebrew: he wasn't opposed to this teaching method in principle, but doubted whether a God-fearing man could be found among its practitioners.

At first these schools continued Hebrew education in the ancient manner. They insisted on the primacy of Hebrew as functional for prayer, on religious indoctrination, on the curriculum of Ivry-Chumash-Rashi. They resisted modernization in curriculum, in methods or in organization.

The movement for a Talmud Torah began in Montreal about 1890, "when the majority of the community of some 5,000 souls engaged in peddling and tailoring, with an insignificant number in trade," as M.E. Levin described it.

In 1894 Dr. Herzberg operated such a school with some community support, but soon ran into difficulties.

Upon his arrival in Montreal in 1895 Rabbi A.M. Ashinsky enters the history of Jewish education in Canada. Rabbi Ashinsky was one of the notable leaders of orthodoxy who went on from Montreal to become one of the important names in American Mizrachi. Significantly, he was an organization man and a Zionist in the structurally informal East European orthodoxy. He was the first man of his generation in Canada to appreciate the communal need of the education of its children, he continuously called for the setting up of a Talmud Torah.

The locale of the Talmud Torah he established was remarkable. For we find here an early Montreal minyan named for, or sponsored by, a citizen in the classic world-wide synagogal tradition. Thus were the rich and pious honoured in the olden days.

A place name associated with his initiative carries a cultural situation within itself. Rabbi Ashinsky established the Talmud Torah in 1896 in Shapiro's minyan at 130 Cadieux St., following a meeting he had convened, together with Moses Coviensky, Levi Kert and David Sperber, at the B'nai Jacob synagogue.

From Shapiro's minyan the Talmud Torah moved to a small 4-room house at 400 Lagauchetiere St. On rainy days the water gathered in front of the house, and teachers and pupils would stand on planks to be swept into the classrooms. Significantly, teaching Gemara was a sacred task apart from the rest of the curriculum. Rev. M.B. Lauterman volunteered for the Mitzvah in a synagogue. (The family name is enshrined in the architecture of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.)

The 1898 annual meeting of the Talmud Torah recalled that "the institution for the religious instruction of Jewish children and their education in the Hebrew language was commenced three years ago by Rabbi A.M. Ashinsky, on his arrival from Detroit to take ministerial charge of the B'nai Jacob synagogue. Throwing himself heartily into the work, he soon organized and established the school and thus relieved what had long been felt as a great want by the people.

"It was in August 1896 that he began, and, by going about making personal solicitations, he obtained the means he required. He saw that it was among the poor that the foundations of Judaism in Canada had to be laid. The school does not depend entirely on subscriptions, but is partly self-supporting.

"The school is open every day from 9 o'clock a.m. to noon, and from 1 to 7 p.m. For little children who are not of an age to attend the public schools the hours are until 12 o'clock in the forenoon, and from 1 to 3 in the afternoon. In this way the preliminary training of the children is commenced; it enables them to enter the public schools with advantage before they reach the proper age. For older and more advanced pupils who are in attendance at the public schools, the hours are from 4 to 7 in the afternoon.

"Whilst the instruction given is wholly religious and in Hebrew, through the medium of Yiddish, the children are fast acquiring a knowledge of English and many of them of French also. But Yiddish being the home tongue of the children, it is the most convenient. It matters nothing, as Rabbi Ashinsky says, what the vehicle may be by which instruction is imparted, so long as the children are taught the great truths of their religion and made familiar with the sacred language of their forefathers; the object being to make them good Jews and good citizens.

"Indeed the importance of the school cannot be over-estimated. If it were not for it, the sixty children, who there receive gratuitously the training for which their parents are unable to pay, would have to go without instruction and grow up in ignorance of the grand heritage which is now placed within their reach.

"Rabbi Ashinsky who, as superintendent, gives his time and labour without fee or salary, attends the school every day to supervise the studies, keep order and see that proper method and system is observed. He has four teachers under him, and the premises occupied by the school, 401 Lagauchetiere Street, are commodious but not quite suitable for the purpose." (Jewish Times, May 12, 1898)

Within three years Mr. Denenberg succeeded Coviensky as president and retained the leadership for more than a decade.

Of the 140 children enrolled, 40 paid the standard monthly fee of \$1.00.

Louis Rosenberg notes that of the 1900 Jewish children of school age in the city in 1901, the Baron de Hirsch Institute Hebrew School was instructing 373 children and the Talmud Torah, 177.

The printed fifth annual report of the Beth Talmud Torah, 1901-1902, also lists Elkin's minyan and Genser's minyan as well as Shapiro's as locations. It records that collection plates at the entrances to the Austrian, the B'nai Jacob and the Ahavat Achim synagogues netted some \$30 for the school.

There is also a record of a Great Siyum, a party to mark the conclusion of a study in common of a Talmud tractate, which took place at the Chevra Shaas Synagogue, whose name was that of the Talmud.

The school moved successively in 1903 to 146 St. Urbain, then to 245 Dorchester St. and then to 245 Lagachetiere.

When Rabbi Ashinsky left Montreal in 1903, the leadership of the school was assumed by Rabbi Hirsch Cohen who, from the beginning, demonstrated life-long dedication to Hebrew education, spending hours in the classrooms, in addition to teaching the Talmud class.

The new leader of the institution enlisted the support of his brother Lazarus Cohen who had come to settle in Montreal in 1869 after ten years as a successful lumberman and merchant at Moberley, Ont. It was natural for him to come to the metropolis in search of a religious Jewish environment for his children.

In 1911, with a Jewish population increased four-fold, with a total school enrollment of the 6,000 Jewish children, those studying in Jewish educational institutions - now also counting the Temple Emanuel, the Shaar Hashomayim and Shearith Israel - counted 700.

## CHARTER

In 1904 the Talmud Torah sought incorporation as the Montreal Hebrew Free School from the provincial government.

The petition on behalf of the Hebrew Free School was presented to the Quebec legislature by S. Goldstein and others on April 5, 1904.

But on April 28, 1904, W.H. Baker wrote to M.L.A. M. Hutchison, who was sponsoring the Talmud Torah's application for a charter. He wrote from his residence in Notre Dame de Grace, while principal of the Baron de Hirsch Institute School, which became part of the network of the Protestant Board in June 1904

The distinguished historian of Canadian Jewry, Louis Rosenberg, notes that a copy of the letter exists in the letter copy book of the school. (Existing copies of the letter vary slightly in their text.)

W.H. Baker, a Christian, had been the trusted administrative officer of the Baron de Hirsch Institute and the superintendent of the independent Baron de Hirsch Hebrew School since 1889. Mrs. J.R. Baker had been principal mistress and Miss Beatrice Baker was assistant principal mistress (1898). Still an officer of the Jewish Institute, and head of the Baron de Hirsch School, educating hundreds of Jewish children, he wrote to the legislature to oppose the incorporation of a major Jewish school.

"When I saw you now nearly two weeks ago you promised to send me a copy of the Bill under your charge for the charter of a Talmud Torah School or a school for the instruction of the Jewish children in Montreal in the Talmud Torah (the Bible) in Hebrew. I have not yet received it, but I heard today of someone in the city who had seen a copy and, if his statement is correct, the Bill is asking for extraordinary powers, both in regard to the scope of the Bill and the means asked for, to carry on this work.

"The bill, too, is very misleading and the real intent, if carried out, will be a most retrograde step.

"For many years the leading Jewish men in Montreal have been endeavouring to educate the immigrants who arrive in our country and to teach them to be useful, loyal and patriotic citizens of Canada. The bill proposed, if really acted upon, will be the means of creating a ghetto in Montreal and of perpetuating that bigotry and ignorance which is prevalent in the parts of Europe from which they mostly come.

"The bill in question is not supported by any prominent Jewish citizens of Montreal, but the promoters are, for the most part, aliens and not even naturalized British subjects.

"May I ask you, then, before placing your measure before the Legislature, to make thorough enquiries concerning it, so that you may not be misled into taking a step which may be fraught with so much injury, not only to the Jewish colony here, but to all progressive citizens.

"I know your political sentiments and how anxious you are to promote all measures likely to assist in the development of our country, but the measure in question you will find to be one of the most conservative ever put before the Quebec legislature, and will assist towards taking back the poor little children, who are to learn nothing but Hebrew from morning to night, to the extreme days of bigotry and ignorance.

"Under any circumstance may I ask you to postpone the measure till you are satisfied of its real object."

After his signature he added a note that has all the charms of information laid - a Messirah; "Let someone visit the existing Talmud Torah School at 401 Lagachetiere St. in Montreal."

The Select Standing Committee on Standing Orders, of the Legislative Assembly reported on April 7 that it had examined the petition of the Talmud Torah (Hebrew Free School) for an act of incorporation.

Mr. M. Hutchison of Montreal was given leave by the Assembly to bring in a bill (no. 38) on April 12 to incorporate the Talmud Torah of Montreal. He accordingly presented the bill to the house, and it was received and read for the first time, and ordered to be read a second time, the next day.

The bill was read a second time and referred to the Select Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills on April 13.

This committee reported to the Assembly on April 19 that it had examined the Talmud Torah bill and made certain amendments which they submitted to the house. The following day, on April 20, the Assembly resolved itself into a committee on Bill 38 and, after some time therein, the speaker resumed the chair and Mr. Laforté reported that the committee had gone through the bill and directed him to report the same without any amendment.

The bill was now read the third time and it was resolved that the bill do pass. The Clerk was instructed to carry the bill to the Legislative Council and desire their concurrence.

On May 17, 1904 the speaker informed the Assembly that the Legislative Council have passed Bill 38 to incorporate the Talmud Torah (Hebrew Free School) of Montreal under the title of the Talmud Torah (Teaching Scriptures) of Montreal with several amendments to which the Council desire the concurrence of the Assembly.

The Assembly proceeded to take into consideration the amendments made by the Council to the bill, and these were read for the first time. Further consideration was postponed until the next day.

On May 18 the Assembly proceeded to take into further consideration the amendments made by the Legislative Council and, the same being again read, were agreed to: the Clerk was requested to carry back the bill to the Council.

The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly brought to the Council Bill 38, entitled An Act to incorporate the Talmud Torah (Hebrew Free School) of Montreal to which they request the concurrence of the Council. It was read and on the motion of the Hon. Mr. Ward it was ordered placed on the orders of the day for second reading the following day.

That day, again on the motion of Mr. Ward, it was ordered read and referred to the committee on standing orders and private bills.

In due course Mr. Larue from that committee reported to the Council that it had gone through the bill and had directed him to report it with certain amendments and to change the title, which he was ready to submit to the Council. The amendments were read twice by the Clerk. The question of concurrence on the amendments was put before the Council and agreed on.

The Hon. Mr. Gilman proposed that the bill as amended be read the third time and passed.

In due course the Legislative Assembly informed the Council that it had agreed to Bill 38, now entitled The Talmud Torah (Teaching Scriptures) of Montreal, as amended by the Council, without any further amendment.

Bill 38 was listed by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery on June 2, 1904 among those to be sanctioned.

The same day Mr. Hutchison moved, seconded by David Gillies of Pontiac, that the fee paid on that bill be remitted, less the cost of translation and printing, as it related to an educational institution.

On June 2 the Lieut-Governor invited the Assembly to attend him in the Legislative Council chamber where he was about to accord royal assent, in the name of His Majesty, to the act to incorporate the Talmud Torah of Montreal.

The Talmud Torah charter - and the good name of the province - were saved by the intervention of Montreal's mayor J. Cochrane, M.P.P., who had been active in the passage of the 1903 act in regard to the education of Jewish pupils in Protestant schools. He sensed something unsavory in the representations of Mr. Baker and spoke up for the application.

A few years later Baker and his wife were dismissed from service with the Institute.

## DIFFERENCES

This stronghold of traditional education was undergoing reforms. The very structure of a school was a step beyond the Cheder. Naming a principal was a reform.

In 1906 English replaced Yiddish as the language of instruction in the Talmud Torah, with traumatic effects, doubtless, upon those who appreciate the values inherent and attached to the sound and the paedagogy of learning of Ivry, Chumash, Rashi and Talmud in Yiddish.

During his principalship H. Lozinsky anticipated the Jewish state by thirty years when he introduced the teaching of Hebrew-by-Hebrew.

In December, 1908 another Talmud Torah, of the Chassidic rite, Anshei Sepharad was formed, (no connection with the francophone Sephard migration of a half a century later). (Adler, Oct. 12, 1908) It seems that the differences lay in the variations between the Russian-Lithuanian and the Polish, Roumanian, Galician (Anshei Sepharad) traditions and pronunciations of Hebrew.

The Talmud Torah Anshei Sepharad named E. Gordon as their principal. (Adler, Oct. 12, 1908) In earlier days Mr. Gordon had been the teacher of Jewish subjects in the Protestant schools.

The Anshei Sepharad school described itself as "the only Jewish school where instruction is given in English, except for the Lithuanian Talmud Torah. It was supported largely by pledges from the worshippers at the Austro-Hungarian synagogue." (Letter from Chaim Steinman in Adler, Feb. 1, 1909) With its 150 pupils, it claimed to be a major defence against the efforts of the Christian missionaries. There are some 500 Jewish immigrant children who require this service," the Board wrote in its appeal."

The Montreal Yiddish daily wrote of "The Harmful Competition between the Two Talmud Torahs" (Jan. 25, 1909). Morris Denenberg, founder and president of the first Talmud Torah, with a budget triple that of the Sephardi school, complained in the press about the diversion of community energies.

Chaim Steinman, founder and secretary of the Anshei Sepharad institution, sought to clarify that "ethnic" labels Russian, Polish or Roumanian are misleading for either of the schools. Children of various cultural origins attend both schools. This is as true of their supporters as of their sponsors at social gatherings when charity plates were passed around at family celebrations." (Adler, Jan. 28, 1909)

One such incident occurred after a circumcision party when one of the guests brought several dollars to the Adler office for transmission to the Russian Talmud Torah and the host of the party insisted that the moneys be divided between both schools.

The Adler editor noted that such differences were common and unnecessary and could be resolved by a merger of the two schools. The fact that the Sephardi owned their own building also hampered the union.

This school, like the other Talmud Torah, was supported in part by collections at private festive gatherings. A typical circumcision party is reported in the Adler of March 12, 1909,

"On Tuesday, February 24, during the week of the synagogal reading of the Pentateuchal section Trumah, the Z.A. Persky family celebrated the entry into Judaism of their newborn son. The Gaon Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Cohen participated as Sandeck and many distinguished guests attended. The tables were well graced and every one present was joyous.

At the request of the master of ceremonies, Mr. Fox, Rabbi Cohen delivered an oration. He was followed by the Gaon Rabbi Konowitz of Safed, Mr. Jacob Kaplan and others. A sum was collected for the Talmud Torah and for the Jewish National Fund.

The Adler suggested that "it would be possible to coordinate fundraising and to adopt newer methods such as concerts, theatre benefits and literary evenings for fundraising." (Jan. 29, 1909)

Even though these schools had a substantial enrollment, they were not generally respected even by the immigrant society.

This aspect of the Talmud Torah surfaced in December 1908 following a formal visit to the school at 143 St. Urbain St. by New York leader Dr. Pereira Mendes, together with Lazarus Cohen and Rabbi Herman Abramowitz.

The Jewish press, through its humourist columnist Reb Boruchel, nom de plume of B.J. Goldstein, commented on the crowded, stuffy, unclean, smelly quarters of the Talmud Torah.

"The gas is not working. They brought in a lamp. A Missus brought in candles, the visitor rolled up his sleeves and barely wrote a line - I swear, half a line, or a quarter.

"The examiners questioned the pupils on whether they had recited the Modde Ani benediction and had kissed their Tzizith, but not whether they had eaten, and how it happened that they were virtually naked these cold days.

"These questions were not asked, and I was overwhelmed by the smell. Do our leaders seek to fulfil the Talmudic dictum that 'he is rich whose washroom is near his table?' This should be recorded in the visitors' book with its great flowery signatures.

"When the guests left in the polluting automobile and its horn, the head teacher remained, head low. Rabbi H. Cohen sought to comfort him. 'It doesn't matter. Sometimes a man is tired and is not able to gather his thoughts.'

"I fled to the editorial room, in the belief that I had discovered a new America. But my cold editor comforted me, 'It doesn't matter. We had Rabbi Solomon Schechter here. It was the same affair, and he barely signed his name!'

"If this is not news, I will not visit the Talmud Torah." (Dec. 13, 1908)

This critical voice had come from the large section of the immigrant society which was not orthodox; whether it was majoritaire or not cannot be determined, largely because the terms cannot be defined, for the measure of

their secularism was itself gradual and even in extreme cases it was close, even passionately close, to the religious. Certainly it included almost the entirety of the articulate, the literary and the journalistic immigrant society, the organized immigrant society, the political and the syndicalist. Goldstein, as one of the leading authors, was one of its many spokesmen.

One of the activists of the school responded over the nom de plume "Sensitive," "Has the columnist ever seen an automobile drive to a Canadian school with its engine exhaling perfume?"

"He has described faithfully the rusty sign on the door of the Talmud Torah, its unwashed walls, crowded benches. The reality is worse than his telling. But where is his compassion and his appeal to the public for improving the school and the condition of its pupils? He missed the occasion for weeping and turned to scoffing.

"Are conditions more airy in other Talmud Torahs, when some 250 poor people are gathered in a small building for eight hours? What can the leaders do? When a poor man cannot pay \$30 for a comfortable well-lit home, he must be satisfied with a \$15 house.

"I have seen Oscar Strauss and Governor-General Gray simply sign their names in the visitors' register at the Baron de Hirsch Institute; as did Solomon Shechter and Dr. Pereira. Are you suggesting that they, too, know no English?" (Dec. 21, 1908)

The Adler demanded "More Light and More Air for Jewish Children" on November 1, 1908,

"In the local Talmud Torah our children are pressed like herring in incommodious and insalubrious rooms which are not airy or well-lit; the fire is extinguished from their eyes, their motions are weak and sickly.

"The pupils in these schools strain their minds from dawn till late evening. They attend public school all day as do their Christian mates and, in addition, are locked up for three more hours of the day when their friends are in fresh air, or are resting after their school hours. At these hours the Jewish child is denied free movement, air and light in a tense classroom straining his attention, forcing himself to learn his new lesson.

"These additional hours would ruin the child even in rooms that are airy, clean, spacious and comfortable. An entire day without exercise can destroy the child's weak body; the constant strain must dull the child.

"Several months ago, after visiting the St. Urbain St. school we informed Montreal Jewry that they are committing a crime by permitting these children to study in these deplorable conditions. They are injuring not only their children; they ruin our new generation."

The following day the Adler recalled that, "until recently, several rooms in the Baron de Hirsch Institute had been used as classes. Would the administration permit them to remain vacant?"

The Adler recommended that the Baron de Hirsch Institute find space for the Zionist library and for other institutional meetings, that it establish a library for

books and periodicals with a wide range of opinion and, in short, become a centre for Montreal.

"The principal of the Talmud Torah in 1907 was Isaac Skiebelsky, a tall, imposing man from England. He had been a Hebrew teacher in Montreal since 1897 and was honoured in 1914 as veteran president of the Teachers' Association. Later he became an insurance agent.

"His forte was discipline. He walked around with a strap in his hand and when visiting a class he would terrorize it by striking the strap sharply against a desk every once in a while, at random, as a mark of authority," paedagogue Israel Figler records,

In this more difficult atmosphere, with less help from parents, from society and from the very air they all breathed, the Melamed on this continent had one of the most difficult tasks in Jewish history: to convey to this generation of the young the lore and the civilization so alien and alienating to the children of North America, the world of Moses as developed in Babylon and as visualized in the hamlets of Europe.

But there is another perspective: Rabbi Meir Berlin (in the Adler, Aug. 5, 1909, on the Montreal Talmud Torah) emulated Hillel the Sage of old: to evaluate the seriousness of a Jewish community, visit its schools. As the Mizrahi leader put it, the synagogues and adult centres reflect and constitute the only fruit of previous generations; only in the schools can we see the attitudes of the young people, who will soon, later, today, be our citizens.

M.E. LEVIN

Moses Elimeleh Levin (1865-1933) was descended from a rabbinical family near Kovno, Lithuania. He came to Canada in 1890 and taught in a Hebrew school in Ottawa until 1903 when he joined the Montreal Talmud Torah under Rabbi Ashinsky, as principal.

In 1906 Levin, author of the first Yiddish book to come from Canada, was named principal. It was an ambitious plan, but several officers personally pledged his salary for several years. (Letter from President Morris Denenberg in Adler, Jan. 29, 1909)

M.E. Levin was an adept at scholarly Hebrew riddles. Some of his riddles appeared in the Adler and he won a prize for others that appeared in the press. His book was offered as a prize before it appeared in 1910. (June 16, 1910)

By October 15, 1908 we hear of a Canadian Teachers Association in Montreal planning weekly sessions to develop teaching methods to be followed by its members. M.E. Levin was elected president; Z.M. Sack vice-president; Rozowitch, treasurer; Lighter, financial secretary and Z. Harman, recording secretary. Meetings were held in the Zion Hall, 847 Main Street.

The teachers group met later in November when the treasurer spoke on a paedagogical theme. Shapiro spoke to them on December 5, 1908.

During the Passover festival of 1909, Levin announced the first Canadian presentation of a Hebrew theatrical evening by his Talmud Torah pupils 9 to 12 years of age, in Dr. Zalkin's Exodus from Egypt, with scenes out of Jewish history, of their return from Babylon, the Esther story and the Hasmonians. The paedagogical event took place in Auditorium Hall at Bleury and Ontario Streets.

He called it "a Hebraic demonstration of the possibilities of Jewish instruction, of our pupils' command of fluent Hebrew while durably identifying with the language of the prophets, and with the heroes of our history.

"Inevitably the educational effect upon our children must be great. They will inevitably come to understand and respect the drama and reality of our history, and of the sacred places where it took place, the pride and legitimacy of our nation and its claims to freedom." (Mar. 29, 1909)

At about this time Levin was preparing the publication of his Yiddish and Hebrew book, Kinder Erziung bei Yidn of which the introduction appeared in the Adler of February 14, 1909. It appeared in book form in 1910. (English title page: Paedagogy Among Jews. Montreal, Eagle Publishing Co. 128 p.)

He left Montreal in 1913 for Chicago where he managed an orphans home for two years and later led a modern style Yeshivah. During his last 13 years he served as rabbi in a Mizrahi congregation.

Levin's book, Kinder Erziung bei Yidn, a Historical Investigation, a Collection of Various Brilliant Statements in the Babylonian Talmud, the Jerusalem Talmud, Midrash Rabbah, Midrash Tanchumah, the Yalkut and Other Various Volumes

and Other Jewish documents on the Jewish Education of Children, was described by Israel Rabinovitch as the first to deal seriously with Jewish education.

The author is one of those passionate lovers - even worshippers - of Hebrew so that at the end of the Hebrew preface he regrets that its social purposes forced him to write some of it in Yiddish, to the loss of the eternity he would have gained if he had published it all in the sacred language.

Levin hoped that parents in the community would recognize their high responsibility to their offspring and to society to follow the thousands-year-old Jewish tradition and give their children a religious and Hebrew education, and create firm bonds between the children, their parents, Judaism and the Jewish people, and thus perpetuate Jewish existence.

To achieve his end he compiled hundreds of selections from thousands of years of Jewish lore, law, history, folklore and comment which illustrate when, how and why the Jewish people educated their young and old, in order to make of this learning a weapon for national survival and for personal elevation.

In the New World context Levin defined his objectives in composing his unique book which he addressed to his Montreal audience, one of typical, promising exile immigrant communities in America, yet threatened in its survival by myriad sociological phenomena apparent in the homes of newcomers, on the streets and on the playgrounds where Jewish children spend their time.

"For some two thousand years the Jews alone have been homeless, wandering from persecution to short respite, into the arms of death, escaping total annihilation only through the continuous high-minded education and training of their young.

"Responsibility for this survival lies in the voluntary hands of each Jewish male and female citizen who is the guardian of the family in the home; the guardian of the Torah which he personally has received; responsible for its faithful transmission across time, through geography, through history and through the nations. In the midst of wars, international massacres, revolutions and cataclysms of civilizations, Jews persisted in the meticulous transmission of their lore which is their soul and their body.

"When streets were a menace and no one could be confident that the family would survive the night, mothers sang the lullaby, 'The Torah is the most precious merchandise,' and father strained his heroism to ensure that his son would attain scholarship. Their last borrowed pennies went to pay Cheder fees and to buy sacred Seforim, while scribes copied holy books and The Holy Book. Those who sacrificed for learning were recognized as the nation's tree of life, the pride and glory of Jewish society, moral leaders of the people. Those least in learning were at the bottom of all scales.

"May parents be gratified and teachers rejoice with this the gift of a poor man which I place before them, which I have compiled in my leisure, after difficult hours of hard work, devoting days and nights in my search in our printed works, in the Talmuds and Midrashim, Sifra, Sifri, Tosefoth, Mechilta and other books and periodicals. I drew from them precious gems that speak of education in Israel.

"Like a bee that gathers the sweetness of flowers and turns it into honey, so I gathered, I collected, arranged and categorized into sections and made of them dishes such as the Jewish soul cherishes.

"This work on the Way of Education in Israel which I place before you is excellent and unique, a treasure to be cherished. It casts a powerful light upon our education of all the periods of our history, which not only instructs, but awakens the hearts of parents to instruct their children in the Jewish faith. Its objective is to teach Jewish parents to love the sanctities of their people and its traditions, so that the deeds of their ancestors may be signals for them to implant in the hearts of their children the spirit of Judaism, so that their hearts and souls may be bound with their people in loving chains forever.

"In order to achieve this aim I strove to assemble all the sayings that speak of the love of the Torah and of its teachers, in particular as they relate to education in Israel, in all the glory of its genius and its pride, that they be a beneficent token for parents together with their children.

"Education is the cornerstone of each nation, particularly of the Jewish people which is constantly facing the enemy, with pure soul and firm arm. This is the eternal secret of Israel and its constantly renewed strength, even as it has been forced from its homeland for two thousand years by Gentile force which has been spilling our blood like water, has been humiliating us, in an eternal medieval age. But at all times, our spirit is dedicated to the observance of what is written in our Law, and we constantly refresh our young flock with the source of our sacred Torah, at the wells of our faith, to inherit its precious treasure of learning accumulated over the ages.

"The father and the mother, together, are the finest teachers of their children. The faith which they implant deeply becomes a rock founded on behalf of their religion and beliefs. Even if many powerful ruthless nations with frightful powers threaten our existence, the people of Israel exists, with its sense of peoplehood, standing like the rock, resisting the changes of time storming over the heads. Who has protected the Torah to preserve us from extermination?

"It is the fathers who sacrificed themselves to bring up their children on the Torah and on worship, to learn and to observe the Laws in practice. As our sages formulated it, 'The world subsists only because of the chattering of the infants in the schools.' For they, the children raised in the spirit of the faith, are the Guardians of the City who watch over the people of Israel against total destruction and 'When the voices of the children of Jacob are heard in their schools the hands of Esau will not prevail against him.' The Torah and education are the assurances of our victory, the force that vitalizes our nation for thousands of years in spite of the efforts of all our enemies to end our existence.

"Our ancestors have been true idealists in the education of their children, even though they were practical workers and traders, realists in their daily life and in the conduct of their personal, family and public affairs. Yet in regard to the education of their children they were unselfish as none other. Their objective from the time of the birth of their infants was 'to raise them to Torah, to wedded bliss and to virtuous deeds.'

"Even their common conversations today witness the many backward steps that education has now descended, especially in Columbus' lands of freedom.

"For in this industrial world all attention is directed at earning more money, for our personal benefit, to dress our children most expensively, to provide for their physical welfare and future. No one pays attention to their spiritual health and their religious education, while the spirit of Israel weeps for them: 'Woe for the children exiled from their parents' table. My children have left me and they tend alien vineyards, even as they neglect my vineyard. Each parent bewails their alienated children and our people is falling ever lower.' Our younger generation is distant from us, silent as it treads all our sanctities under foot. The sacred Torah which has preserved us for generations is trodden under their feet. Our belief, the light of the universe has departed from them.

"The parent only blames the land: the air of America makes men wicked, as if America had stolen his children from him, as if there were no other cause for this condition; never about their children becoming wealthy or powerful merchants, bankers or manufacturers. The objective had been to raise true Jews, God-fearing and great Torah scholars.

"I am not among those who idealize the past, who find the ancient all perfect. But our ancestors were farsighted. Their homes were excellent schools for their children. They founded their education on the pure religion, on awe of God and respect of parents and teachers, as we had been commanded. They felt deeply and without doubt that there is no foundation, no principle and no method for education, for decency or for Judaism other than the faith as the Bible put it, 'The beginning of wisdom is the awe of the Lord.' Young Jews who had grown up and became educated in this universe and trained from infancy to observe the commandments were bound to their nation and their homes and their parents with a steadfast limitless love. This education is not distant from us in space or in time.

"But what do we see now? It's heartbreaking.

"It is the parents who have brought this condition to pass, for they are dealing lightly with all the sanctities of Israel and they believe that their children do not require the Jewish heritage; that they do not need to burden their children with the Torah of the Lord after their long English school hours. They confuse the essential with the ephemeral.

"Those whose religious feeling has not dissipated totally engage teachers to instruct their children at home, most often unqualified men not worthy of the trust, who have themselves never studied and yet are engaged as teachers for some reason or another. I am aware of exceptions, but I am not referring to them.

"No wonder, then, that failing teachers to guide them in proper direction, without faithful moral foundation or elevated tendencies implanted by parents and teachers, the children wander in pathless confusion.

"The fathers who had influenced children more than the teachers have discarded the glories of Jewish sanctities and bring their children to Mammon's altars and sacrifice them to the golden calf.

"The mothers, too, the ancient symbols of modesty in Israel, now mock everything bearing the stamp of the Torah, take part in conversations that should not be heard in Jewish homes, desecrate the Sabbath. Sabbath candles and everything based on the Law is alien to them. Phylacteries, Mezuzoth and the fringed garment are not seen or mentioned in their homes.

"Our current experience confirms the ancient principle that 'when the Lord does not build a home, its constructors strive in vain.' In particular, if education is not founded on the moral principles of the pure faith, if the spirit of the Lord does not inspire education from beginning to end, the efforts of all teachers will never succeed, and it will not be possible to bring up a generation of Jews faithful to their religion and to their people. There is no instrument in the paedagogic treasury to take the place of faith in the school system, for without a knowledge of God there is no basis for morality.

"Therefore, how can parents complain about their children? Did they not bring up their children in this manner? With some effort, with thoughtfulness, with careful conduct, they could turn their children into loyal Jews, faithful to their nation and their faith. It is the parents who are responsible; and they blame the land falsely, for they have not brought up their children properly."

Levin supplemented his intense historical survey of Jewish education with an essay on the pioneers of European child training: Swiss psychologist Pestalozzi and F. Froebel who introduced kindergarten into the school system.

Much of the book appeared serially in the Adler on February 2, 5, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21 and 25, 1909.

## GIRLS

In April, 1913 "the St. Urbain St. Talmud Torah decided to establish classes for girls, urging parents to send their girls to the Talmud Torah where they will be given religious instruction.

"This development of the work of the Talmud Torah is one of significant importance to our Jewish life in Montreal.

"Rabbi Hirsch Cohen said: 'In the olden times Jewish children were brought up in a Jewish atmosphere and environment. There was no question then of their imbibing Jewish ideals. The boy's whole day was spent in the Cheder. As he grew he would accompany his father three times a day to the synagogue. In the homes all the old customs prevailed. Then we were sure the boys would remain Jews. As far as the Jewish girl was concerned, she was always in the house and received her customs from her parents, which she used to copy and exercise in her own home when she left them. There was then not so much need to give a high Jewish education, as the habits inculcated in the girl's youth remained with her throughout life.

"In this country, however, the environment has changed. Jewish children do not come in contact with Jewish influence. All day they are at the secular schools. Their attendance at synagogue is rare - even on the Sabbath day. The father is too busy to go to the synagogue very frequently, as he did in the old country. Under these circumstances the bringing up of the children was left entirely in the hands of the mother. It is, therefore, essential that the future mothers should know more of Jewish teaching, to enable them to imbue their children with Jewish ideals.'

"Principal H. Lozinsky said: 'We already have sixty-two girls enrolled on the register. We hold two classes for these, under one teacher. Our readiness to take girls as pupils has, therefore, met with success. It is interesting to note, however, that very few of the girls are actually brought by their mothers. Although we had thought of making it a rule not to register them unless accompanied by one of their parents, we were unable to refuse the plea of the children who desired to enter the school, and assured us their mothers were too busy to come with them. The girls show a remarkable will to study Hebrew and the ethics of the Jewish religion, to which they exhibit a very reverent attitude.'" (Jewish Times, Apr. 11, 1913)

Details on the first two decades of the Montreal Talmud Torah may never have been available. Estimates indicate a tenfold budget rise from \$1,500 in the twenty years after 1896, with an enrollment rise from 30 to 770. The budget rose from an estimated \$16,000 in 1916 to \$48,000 in 1926 with an enrollment doubling. By 1936 the enrollment rose only 50%, but the budget increased from \$50,000 to \$257,000.

Significantly, Rabbi Hirsch Cohen compared the two reports of the Talmud Torah, 1907 and 1927:

"There is little to be proud of in the statistics of tenfold growth. The bright portion of any comparison is in in the curriculum. Twenty years ago we felt like a limb torn off European Jewry, and were satisfied with a minimum of Jewish learning for our children in America, and only a select few optimists

maximum teaching. Today - after two decades of slow progress - our equality with the other portions of Judaism is accepted and self-understood.

"Our educational activists are largely the same as twenty years ago. Yet if anyone were to propose the excision of Talmud from our program he would be considered demented or radical or Karaite. But those who had proposed the inclusion of this subject then were cried down as fanatic and utopian. The same people, but other concepts." (1927 Anniversary Edition of Adler, Pp. 23, 98)

Geography asserted itself. The Shaare Tefilah Congregation opened its Anshei Sepharad school uptown, all the way north from Dorchester to Milton Street.

Rabbi Simon Glazer, one of the aggressive leaders of orthodoxy, opened his Kerem Israel School further north, on St. Dominique near Marie-Anne. Another school was opened on Marquette Street in Papineau, still another on De La Roche Street in Amherst Park, and one in Mile End. By the outbreak of the First World War there were at least six Jewish schools in the city.

The Quebec City community had been plagued with conflict between its synagogues. When a peace was arranged early in 1909, the united community decided to establish a Talmud Torah. (Adler, June 24, 1909)

## THE VOICE OF LABOUR

In the middle of the first decade of the century a great change had occurred in Canadian Jewish history, not least in education.

The slow growth in population which had begun in 1880 became a flood in 1905, and with this demography there arose a powerful intellectual and political voice - if only because the date was 1905, the magic revolutionary time. Possibly Canadian annals never did welcome such a society of intellectual Jews.

They included the remarkable H. Wolofsky who, single-handedly, established an articulate and durable voice for the wave of experience-laden immigrants. The Canader Adler, which he set up in 1907, was itself the major historic saga which his newspaper recorded for over sixty years, even as he memorialized the events, the sights, the opinions, their positions and experiences of those decades.

Remarkably the first decades of the Adler numbered among its collaborators over thirty intellectuals in the new community who were unmatched in the later periods of its press - a literate society which had not the benefit of formal education, of literary training, of secular or systematic schooling. The nearest to institutional benefit they enjoyed, aside from home, Cheder and Yeshivah, was participation in Herzelian Zionism which was shaping the Labour Zionist movement and the Russian and Jewish socialist movements, such as the Bund.

Most of them were secular in orientation but learned in the tradition, aware of the power of organization, able to formulate their social programs and to match the best arguments of the established community and its experienced legal and communal leaders, as the men of the Baron de Hirsch Institute soon learned, to their embarrassment.

They were the bearers of the young political and educational program which was then gestating in Europe and which was giving birth to modern Jewish organization soon to establish the State of Israel.

In the New World, the immigrant youth was militant, syndicalist, organized in numerous socialist groups, some of Bundist inspiration, others with the fresh Poale Zionist movement and its kin the Socialist, Zionist Territorialist, the latter two to merge within a few years.

The first Montreal Jewish literary school which centred on the Adler has been introduced in issue 41 of the Canadian Jewish Archives and in later issues.

Rosenfeld was one of the classic Yiddish literary figures whose Montreal visits were a major community event, arousing even the west end society which may not have been able to read his language.

The name of Yiddish poet Morris Rosenfeld was fresh in the ears of Montreal readers at the moment as a local arrangements committee headed by the distinguished dentist-journalist Dr. Stern was preparing to receive him. (Adler, Feb. 1, 1909) His readings took place at the Baron de Hirsch Institute on March 14, 1909 with the participation of Rabbis H. Abramowitz and Dr. Nathan Gordon. The presence of this young rabbi, at the Baron de Hirsch was not surprising.

It was equally newsworthy that the poet gave the Adler several new poems for the paper to publish, including Purim verses and "The Succah,"

"Old doors, old boards  
and rotted bits of wood,  
What are you hammering, uncle mine,  
This fading autumn day,  
and why this pride?  
What do you hope to make  
of this much used matter?  
Your structure is a laughter,  
any breeze will send it falling  
and bring it to an end.  
Let the hammer lie  
and the poor man's boards,  
For you will derive  
Neither use nor pleasure from it."

"Child, what words are these  
and what language?  
Be silent, for you despise  
the tower of God  
which laughs at the strongest gale  
and fears no evil.  
My structure needs no pillars  
Or firm foundations  
Nor arrows or files  
or arts brought from distance  
or earthly cement.  
This may not please you  
in its externalities,  
But, it stands proudly  
beside the greatest citadels  
as it silences all appeals.  
May this not sound novel,  
But your laughter is not Jewish.  
So look inside the Succah,  
Make Kiddush and be proud  
That you are a Jew." (Mar. 21, 1909)

Unlike most Yiddish poets, Rosenfeld was rather aggressive at this period of his life. Many American intellectuals came to take an interest in his Yiddish lines. Even graduate student William Lyon Mackenzie King followed his writings. (Diary) But Rosenfeld was criticized by a number of his colleagues, particularly for his role in the important strike at the New York Forward. Some of them wrote in the columns of the Adler in this connection including M. Seifert, (March 14) and Tzivion (March 16, 1909) to whom Rosenfeld replied on March 21, 1909.

The Baron de Hirsch Institute sought to serve the entire community as is evidenced by the reservations in the building for meetings in January 1909: the Eureka Athletic Club, the Boys' Athletic Club, the Maccabean (Students) Literary Society, the Zionist Bnot Zion, the Bnei Zion Kadimah, the Young Men's Zionist and Literary Club, the Yiddish Self Education Union, the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society, the Hebrew Young Ladies Sewing Society, the Malbish Arumim Society and the Young Ladies

Hebrew Orphans Protective Association - clearly a wide range of institutions equally intense in its Canadian-born element and among the immigrants. In this hospitality the philanthropic society was demonstrating a commonalty regardless of conflict. (Adler, Jan. 31, 1909)

## SOLOMON CHAIM SCHNEOUR

Among the creative figures of this epoch was Solomon Chaim Schneour (1884-1958), whose journalism mirrored the age, even as his Poale Zionism shaped it.

Vilno-born Schneour, one of the brilliant minds in the Montreal ideological immigrant community, played a key role in the educational and cultural drama of Canada at this time.

A moving spirit in the Adler team, he had made his mark in the Zionist movement in Vilno early in the century when he had met young Baruch Zukerman who was, in the future, to become one of the founders of the World Jewish Congress. These were the 1903 days of the shaping of the prophets of the century.

Yeshiva student Baruch Zukerman had just been released from jail, on the intervention of Vilno's great rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, after being found with revolutionary papers in the Shoemaker's Chapel.

Hearing a stirring current report of the planned passage through Vilno, the cradle of modern prophets and the home of Jewish sages and of singers, by Dr. Theodore Herzl, Zukerman and Schneour with the entire populace of Vilno surged to see the impressive and impressing face of Herzl.

The two were among the Vilno youths who unharnessed the coach which was to bring Dr. Theodore Herzl from the railroad station and drew it to his hotel during his historic voyage to St. Petersburg. They shared in the working of the magic within the mass of assembled pilgrims, the Vilno heroes of modern Jewish history, as they sensed the import of the Jewish state which they would themselves build by his inspiration and would defend with their own talent and power.

A Montreal pioneer of this period, Jacob Solomon, originally from Pskov, came to know Schneour in Vilno at this time. Before the name Poale Zion was adopted, the first Pskov nationalists, then combatting the anti-Zionist Bundists (under Schneour's guidance), chose the name "the Zionist-Poale Zion of Pskov, with the slogan: Workers of all nations! long live the Jewish Socialist Republic in the Land of Israel."

Schneour later recalled his Berlin days when Reuben Brainin represented "all that was noble and liberating in his student world, when Brainin raised the battle cry against the Russian-Jewish students in Germany when he discovered that relations between them were morally not as high as they might have been. I remember his pamphlets at that time which he flouted in their faces. I remember how the nationalist students listened to each of his words." (Adler July 17, 1912)

Schneour arrived in Montreal in 1907, and was invited by editor Wohliner to serve as news editor of the new Adler to conduct a regular opinion column, and to write other articles on culture and politics as well as to compose editorials which appeared unsigned.

In 1908 Schneour led the Montreal "Save Sholom Aleichem" campaign to assist the ailing Yiddish prophet-humourist.

New from Russia, Schneour appreciated the Canadian freedom which was permitted even an anarchist agitator, but he was angry at the current attacks on Zionism. Nor was he the only one. Others, likeminded, who shared his loneliness - Tabachnikov from Kishinev, Moscovitch from Ekaterinoslav and Hershberg from Odessa - decided to meet at the bookstore of H. Hershman, himself an anarchist, for common Poale Zionist action.

Together with L. Zuker and other young militants, Schneour joined the distinct Socialist Territorialist group - nationalist-minded, dedicated to finding a homeland under European civilized auspices for the Jewish people, not necessarily in Palestine.

Other local Socialist Territorialists joined the Montreal Poale Zion in 1908, before other Socialist Territorialists in the United States made the same move, on the urging of Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky. (S. Belkin and L. Cheifetz. "25 Years of Poale Zion Activities in Montreal," in Natzionaler Arbeiter Farband 12th Convention Book. Yiddish. May 17, 1930. Pp. 7-9; S. Schneour. "On the Union of Zionists and Territorialists," in Adler, May 12, 1909)

Schneour had announced, "All who wish to join a group which would act for the convening of a Jewish parliament are cordially invited to submit their names to the office of the Adler in the name of S. Schneour."

Schneour then foresaw that a world congress would concern itself with regulating Jewish migration and realizing the territorial aspirations of the Jewish people.

Thus the Montreal Poale Zion group was formed, with Schneour as its recognized intellectual mentor.

Simon Belkin early notes that Schneour, deeply influenced by Dr. Zhitlowsky, was endowed with great knowledge and talent. He became the teacher of L. Zuker when that labour leader was rising in the union movement under the inspiration of the I.W.W. at the time. Its first outside lecturers in Montreal: D. Aberson and Bella Pevzner.

Montreal Poale Zion secretary Pruzhansky wrote to Winnipegger J.A. Levadi in December 1909 about arranging for Schneour to lecture in Toronto. "Tonight he is speaking at a Chanukah concert in a synagogue in Lachine on the Poale Zion and the Maccabees. We are proposing to set up a branch in this suburb; we are also arranging for him to speak several times in Quebec."

A Pruzhansky letter to Levadi reveals the poverty of means which faced the immigrant activists in their far-fetched country-wide programs: "Schneour was prepared to come to Winnipeg to speak for the movement, though it meant the loss of a week's wages, but he could not bear the travel expenses." (S. Belkin. "The First Chutz from Canada." Dos Vort, Sept. 1, 1954)

A talented and brilliant speaker, an unusual expert on Yiddish literature and an authority on the theories of both Zionism and of socialism, Schneour was a recognized leader of the Montreal labour movement. (S. Belkin. "L. Zuker, The Course of his Life and his Environment," in L. Zuker Gedenk Buch. 1968. P. 40) He was succeeded by Judah Ibn Samuel Kaufman.

Schneour lectured on nationalism at the Zionist Hall, 547 St. Lawrence on February 14, 1909.

Mr. Lifshitz of Hamilton recalled his early days in Canada,

"A ship docked in Montreal and spewed out wanderers, fleeing the sword, frightened, helpless, discouraged - me among them, a survivor of pogroms in Gomel and Bobroisk in the Minsk province of Russia.

"At home I had been a teacher in a modernized Hebrew school, in fierce opposition to the old Cheder. I will not speak of my work with rags and other dirty materials in Montreal, after my life at home where I had known no physical labour.

"One day I came across a leaflet about a lecture by one Aberson, a Labour Zionist from New York; he would speak in one of the halls in the district on May 1.

"I had been a Zionist all my life, with love of Israel filling my heart. I had come from but twenty miles from Swislovitch where the unforgettable Dr. Shmaryah Levine had lived. I had received my first book of Shekolim from him in the Shoemakers' Synagogue at Bobroisk.

"That evening my heart quivered again as I forgot my unhappy present condition. The hall was full and the packed audience was swept by the oratory of Aberson who was the peer of Baruch Zukerman as he prophetically portrayed a united mankind in which the Jewish people, too, contributed to the universal advancement of all nations.

"In the style that was common at the time, a materialist opponent of idealistic Zionism questioned, 'With which armies will you conquer Palestine? Are you sending spies into the country, as did Moses, in search of another Rahab?'

"That evening I met one of the Poale Zionists and a friendship was born between us that lasted for many years. He was working in a foundry and was earning \$9 a week, a very good wage in those days when you could live well on \$2. He had already saved \$140.

"But his fellow workers despised Jews and were constantly badgering him. One day he could stand it no longer and struck one of these men. He fell on an iron block and was seriously hurt. There was a trial at court and he lost his job."

Schneour was an ideological leader in the secularized immigrant community, distinctly unconcerned with the observant religious sector. Being a Poale Zionist, his area of action was in Zionism, in labour, in socialism. But being a Poale Zionist, his cultural preoccupation and his mission was in total Judaism and in the causes of Jewish nationalism. This immigrant from Vilno Yeshivah circles had an intense Jewish education which he cherished and which he sought to transmit in the labour and syndicalist spheres of Montreal, together with his Zionism.

Schneour was active at this time on behalf of the embattled Montreal bakers union, again together with L. Zuker, Sirota and Caiserman.

Schneour wrote on the strike at the New York Jewish Forward, on musician Mischa Elman (Mar. 29, 1909), on American public opinion in regard to capital punishment (Apr. 26, 1909), and on "Jewish Public Opinion" (May 3, 1909).

Lachovitzky, mobilized into Poale Zion by Solomon and J. Hershberg whom he met by chance in a café, portrays daily life in the immigrant left in Montreal in 1905 Solomon remembers,

"The Zionist group was motivated by a desire to respond to the general indifference. We organized a group of five to this end: Tabachnick, Moscovitch, Sarah Mann (later Mrs. L. Zuker), Hershberg and myself. As new immigrants came they added to our numbers: L. Zuker, B. Lachovitzky, J. Weigensberg, A. Parnas, I. Yampolsky, Shapiro, J. Pruzhansky, the Meltzers, the Komarovs.

"We distributed our literature in grocery stores, book stores, in the garment workers, bakers and cigarmakers unions and appeared at the meetings sponsored by our opponents. Their lecturers came to expect us and prepared to answer us. They began to sponsor anti-Zionist lectures. New York labour leader J. Shipliakoff spoke to warn the workers against Zionist enticements. Meir London refused to meet the arguments of Schneour who happened to be shorter than his interlocutor, boasting 'I fight only people my size.'"

The Uganda project, to replace Central Africa for Palestine as a homeland for the Jewish people, resulted in the formation of the Socialist Territorialist Party which attracted many Poale Zionist members, perhaps a majority. But the Dorshai Zion group disbanded, and many of their members, including the Cheifetzes and the Lazaruses, on the inspiration of intellectual Noah L. Sack, joined the Poale Zion. ("In the Early Days," in Dos Vort, Jan. 11 and Feb. 1, 1954)

Meltzer described Lachovitzky as the "agitator of the party who spent his time where the young immigrants gathered debating the labour Zionist cause, together with Jacob Pruzhansky (later, Ahvah left for Palestine where he led the Kibbutz movement and founded old age centres), N. L. Sack and other pioneers of Labour Zionism"

Lachovitzky recorded, "I was made responsible for distribution of the party weekly Der Yiddisher Kemfer. I went to the post office to pick up the Montreal copies and distributed them to the groceries and to such stands as Hershman's and Lazarus'. I need not tell what a high moment it was to receive each new issue; it was the occasion of a festival and an elevation - no work in the factory that day.

"I once overheard anarchist Hershman explain to Zuker why he sold Dos Folk, the bulletin of the competing Socialist Territorialists, under the counter. I felt humiliated at the sacrilege, and wrote to my editors to increase the Montreal order and to send me 200 copies of the Kemfer. I stood on the street corner, near Hershman's and sold them to passersby on Friday and Saturday. By Sunday I was out of stock, for if the customers did not have the requisite three cents, I trusted them. Next week I ordered 400 copies. Until a Saturday came with a pouring rain. I sought shelter in Hershman's doorway and distributed my Kemfers. He called me in 'Why stand outside? I pay rent here anyway.' I told him of his discrimination against Dos Folk. He said it was no longer practised. That was the end of our street sales." (Dos Vort, March, 1954)

As he recollected these times later Lachovitzky would say, "Those who sow with tears..."

S. Belkin (1889-1969), a native of the Ukraine, had an intense Russian education and had spent a number of years in trade in the Russian Far East before settling in Canada in 1911. A close associate of Brainin and Kaufman when they came to Montreal, he became the prime figure in the Poale Zion whose early annals in Canada, 1904-1920, he narrated in the classic Di Poale Zion Bavegung in Canada (180 p.)

During the First World War he was active in Brainin's Folks Farband and subsequently in the Ukrainian Alliance. On their behalf he proceeded to the new Soviet Russia to supervise the distribution of Canadian relief supplies to Jewish war sufferers and to pioneer the study of the conditions of Soviet Jewry. He made a serious effort to enable Russian Jews to leave, through Latvia, for the island colony of Newfoundland.

Upon his return to Canada, he was named executive officer of the Jewish Colonization Association, a position he held until his retirement in 1954.

In 1969 he published the fundamental study of Jewish immigration into Canada, Through Narrow Gates, issued before his passing.

S. Belkin's records remind us of additional Montreal names for the list of founders of the Poale Zion: Dr. J. Bachrach, Noah Cheifetz, Zelig Wolofsky and David H. Lazarus.

But the list of Poale Zion pioneers is not confined to Montreal. At the time Toronto was also the scene of the birth of the same party in the persons of Abraham Rhinewine, A. Wallerstein, S. Julien, L. Hutnik, S. Shapiro and S. Kruger.

The Poale Zion issued a monthly bulletin, the Kemfer Shtimme for two years.

Early in the second decade of the century, the national voice of Yiddish literature and of the party in the United States, Der Yiddisher Kemfer, was fading. The Poale Zion in Montreal declared, "The public understands the function of this periodical under the direction of K. Marmor and of Landau, now editor of the Adler in Montreal, as a cultural torch in this land plagued by the yellow press. At the present historical moment in Zionism the few of us must labour more vigorously to restore the Kemfer."

The Montreal group may have printed many issues in the city with proceeds from local advertisements secured by Zuker and Meltzer: from Tatarinsky, Albert's Drug Store, Federal Tobacco, tailor W. Karp, A. Komarov, A. Rubinstein (insurance), barber A. Stark, M. Israelovitch (boots), etc. Typesetting was done at the Adler, but some of the press work was done in New York in a printery where the great Baruch Zukerman was proofreader.

Important New York writers appear on its pages: Dr. C. Zhitlowsky, L. Jaffe, Yehoash, D. Aberson, M. Shapiro and K. Marmor. (S. Belkin. Die Poale Zion Movement in Canada. P. 37)

The Montreal branch of the Poale Zion party in 1912 issued several numbers of the official Bulletin of the national party. Schneour secured the advertisements and the New York office supplied the editorial material. The forthcoming

lectures of Zerubavel in Montreal were advertised in this national bulletin. S. Bercovitch recalled that he was criticized for exaggerating the qualities of the guest.

Some even considered that the Central Committee of the party be transferred in its entirety to Montreal, but the local members would not hear of it.

In Winnipeg the saga is peopled by S. Abrams, A. Assofsky, M.M. Pessicov and Max Mains. Ottawa had its own early heroes and Hamilton its own.

## POLITICAL DIVERSITY

Schneour boldly encountered one of the harshest conflicts which Jewish radicals met from the first days of modern Jewish history; the challenge of loyalties between idealisms. Jewish loyalists chose between different means of instituting messianism, between ways of bettering society and of ensuring the survival of Judaism in a modern progressive world. All too often the socialist program proved to advance anti-Semitism.

An intimate glimpse in the Montreal immigrant society revealed a score of durable conflicts: Jewish assimilationist radicals found themselves opposing Jewish nationalist socialist schools.

The conflict with the non-nationalistic "Genosse" people was conducted by the Labour Zionists all over the world. In the absence of distinguished guest lecturers, the local groups such as the Hamilton Poale Zionists asked S. Shapiro to speak on this theme on January 17, 1909. He was challenged by half a dozen opponents, including a lady. (Adler, Jan. 30, 1909)

Years later Jewish communists were raising funds for Arab pogromists in Hebron, and were proclaiming their neutrality towards Hitlerism, which they described as "a matter of taste."

Benjamin Lachovitzky remembered an incident from his early days in Montreal when he applied to the Workmen's Circle for admission, together with his cousin. The latter was admitted into the cosmopolitan, socialist order, but the Lachovitzky case was referred to the committee because they were concerned that, being a Zionist, he would raise the Palestine question at meetings.

Another candidate before the committee was not Jewish, a Russian socialist by the name of Mikita who had learned to speak Yiddish from his radical associates. There was no problem about admitting Mikita, but only after a long debate was Lachovitzky admitted on condition that he would never raise or discuss Zionist issues.

Meltzer was court reporter for the Adler and nights helped fold the flat copies of the newspaper, as did B.J. Goldstein, one of the brilliant Adler's journalists. He had worked in the C.P.R. shops, polishing cornices with sandpaper.

Leiser Meltzer was a member of the carpenters' union, local 1270, whose president Jacob Scheiner from England was secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, founded in 1906. It was known formally as the Federated Trade Unions and Organizations Committee.

The Council had a number of Jewish affiliates: Jewish Workmen's Circle Branch 151, the Mohilever Society which later became the Branch 204 of the Workmen's Circle, the Bakers' Union (then on strike) a Tailors' Union affiliated with the I.W.W., the Carpenters' Union founded in 1905. N.L. Sack, brother of journalist B.G. Sack, was very helpful.

When the Organizations Committee of the Council was established no fewer than seven of the twelve delegates from its component unions were Poale Zionists. Meltzer notes that its Ladies Waistmakers Union bore on its

letterhead the Poale Zion slogan, the Yiddish "Workers of the World Unite." and the Hebrew, "If I am not for Myself, Who is for Me?"

Jewish unions may have been represented in the Montreal Labour Councils through many years, but there seems to have been no meaningful contact and their names do not appear in the voluminous press and other labour documentation.

Schneour was even more keenly aware of the assimilationist tendencies within the Montreal Jewish labour movement so close to him.

B.G. Sack noted that Canadian labour was inimical to immigration since the 1880's, particularly to Chinese and other Asiatics. This attitude was continuously intensified until 1922 as labour assumed organizational and political form with time. ("A Changing Front," in Arbeit, ed. by L. Meltzer, Dec. 1922)

Like Schneour, Aaron Assofsky of Winnipeg, founder of the Poale Zion in Western Canada in 1904, had resented the anti-immigration stand of the Socialist Party. He even supported the Liberal Party in protest during federal elections.

Schneour condemned the Jewish members of the American Socialist Party for their boycott of the New York Varheit because of its attacks on Morris Hillquit. He compared it to the ancient tradition of excommunication which had in its day placed its ban on Maimonides.

Schneour wrote "Is this the End of the Anti-Immigration Movement?" on November 27, 1908. On November 7, 1908, he had noted the hostility of labour and socialist groups to immigrants, as demonstrated by the American Federation of Labour.

Three weeks later he wrote on the milder attitude of the A.F.L. towards immigration. Some saw it as increasing liberalism in the labour organization. But Schneour saw it as a result of the passing of the economic crisis of 1907. There was an increased call for workers to enable industry to catch up on the losses of the past months. It made no sense for the A.F.L. to protest the arrival of more manpower. But if economic conditions should change, the federation would resume its hostility. He cited the Talmudic axiom. "The man who is always fearful is fortunate."

L. Meltzer and Schneour, the leading ideologists of the Labour Zionist movement, criticized the Canadian Socialist Party "for its lack of principle" in opposing immigration. Nevertheless, the Montreal Socialist Territorialists supported St. Martin in various elections, as did the Poale Zion. It later appeared that St. Martin was quite anti-Semitic, according to S. Belkin. (Der Veg, Oct. 29, 1915)

Schneour reported on some 500 Jewish farmers who were enjoying favourable conditions, (December 29 and 30, 1908) and "On Regulating Immigration" (May 6, 1909), that thousands were still fleeing poverty in Europe, in spite of insufficient preparation and inadequate reception; "there are calls for popular mobilization, and in New York a newly formed institution is beginning to do good work; several months ago a group was established to this end. The New York society appealed to Montreal for parallel action, but has received no response."

Indeed, within the fortnight, on May 16 the Socialist Territorialists convened a meeting to form a Montreal branch of the American Jewish Society for the Regulation of Immigration.

He referred to an early ineffective attempt at an excommunication of the Adler. (Nov. 16, 1908)

Clearly the socialist parties were marginal in the total political structure; the bulk of the vote went to main parties which enjoyed the support of the Adler and of Brainin's Der Veg. But the Jewish principle was important, and Jewish socialists were fighting all over the progressive world to ensure support in the areas which promised to be extensive and influential in the decades ahead.

Schneour was not the first in Montreal to react politically. Jacob Solomon recalls the organization of the Poale Zion in 1903. One day soon after his arrival in Montreal he saw many Jewish people streaming to a public meeting in the Empire Hall (Main and St. Catherine streets). The speaker was a local manufacturer who spoke a very good Yiddish. His message was anarchistic and aggressively anti-nationalist and anti-Zionist.

Schneour's coolness towards organized socialists continued for many years and became more bitter as these partisans joined with some Jewish socialists outside the Poale Zion to form a non-Zionist political bloc. The Poale Zion pursued another policy which proposed Jewish candidates for municipal office.

When a movement developed among Montreal Jews to secure representation on City Council through an alderman of Jewish origin, there was a great deal of support for Abraham Blumenthal as the Jewish candidate, support in which the Labour Zionist movement participated. Blumenthal had been nominated by the United Hebrew Political Association. L. Zuker was chairman of the mass meeting convened by the Poale Zion in support of Blumenthal and the speakers included S. Schneour, A. Kamaroff and L. Meltzer. The Labour Zionist Party sent twelve volunteers to help out on election day. Blumenthal was elected.

When he was nominated again in 1914 the Poale Zion no longer supported him. (Adler, Jan. 22 and 28, 1912)

The partisan problem facing the Canadian Poale Zion during this period in regard to the Socialist Party of Canada came to a head at the Continental Convention of the Poale Zion Party which took place in Montreal in 1910. At that convention the distinguished leader of the movement, Baruch Zukerman, Schneour's friend from Vilno days, urged the Party everywhere to support socialist organizations.

He received his response from Schneour, who said, "In Canada it is quite impossible to work together with the socialists. They are quite anti-Semitic." He urged that the resolution about socialist activity should be binding for Canada only insofar as local circumstances permit. (Yiddisher Kemfer, Oct. 25-31, 1910)

Schneour played a decisive role in the shaping of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America in Montreal. During its wartime growth his colleagues Yehudah Kaufman, V. Sirota, and H.M. Caiserman led the campaign for the young international union, but Schneour was able to negotiate the transition from United Garment Workers Union into what was basically a financial

agreement which led to the recruitment of 3000 tradesmen into the ACWA within the year. (S. Belkin, Die Poale Zion Bavegung in Canada, 1904-20. Montreal, 1956. Pp. 95,98)

In 1917, when the employers locked out the Amalgamated union, Schneour helped raise \$1100 for the strike fund. Here again his colleagues in the campaign included Caiserman, Zuker, Korenberg, Louis Benjamin, Moishe Dickstein, Sirota, Kaufman, Radovalsky and M. Blechman.

Schneour's campaign within the socialist movement in Canada was conducted on two very important levels: he opposed the Jewish members of the assimilationist radical party for ignoring the interests of their Jewish continuity and that of their progeny, for not acting in Jewish interests and Jewish concerns, and he condemned the socialist parties for not recognizing the plight of the Jewish people; for not including the Jewish people as an underprivileged group deserving justice and restoration.

The question of Poale Zion participation in the socialist movement in Canada came up at the 1913 continental convention of the Party and again at the eighth convention in Rochester, N.Y. Contrary to their previous stand, the Montreal Poale Zion were loyal to the Rochester resolution which stated "Canadian members who function under an electoral system in social-political conditions which are different from the American are nevertheless bound to support the socialist candidates where they do not put forth their own."

However, the Poale Zion objected particularly to the fact that small groups of Jewish socialists (not Zionists) met with non-Jewish socialists and nominated candidates in Jewish districts for municipal, provincial and federal office. The Poale Zion were systematically ignored in these proceedings. They were placed before a fait accompli and were called upon to work for and vote for these candidates if they were to call themselves socialist. This continued for a number of years until the Poale Zion revolted and nominated their own member for City Council, for St. Louis Ward in City Council in 1916. Their candidate was H.M. Caiserman (1884-1950).

The historic political labour conflict took sharp form in the Caiserman-Schubert 1916 civic election campaign in the St. Louis ward populated by Jewish immigrants, where Godefroy Langlois, a parallel on the civic front to the libertarian, emancipated Louis-Jospeh Papineau on the national arena, fought for Canadian liberty, with peers in Winnipeg and possibly in Toronto. Certainly the Caiserman manifesto is an important document in Canadian political aspirations.

Both Yiddish newspapers, the Adler and Der Veg, supported the bourgeois candidate and called upon the Jewish voters not to split the Jewish bloc in the ward.

On July 12, 1916 Schneour wrote in the Adler on "Splitting the Unity of the Synagogues."

The outcome was perceived as a ludicrous defeat for the Poale Zion. Caiserman's 75 votes were mocked by Schubert's 185 supporters; but these, too, were unimpressive, especially since clearly Caiserman's Jewish nationalism appealed only to Jewish voters, while Schubert's socialism could draw upon radicals from the entire population. This radicalism, Hershman notes, was reinforced by the socialist background of the skilled workers brought to Canada from New York.

Because of the anti-Zionist Jewish socialist influence by the Bund, the Poale Zion organization had been excluded from Montreal May Day parades.

The H.M. Caiserman election committee consisted of some thirty members led by L. Zuker as chairman, N. Cheifetz as secretary, S. Schneour, treasurer, L. Meltzer, campaign director. Yehudah Kaufman, Max Blechman and Moishe Dickstein served as the press committee. The anti-Zionist socialists could not make peace with the right of the Poale Zion to nominate their own candidate and refused to withdraw their candidacy of J. Shubert. It was the first time in Montreal, in Canadian history, that a member of the Poale Zion was a candidate in a municipal election.

The campaign was extraordinary, of a type known nowhere in Canada or in the United States. The campaign platform included forty points which covered education, culture, labour demands, a national program and a demand for a change in the electoral system. The program included provision that families earning less than \$1,000 a year should be free of taxes, a permanent census bureau for the city which would maintain statistics according to nationalities; demunicipalization of the Street Railway Company and the Montreal Gas, Light & Electric Company, sanitary security in the city through an intensified inspection of food, free medical service, public toilets, milk stations, more parks, broader streets and facilities for free athletics and sport. The program included a proposal for the abolition of religious instruction in the schools, institution of a library which would include the classic literature of all the national groups in the city and should attempt to become for Canada what the British Museum Library is for England; free textbooks; a cultural-historical museum in the Museum of Natural Science; a zoological and botanical garden, an art gallery; free courses in all areas of literature and science; free instruction in the high schools.

The labour demands also included an eight hour day, inspection in the factories, labour bureaus with the union representatives to combat unemployment, union labour for the municipality, housing for workers according to the most recent studies in social economy, support of consumers and labour cooperatives, the abolition of child labour, pensions for city employees, etc; all ethnic or national groups in the city to have equal rights; Yiddish as well as English and French are to appear in civic documents, one hour a day instruction in Jewish subjects in the elementary schools and two hours in secondary schools, the curriculum to be decided by a Jewish Board of Education to be approved by the City Board; Saturday to be a day of rest for Jewish Sabbath observers.

A leaflet addressed to the citizens of St. Louis Ward declared,

"Although our city is composed of three major national groups - the French, English and Jewish - and many small groups such as the Italian, Roumanian and Russian, etc., our civic administration has paid no attention to the national, social and cultural needs of the minorities.

"The national interests of the Jews of our city are particularly ignored. Yiddish has been denied the most elementary recognition in the city's public documentation; the language is a stepchild in the courts and in the schools. They are deprived of the right to observe their national day of rest, the Sabbath, and its observers must abstain from two days of work during the week.

"St. Louis Ward being composed largely of workers, it must have labour representation alert to the interests of democracy and labour." (S. Belkin. Die Poale Zion Bavegung in Canada, 1904-20. Montreal, 1956. Pp. 103-7)

Noah Cheifetz described the difficulties of the campaign in a letter to the Central Committee of the Poale Zion Party dated March 28, 1916, "We have mass meetings every evening. Many of these are open air meetings, but we must deliver 7,000 leaflets to the electors ourselves because we must save the \$70 postage. We receive no help and our hands are bound."

Among the speakers at these election meetings, beside Yehudah Kaufman and S. Schneour, there appeared Prof. Harold Lasky, who was then lecturer at McGill University. With the electorate in St. Louis Ward largely not Yiddish-speaking, the Poale Zion found difficulty in securing speakers in these languages. Fortunately, Korenberg knew French and Louis Benjamin, who later joined the Poale Zion Party for a brief period, also assisted in the French language meetings.

Later Caiserman reported (in Yiddisher Kemfer of April 28, 1916),

"Our campaign will long be remembered by the Jewish community of Montreal for the worthy tone of its platform, the pure idealism of the campaign and its considerable educational significance. Our committee rooms became a people's university for social and political science on the one hand and a tribune for national liberation ideals on the other. It remains historic in the annals of the constituency led by militant Godefroy Langlois. We have established a standard for political campaign. This may be our greatest achievement which both friends and opponents will need to recognize."

In 1917 the Poale Zionists organized a May Day parade of their own and marched from their hall in the Jewish area of settlement through Main Street before they returned to their headquarters. "The girls in the parade wore white blouses with blue collars and red arm bands, they sang various Yiddish folk songs and labour songs and, as they marched past the offices of the Adler, they stopped to deliver speeches in favour of the rights of the Jews to secure a home for the Jewish people in Palestine." (Adler, May 2, 1917) At the May Day meeting in the Labour Temple they heard I. Zar, leading member of the Poale Zionists in the United States, address the gathering.

In 1918 the Poale Zionists met in their hall at 707 Main Street and marched with all socialists, but they did not direct themselves to the Champ de Mars, instead returned to their hall, where they conducted a literary evening. There was a cessation of work in all the garment industry. After that day there was no longer a boycott against the Labour Zionists in the May Day observances.

One of the most sublime days in the life of S. Schneour came on February 10, 1918 when, together with H.M. Caiserman, he presided over the festive demonstration at the Monument National convened by Montreal labour to celebrate the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. Baruch Zukerman and N. Syrkin were the guest speakers.

The participation of the Trades and Labour Council, now headed by Mr. Foster, in this event, was a special triumph in the light of the aggressive agitation against Zionism on the part of the assimilationist Jewish workingmen. Their representatives sat on the stage beneath their banners. The institutions represented in this manifestation included the Workmen's Circle, Carpenters

Union, Amalgamated Joint Board, Mens Pressers Union, Cloakmakers Joint Board, Cloak Pressers, Bakers Union, Poale Zion, Jewish National Workers Alliance, Hechalutz, Peretz Schools, Jewish People's Schools, Jewish Public Library and Dramatic Club, Maccabean Students' Circle, Altneuland, the Papineau Hebrew Sick Benefit Society, etc.

This Poale Zion tradition of Jewish militancy was especially marked by the schooling in the Peretz and Jewish People's Schools and their program of literature and scholarship, with their Reuben Brainin, Yehudah Kaufman, Shloimeh Wiseman, Jacob Zipper and Samson Dunsky tradition.

Schneour entered the Jewish language discussion ("The Pawned Logic") between I. Yampolsky and B.J. Goldstein on November 8, 1908 when the former defended Yiddish and the latter spoke for Hebrew. Yampolsky had argued that "The masses of Jewry are by nature assimilatory and Yiddish is bound to lose out, and with it the nature of our populist character may become a non-confessional sect, the last station before total assimilation. There can be no space for an independent Jewish language in exile, anywhere in exile, not in any Jewish territory; only in Palestine. There only Hebrew can live, because only this language is related to our sanctities, its past, its future. It can hope for a future a hundred times more realistically than in the world of exile."

Schneour responded in support of the Yiddishist position that if a territory may be secured for the Jewish people, Yiddish could surely persist since even without such favourable conditions - without a Jewish majority, a Jewish controlled society, institutions, governmental influence - Yiddish nevertheless grows in exile lands even under pressure from other cultures and languages.

"Even in a Jewish Palestine, of the two Jewish tongues, Hebrew is less likely to persist not having been spoken by Jews for thousands of years, requiring artificial resuscitation; even while Yiddish lives and develops naturally.

"In these circumstances Yiddish is more likely to prevail in a Jewish Palestine than in another Jewish territory. A Jewish Palestine is likely to become such by virtue of Jewish immigration, and immigration will most likely be Yiddish-speaking."

In 1915 Schneour, in his quality as co-founder of the Poale Zion, signed the joint appeal of the community dignitaries in aid of Jewish war victims and of local suffering from the disarrangements due to the war.

It turned out to be an unfortunate campaign not only because the results were meagre but because, in the wisdom of the management committee, most of the proceeds went to local needs, and the Jewish world tragedy was largely unregarded. It was a class differential whose consequences festered tragically for a quarter of a century, until the arrival of Samuel Bronfman as national leader of the community.

## NEWS FROM TURKEY

The editor of the Adler defined the "Territorialist and Zionist" movements on March 23, 1909,

"Opinions may differ on the feasibility of their program, but there can be no two opinions on the nature of this movement. They belong to the best sons of our people. They are sincere idealists in their vision of how to end our exile; they are courageous in their revaluation of values, in their rejection of the old values, in their search for the ancient trail. As former Zionists they had seen Palestine as the only home for the Jewish future; until they could no longer see the Holy Land as the possible refuge. Idealistic and honest, they seek elsewhere."

The crucial event that brought about the fruitful political joinder was the virtually bloodless Young Turkish revolution which evoked as great hopes in world Zionism as it did among the Turkish people, for "it destroyed every trace of the old order and brought Turkey into the ranks of free civilized nations," as Schneour wrote. (May 12, 1909)

"Now, in the altered Turkey, we respect their dedication to a sound foundation for the Jewish people, while the movement decides whether they seek a temporary territory until Palestine can become ours, or are they in search of a new eternal territory for the Jewish people?"

"Now it is historically clear that there can be no asylum for the night for the Jewish people. In the new Turkey, Palestine can become this new Jewish home. The active beginning had already been made in that area."

The editor of the young Turk newspaper in Salonika published a series of articles on Aram Naharaim (Mesopotamia) suggesting that it be offered to the Jews as a territory.

"This is not a new suggestion, and the Jewish Territorialists have begun negotiations to this end. It is encouraging that the dominant party in Turkey sees the Jewish project as beneficial to their country. This land has huge areas which are in need of energetic people who will exploit its resources. They are noting,

"Our land requires initiative and financing. Our country is a Babel Tower, with as many members in our parliament as there are ethnic and religious groups.

"Ten million Jews are spread all over the world, most of them loyal to the lands of their residence, alien to chauvinism and to race hatred. Their Jewish Colonization Association has established Jewish model settlements in the Argentine.

"In the past it had negotiated with the Sultan, but they had hesitated about placing their suffering brethren in the hands of the despotic government of the time. But now that despotism is a mere memory, and now there is no reason why tens of thousands of them cannot come to our land of freedom. Our government seeks to satisfy all its inhabitants regardless of faith, race or nationality."

These ideas were reiterated in several periodicals in Istanbul and in Tunisia, the Adler reported.

For the Territorialists their abstract ideal has assumed concrete form with the opening of new possibilities in Palestine under the new Turkish régime. ("Mesopotamia or its Neighbouring Countries?" Adler, March 12, 1909; "Union of Zionists and Territorialists," March 12, 1909)

"It was not Herzl who created the Jewish nationalist movement, but the nationalist sentiment which created him. Conditions were propitious. The people could not tolerate its enslavement, even as other enslaved peoples led campaigns for their liberation. He, too, discovered within himself the power to tear off the bonds of exile. The Jewish people developed new demands, new concepts, new creating forms of living. The new great work was in the air. It needed the man who would utter it, who would seize the expectations and become the prophet, the leader, the organizer, the hero, the voice of Jewish suffering and of liberation.

"With his passing, the homogeneity which he had brought dissipated; the elements began to wander, unsystematically, without order, like a volcano spitting fire in many directions.

"But in the Middle East the sun arose again within Turkey with a message of hope. As the somnolent people, in its own song of victory, awakened, they remembered the nation which in its long exile had retained the hope to revive again in the very land where bells of liberation peal. They are returning to that corner of the Middle East, to the vast unsettled areas, to establish an area of security.

"We need another hero who will understand the meaning of the hour, to mend our shattered unity, to reawaken with hope and courage the discouraged hopes of the mourners for the illuminating, prophetic, self-sacrificing Dr. Herzl." ("If Herzl were Alive," March 16, 1909)

The Adler wrote on April 9, 1909, "Zionists are on the Right Track."

"We trust the report that Zionists are about to convene a world conference to discuss recent Turkish developments in regard to Jews settling in the Holy Land.

"If ever it was possible to make Zionism a truly popular movement, it now lies in this Turkish development. Hitherto Zionism could not point to genuine possibilities for its attainment. Considerable energies have been invested there, with substantial success, in the territory of our dreams. Yet there was a strong feeling that the old Turkish régime was a powerful hindrance.

"The Turkish libertarian movement in Jewish history touched Zionism. Baron de Rothschild had died leaving a considerable sum in the hands of trustees for the benefit of stricken Jewry. Many Jews felt that Palestine was the logical place for this investment, to enable threatened Jews to reestablish themselves. The trustees were not devoted idealists and did not trust the Turkish imperial government to permit the development of a Jewish settlement under the Crescent.

"The large Jewish Colonization Association has declined to invest the capital of the Baron de Hirsch there because it would not hear of Jewish national ideals; it preferred working in the freer societies of Canada and Argentina.

"But with changes in Turkey the association must also alter its stand towards Jewish settlement in Palestine. Indeed, now is the time for Zionism to attract all Jews to a world-wide effort to find a home for the Jewish people.

"We noted immediately after the Turkish revolution that Zionists are unable to exploit the new situation for the benefit of the movement. Now it seems they are mobilizing for a world assembly. The report of such a meeting indicates that the concept is ripe to assemble all Jews who hold their people dear to mobilize the Jewish settlement associations and all other Jews to realize the Zionist ideal.

"Now, with the Young Turkish government, it seemed that these funds might be freed for Palestinian development.

"With the change in the Turkish condition, the ban upon migration from Russia may be removed. The country has a constitution, and the Turkish people welcome Jews. Jewish settlement is continuing to grow, even without special support. The Jewish National Fund and the Colonial Bank are maintaining agriculture and industry. The Holy Land is as legitimate an area of Jewish settlement as Argentina, Canada and the United States. But Palestine has the further advantage as the scene of the great national ideal." ( also in Adler, Mar. 22, 1909)

Passionately concerned with the assimilation of the Jewish people Schneour carefully analyzed the menace in various classes of Jewish society.

He was aware of the differing opinions on the effect of the Turkish revolution upon Jews. "Will Turkey more readily permit Jews to settle in Palestine and give them autonomy, as Max Nordau predicted in the press, or is it the aim of the Young Turks to safeguard the integrity of the empire and prevent Jews from forming a state there?

"In any case civic liberties for Jews in Palestine and in Turkey are more assured under a parliament with representatives from all the minorities within the empire. Will Jews benefit from this? Will the Turkish legislature hear out the demands of the Jewish nation? The answer to this is in the negative because primarily, Jews have been elected and, secondly, because the candidates were not elected as representatives of the Jewish community but as Young Turks; not as Jews but for their civic persons, as members of their political party and they must speak accordingly.

"But most important, they represent a section of community which is assimilationist and aristocratic by character, the Sephardi who look down on co-religionists, whom they do not see as children of their Jewish people, sharing national characteristics and outlook on the Jewish future. They have not been members of the national Jewish movement.

"Jews have been sitting in the parliaments of the world, but this has not assured us that they would fight for the rights of the Jewish nation beyond civil rights. They hesitate to raise their voices lest they be labelled excessively nationalist.

"Turkish Jews - and others - might benefit from the new order in their nation if the voice of the true sons of Jewry were heard from the loftiest tribune of the new order speaking of the profoundest faith of our people in its own freedom, independence and renaissance.

"There is something sadly fateful in our history that, whatever our preparation, we are never prepared for the crucial moment. Even in Russia, where Jews dreamed so deeply of revolution long before the Russian peasants ever heard of freedom. Yet when some reforms, such as elections, parliament, etc., became possible, Jews failed to elect an adequate number of deputies."

The little noted side effect of the Turkish revolution upon American Zionism proved to be important in world history, for it led to the union of the Territorialists with the Poale Zionists to bring together creative Jewish forces which, in Palestine, strengthened the Jewish labour movement and, in such countries as Canada, brought to community shaping, in the Poale Zion Movement, men such as Zuker, Schneour, H.M. Caiserman and other valuable elements. Years later the Poale Zion was enriched by the adhesion of the Zeirei Zion.

Following the course of events in the east, Schneour noted that "Turkey is being added to the roster of constitutional societies. notably as reflected in the sultan's speech from the throne at opening of its parliament. The country is at the beginning of great reforms" (Adler, Dec. 28, 1908)

"Even the backward, dormant China is beginning to speak of changes in governmental form. It is in order to look at Russia.

"Until recently such a question could not be raised there; clearly the Duma (the parliament) consists of a black majority, ranging from the Black Hundreds to the Progressive Men of October. But recent incidents may indicate change. In the course of debates on the eternal Jewish question, the black forces attacked the government and even the Czar. These, his faithful sons, the pillars of despotism, these darkest spirits, suddenly revolted and called the government and the Czar himself traitors to the Russian people and their cause. The left who never failed to discredit the government and the autocracy, suddenly spoke up in its defence.

"The forces of the black could not tolerate the few relaxations which Premier Stolypin introduced in relief of the Jewish condition. They saw it as a sign of the end of the black forces in Russia.

"But the government did not desire such a denouement. It found a peace with 'the genuine Russians' and the Czar pardoned ten pogromists in Bialystock and promised to consider new anti-Jewish regulations which the blacks were proposing. The castles in the air that some had envisaged proved soap bubbles, as the Russian Duma remains the only black legislature in the world."

Schneour commented on international affairs after the American presidential elections of 1908, even before the final count of the votes, that American business leaders deliberately removed their brakes on the national economy and created a business boom in the country. They had manufactured a crisis before the elections to foil the Democratic candidate Bryan.

Schneour's appreciation of Canada found expression in an early article on "Corruption in the United States and Canada." (Nov. 30, 1908)

"There is constant discussion on whether Canada will remain a British colony or whether it will be absorbed into the United States because this country is already so dependent financially upon its neighbour, because it is being invaded by American immigrants and, thirdly, because of an undesirable influence: unlike

the United States, each class in Europe has a beautiful tradition behind it. The life forms in Europe have been shaped by bitter struggles between these classes each of which has developed its own spiritual aristocracy and its own idealistic intellectual class which guards itself from descending into the abyss of corruption, swindle and degradation. So every state in Europe possesses a body politic which is relatively clean in its laws of conflict, with a certain independent spirited aristocracy and a relatively clean code of rising within the class. The total presents an army of writers, journalists, poets, columnists, thinkers, militants and idealists of every colour.

"This structure is absent in the United States where development has assumed another shape. For a long period the United States became a land of opportunity. Each citizen grew, not in consequence of his position in his class or as a result of relationships of classes or groups but as the fruit of his personal abilities or talents. Material utility became the basis of morality and politics.

"In Europe each citizen found a ready-made social class tradition which he accepted for his own personal uses; in America personal utility became the source of each citizen's concepts of society and of traditions. Under such conditions all means are acceptable as honest, and corruption, swindle, bluff, graft, bribery, purchase of votes and the acquisition of the press, of intellectuals and of legislation are admirable if they lead to the desired end.

"Canada is different. It is true that this is also a new nation without social traditions. But since it has been dependent on two European nations, France and Britain, it has hitherto been under the influence of European methods of social life. So Canadian political parties have not exploited the crisis, the hunger of the people, for partisan ends, as the Republicans have done shamefully.

"But American influence is growing and, with it, corruption. The investigation into Quebec and Maritime practices have revealed grave corruption, even if not on the scale of American insurance companies and the oil trust. The revelations of kickbacks to officials from suppliers, the 'loans' from businessmen reflect the influence of American businessmen and politicians.

"This conflict between deleterious American influence and the relatively cleaner Europe style of conducting business will be lengthy and bloody.

"The outcome is difficult to foretell."

## IDEOLOGUE OF FESTIVALS

An examination of Schneour's publications recreates vividly the intellectual atmosphere of a portion of that immigrant society.

Schneour helped institutionalize his concept of the festivals.

In this direction he set up a periodical dedicated to this reading of Jewish history, under the title "Maccabean."

The Maccabean series was sponsored by the Poale Zion. The first issue, like the title, was devoted to the Chanukah festival. Schneour related the philosophy of the candles holiday to current civic politics just as the Poale Zion was preparing for activities on the municipal level which culminated in H.M. Caiserman's campaign for a seat on city council.

The Maccabean was issued by the Poale Zionists' Maccabean Publishing Co. to mark Jewish festivals and to establish their national, contemporary, secular significance. The Maccabean was issued as the conscience of the younger element in the social democratic community. It agitated for a renewal of the Chanukah spirit and urged that it be observed as a period of rest.

The essential thought of the publication - and indeed of a large part of that immigrant society - was conveyed completely in an article by Schneour, "Chanukah Parallels: Passover and Chanukah; Our Ancient and Future Liberation."

The editor related the historic struggles of the Maccabeans of old to the current political activities in municipal politics; for the first time a Jewish labour candidate will seek a seat on City Council who will represent the district where Jewish electors reside. This candidate would be independent from the English or French political parties.

Schneour's close associate in the Maccabean was Leiser Meltzer, one of the founders of the Jewish National Workers Alliance (Farband) in Montreal in 1909. Meltzer served as manager of the Folkszeitung, edited by Leon Chazanovitch, in the summer of 1912. With Moishe Dickstein, he was among the founders of the Jewish People's Schools where he served as volunteer teacher when the school splintered in 1914 from the National Radical School. He helped organize the United Jewish Unions of Montreal in 1915 and served as secretary of the Jewish Syndical Council formed on December 22, 1909. (Adler, Dec. 15, 20, 26, 1909)

A third collaborator was M. Shmuelson, who contributed a short story, "The Carter of Eretz Israel." B.G. Sack also wrote for the Maccabean.

The Chanukah festival was the occasion for Schneour to recall that throughout history the heroic element among the Jewish people always had occasion to fight many traitors in their own midst, even more consistently than their open opponents or their external enemies.

Indeed, the Jewish traitors encouraged outsiders to oppress the Jews, to exclude Jews from international society and to erase the Jewish fact from the face of the earth.

Scholars of the Chanukah know that it was the Greek-speaking Jews who sought to impose Greek faith and thought upon the Jews; they informed the authorities about Jews who were not sufficiently patriotic, who were not loyal to the king.

Exile, with all its degenerating influence, created the traitors. It was these assimilationists who invented the notion that Jews are not a people; or that they are merely a faith, a sect, without hopes of a future.

When the appeal for freedom was first sounded in Jewry, when the renaissance began to stir, the bitterest enemies of the rebirth were not their oppressors in their environment but the Jewish assimilationists who labelled the men of the reawakening and of Jewish self respect as chauvinists.

"The most recent demonstration came to light at the sessions of the International Socialist Bureau. As on many other levels, the Jewish people has difficulty to secure recognition from the international family of labour. At the International Workers Congress, all nationalities of working people are present except that of working Jews. There are many Jewish delegates at these gatherings, but they represent Germans, Czechs, Frenchmen, Russians and many other labour circles, but never Jewish groups. Even the Jewish labour organization, the Bund, had to secure admission masked as Russian Social Democrats.

"Fortunately several representatives of other nationalities came to see that Jewish workers ought to participate in the labour international and they won them a consultatory place in the workingmen's congress.

"A few months later the Jewish labour men appealed for Jewish national rights, but Jewish traitors, the Hellenists of this day, were able to betray their own nation and succeeded in expelling the Socialist Territorialists from the Congress.

"Will traitors always succeed? Our Chanukah reaffirms our conviction that theirs is not the final victory." ("Modern Jewish Traitors" in Adler, Dec. 10 and 20, 1908)

In this vein he wrote a series of articles such as his "Memory of the Festival of First Fruits" (Mar. 25, 1909), the bright and beautiful Shavuot day, "the time of the Granting of the Torah, of First Fruits, of Jewish labour, observed by Jews spread over the entire universe.

"The Torah festival survives as every Jew takes from his bookshelf his little Bible and is reminded of the flames and auto-da-fes through which his ancestors walked, Bible in hand, of the persecutions and tortures they endured for the sake of the Word - an experience which identifies him with the broad cultural and historical significance of the Torah festival.

"But there are few and meager marks of the Festival of First Fruits, of the farm worker, of the summer, of the free children of a nature people happily gathering the crops of their labour. The season itself breathes of new life and contentment; the trees are vested in green, the earth covered with grass, the fields carry green stalks and the orchards bloom and flower. From everywhere the tiny voices of bees sing in praise of creative nature; the rustling trees share secrets. The silent language of nature movements and the rippling waters of creeks - everyone calls out in their own voices to awaken to a new life and to be strengthened by the present time.

"Yet Shavuot is not a nature festival, for the birds and trees and lanes are alien, an alien summer, an alien May. The festival has lost its content. The ghetto is torn from nature. Its vessels do not send the blood of a healthy and free child of nature. The Jew does not toil the soil, he does not reap or gather the first fruits, and he does not sing of life and pleasure.

"Our ancestors feared that the poetic and beautiful seed of the Festival of Fruits might be lost. So they plucked one memorable little flower from the Jewish nation's garden. On its mouth we still feel the kiss of the sun of Bethlehem and he presented it to the children of the exile ghetto as the only memento of the Festival of First Fruits, in memory of the simple, carefree peasant life of those for whom it is a true, living festival. That flower was the Book of Ruth.

"It was from the time when the Judges judged, when the Jews had no kings, no soldiers, no impressive military parades, no sparkling uniforms, but many thousands of simple, young, naive, healthy, life-loving sons of peasants and daughters of villagers.

"But the wealthy aristocratic Elimeleh was not satisfied with such a life...

"For thousands of exiles, distant from the fields and farms of Bethlehem, confined in airless ghettos, the Jews read through the idyll of Beth Lehem and understand the happy nature of children's lives in the Holy Land.

"But a new time came, a new generation which is not content with remembering the Festival of First Fruits. It wants its full contents. Slowly the Jewish people is acquiring a land element that it had not had for thousands of years.

"A time will come when it is not a book out of fantasy, but out of our own fields and gardens will come the flowers from our homes for our true festival."

On Yom Kippur S. Schneour remembered the historical background of the Day of Atonement, of the Day of Judgment, of forgiveness, of pardon, of fasting.

"The day recalled one of the bloodiest chapters in Jewish exile annals, one of the most brutal forms of persecution, a treatment still being meted out to our people. A preliminary declaration at Kol Nidrei is a remarkable factual reminder of the state of our community when it 'permits itself to pray together with sinners.'

"What sinners? What a dispensation! Not to the sinners, but to the community. Why do observant Jews in their solemn assembly speak of 'sinners?'

"The pages of our history in the Middle Ages, when Jews everywhere were subjected to wholesale atrocities, and no one was secure of his life, there were Jews in Iberia, 'the forced ones' who, on the face of it accepted the Christian faith but secretly, in their hearts, remained true to their faith and their nation.

"They were not fortunate in their open daily life, hated as former Jews, despised as people yesterday persecuted; regarded with contempt by their brethren of yesterday, today traitors to their tradition, limbs torn from the body of Judaism, souls wandering in the Tohu Bohu. They constituted a rare tragedy in history, living shattered lives, publicly Christian, privately Jewish. More than once to restore their integrity, they surrendered to their worst enemy, the Inquisition.

"Yet there were moments when these Marranos felt freed from the Christian mantle, from the outer soul imposed upon them, complete, integral Jews - on the secret Yom Kippur, in basements, where the community poured out their souls in prayers, where it was permitted to pray with the sinners. Here they could, in their spirituality, forget their mighty burden, the bitterness, the regret. Their tears of centuries ago are shared to this day, during the present hour, by men at prayer who understand the historic background of the words of the ancient prayer and the meaning of the phrase, 'It is permitted to pray together with the sinners.'

"Memories are revived and even created in the synagogue during this day of prayer and recollection.

"Centuries have passed, forms have changed; the religion of Judaism is permitted. But it has remained despised. We still have Jews with splintered souls, torn limbs, half-Jews, quarter-Jews, Marranos in new garments.

"During this period of the Inquisition it was the religious issue that troubled society. Failing recognition of their faith, they became religious Marranos.

"In time religious freedom was won. Jews could follow the prescription of their law. They could in peace erect synagogues and schools, publish books and develop their religious literature.

"In the ghettos they were free to follow the rules of their faith, build synagogues, write Sephorim. But they missed the broad streets of society, the fresh air of nature, and a struggle developed in the heart of the Jew between the attraction of the Christian street and the love of the Jewish street. Many left the community and its nest, and again - we meet and the community grants them permission to pray together with the sinners.

"There began the conflict for the soul of the Jews, for the freedom of the Christians' street; on the other hand there was the fear of quitting the ghetto, of quitting the Jewish people.

"Many could not resist the temptation and fled to the busy, lively world of the many. There they developed a formula for the new type of Marrano, 'Be a Jew in your tent, in your home, and a man outside.'

"Again the divided, the severed soul and its painful dialogue. Now it is the Christian street that split his soul. The tragedy is the same. There is no love on the Christians' street. The old residents see him as an alien, new arrivals, the children of the ghetto, even as the permanent residents of the ghetto see the Jews from the street as traitors who had fled. Again the universe of confusion, lost souls torn from the earth, not flown to the sky.

"With each day of exile the more many-sided, multifarious and complex our Marrano existence becomes, the more fragmented our soul, the more segmented the ego.

"Now it is not Christianity that is imposed upon them, but it is their Jewishness that is forced upon them. They resent their fate as Jews, as having been born to Jewish parents who chose a style which stamps them eternally as Jews.

"They lack the courage to discard the burden. They are too cowardly to face the contempt of their brothers and they remain Jews in spite of their will.

"We have Marranos from all levels: pious Marranos, atheistic Marranos, revolutionary Marranos, socialist Marranos, artistic Marranos, literary Marranos, Christian Marranos and Jewish Marranos. 'It is permitted to pray with the sinners.'" ("Marranos of Old and Modern Marranos," in Adler, Yom Kippur, 1908)

Schneour focussed his Succot reflections on the book of Koheleth, traditionally read in public during the festival.

"'All is Vanity.' Can man be happy? What can make him happy? Questions as old as man, who has, from his beginning, wondered about eternal happiness, about complete satisfaction and about man's progress.

"If, in the course of his development, he has succeeded in clearing his path of many stumbling blocks, it is still not certain that his road has ultimately been opened.

"At one period he has sought happiness in the faith that eventually a supernatural power will comfort him with life after death, with a Gan Eden, with reward for his good deeds and with compensation for his sufferings.

"Though this satisfied the universe of his soul, it did not appease the world of his senses. His mind always searched, and ultimately destroyed what religion had built for man's happiness.

"Came the time of rationalism, when man weighed everything on the scale of cold reason. But there, too, no happiness. Dry reason did not satisfy the yearning soul, so man turned to other levels. Human history consists of this eternal quest for satisfaction.

"Some hoped to find it in material wealth, out of breath, losing sleep, forgetting food, adding penny to penny, dollar to dollar before assembling a great fortune, before each realized he was distant from his objective, that in his search for gold he had lost his powers, his lust for life and for pleasure; that he had become inanimate, a zombie walking among the deceased.

"Another sought his happiness in knowledge, wisdom; he studied and searched day and night, in books, old papers, scarce sheets, fine letters, leaving no problem untouched, no experience untold, no star unexplained, no pit unexplored in his quest for the annals of primitive man and his predecessors. Learning the secrets of the stars and of the oceans and the wildest corners of the earth he realized the depth of his dissatisfaction. There is no happiness in dead letters nor in dusty palimpsests. Wisdom only reveals regrets; knowledge reveals pain.

"So man tosses in realms. Even as he finds contentment, a new experience shatters his perspectives, a drop of poison in his chalice; finally death.

"This anticipation always embittered his most promising instants; the absence of eternity delimits all his perspectives. All flowers carry their own fading, threatening the lover, the scientist, the inventor, the poet in the glory of his spring, the capitalist in his counting house as he assembles his corporations.

"What is life in the face of anticipated death, after all the turns of the seasons, after love with its disappointments, after the awakenings from dreams, after the universal equality with death?

"In the face of this final defeat man becomes the sceptic, the pessimist who sees that all is worthless. Man is no more than animal; hope is disappointment, wealth is poverty. 'All is vanity.'

"Succot is when this becomes evident as naked trees, fallen leaves, faded flowers that had blossomed in the spring and bloomed in the summertime reveal the sorrow of the season, as birth becomes maturity and as living branches become dead, with inanimate wood rotting chemically into strata of fossil.

"Koheleth is wisdom signalling the response to the mystery of man, man's quest for happiness, for purpose, for the secret of death. He concludes that in spite of the finality of death, man must neglect nothing. Life consists of moments which are, therefore, infinitely precious. We must enjoy spring because it is followed by summer. We must enjoy love, for later comes disappointment and then age." (Also in Adler, Oct. 9, 1908)

## JEWISH CONTINUITY

This war upon Jewish assimilation and Jewish assimilationists exemplified, if it was not led, by Schneour and by his Poale Zion group, was a constant feature of the Canadian scene. It was the recurrent theme in all his writings.

Schneour surveyed the recent attempts to deal with the current problems facing the Jewish people. "There is no important community worker who has not worked on a plan to deal with these issues.

"At first these solutions sought to drag us out of our exile state through education and civilization - the keys to salvation. Jews flocked to schools and universities, but this only aroused the jealousy of the more highly trained professionals who saw us as powerful competitors.

"Some went further: Jews must assimilate totally, become Poles in Poland, Germans in Germany. But this soon proved futile. Those who were to assimilate found it impossible. Those who were to assimilate us were unwilling to have us. Some Jews broke into the society of the others, and Jewish society found itself impoverished by the loss of its educated men and women.

"New solutions were sought, more radical plans: in migration and agriculture. Baron de Hirsch colonized Jews in the Argentine; the Chovevei Zion in Palestine; there were the migrations to America. There is no corner of the world where Jews have not settled on the land, yet we are still in our exile. We have scattered our crumbled nation, and have created new exile centres with old exile problems.

"Zionism and Territorialism urged our intellectuals to rely on themselves and upon the entire people, to concentrate our efforts on a single, historic geography, to abolish the dispersion of exile. Life confirms the validity of the plans.

"The previous researches have not been without benefit. Education has enriched us; assimilation has Europeanized us; Zionism has strengthened our national awareness.

"It is strange that after these experiences some seventy Berliners have met to form a World Jewish Alliance, without a mandate from the world community, to improve the lot of Jewry in the lands of exile, to find new areas of migration, and to settle Jews there without aspiring to create an independent Jewish society there.

"This is a repetition of programs proven futile in the past, prepared by men who refuse to learn from recent and from old history." (Adler Nov. 3, 1908)

In his column, "On Persons and Events" Schneour discussed the Jewish leaders of Western Europe who denied the nationhood of the Jews, and saw Judaism only as a religion with a mission, a synagogue with a faith, and a function in the midst of humanity to teach justice, morality and honesty. Although rejecting the nature of their Jewish identity as leading to the dissipation of the people, he recognized the contribution which many of them have made to Jewish culture and to Jewish pride in keeping the group together in synagogues and their great academies.

"A useful contrast can be made with many alleged nationalists who never preach Jewish survival in Yiddish or Hebrew; who subscribe to the renaissance of our people solely to assist their poor brethren in Russia and Galicia, but neither in deed nor in word identify themselves with the Jewish people. They leave that for the oppressed Jews, and even call themselves only true citizens of Canada, Britain or the United States. Liberation of the Jews is a matter only for others. They reject the masses of Jews of whom they would be rid.

"At a recent assembly at the Baron de Hirsch Institute they asserted that Canadian Hebrews have no need of a Jewish homeland; immediate Zionism is for the Jews in the lands without freedom."

The Adler published an article on conversion which is a consequence of assimilation, especially in Europe. (Mar. 25, 1909)

"Not all conversion and assimilation are impelled by a search for economic improvement, but because Jews could not tolerate the hatred and contempt of society. The young fled the ghetto into the larger world like a released prisoner. The insult he suffered not only embittered but injured his national soul and produced contempt for himself and of his people.

"This condition persisted but also affected many who remained loyal to Judaism. When other ethnic minorities assimilate they do so without the deleterious consequences that we meet in the parallel Jewish circumstances.

"Assimilation did not proceed at the same rate everywhere. It made the greatest progress in France. The Jewish national idea hampered it in Austria and Germany through Zionism. In the United States social anti-Semitism will not hamper our economic condition. It is there even if to a lesser extent. But assimilation is nevertheless taking its toll and casts a shadow upon our national soul. Only our national identity can act as an anti-toxin. Only the development of our sense of communal self-respect can counter the effect of social anti-Semitism that it has exerted in Europe and might have in America."

An unsigned article about assimilationist Jews in Poland resounds Schneour's concerns about "Jews of the Mosaic faith" (Adler, Mar. 3, 1910), "Assimilation or Elimination."

"The international caste of 'Jews of the Mosaic faith' think of their citizenship being protected if religion is their sole bond to their Judaism; particularly in countries where religion has been weakened in the recent century; then there is little that distinguishes them from their fellow-citizens in such countries.

"Poland is a case in point. There the majority is Catholic and intensely so; a few are Protestant, of German roots, or are bound to the religion of alien Russia.

"Polish nationalists are close to the Catholic tradition. They are aware that the Jewish faith is the oldest of the great religions, and has penetrated deeply into the structure of the souls of the Jewish people, has marked the Jewish type irreversibly and has bound them all into unity. The populace of Poland has its share of free thinkers, but they remain deeply bound to their nation. They are not to be identified with free-thinking Jews as members of the future Polish society. A Jew, even if he is 'merely of the Mosaic faith,' will not be accepted into Polish citizenship. Such Jews forget the countless threads which bind a Jew

with his ancient religion and national civilization, in a comradeship which includes 'those of the Mosaic faith.'

"A restrained Polish nationalist like Dmowsky will not express all his sentiments regarding Jews, but his feelings about the future of the Jews in Poland are dominant.

"But their conclusion is clear: assimilate them or annihilate them, and assimilation is not possible. What Dmowsky does not utter, his echoes speak loudly. What the dignified Gazetta Warszawska does not write appears in the popular Djen: 'we must make it difficult for them to educate their children, to buy land and our other possessions. Cooperatives should be formed to acquire the needle industry from the internal enemy of our people. A manager of an estate found several Jews working there as he assumed his duties. He dismissed them, and drove them from their homes. Most of them have migrated to America. One is still wandering uselessly about the countryside.'

"A reader commended Djen. 'If the paper had appeared a decade earlier we would now have a hundred thousand fewer Jews in Warsaw and half a million fewer in the country.'

"Such is the shape of Polish nationalism today; this is what had happened to the nobility of Adam Mickiewicz, dangerous for the spiritual culture of Poland and for the structure of our people."

Schneour was not gross in his analyses of assimilation. He felt that many who called themselves anti-assimilationists, and even Zionists and nationalists, were not consistent, and others who labelled themselves anti-Zionists actually contributed richly to the nationalist cause. Some of them are "Jewish through and through; they received an excellent Jewish education, devote themselves to Jewish public service, advance Jewish learning. Yet they hold that Jews are not a nation but a religious sect with a religious mission to humanity.

"The classic example is Heinrich Graetz who believed that Jews remain and function because history has determined a religious function for them: monotheism, social justice, honesty. But in practice he was no assimilationist. He devoted his entire life to recording the history of the Jewish people, the most Jewish of all Jewish works. He opened the most intimate secrets of the Jewish past for future generations and gave them a key to Jewish future. He has contributed more to the awakening of Jewry and national rebirth than many leaders of our most passionate nationalists. Many who have not preached the peoplehood of Judaism have nevertheless laid bricks on bricks for the structure of our nation.

"Can we call such a man an assimilationist after he had contributed so much to the Jewish renaissance? He was not the only Jew who preached the disappearance of the people while building the splendid structure of Jewish culture. They were alien to us in word but warm Jews indeed, warm nationalists.

"This incorporates the contradiction of our exile, the tragic duplicity of our life: 'Jewish hearts with gentile heads.'" (Dec. 25, 1908)

ADLER COLUMNIST

In Montreal in 1907, soon after fleeing Russia, Schneour became a journalist and news editor for the Adler and contributed a weekly column, "Week In, Week Out."

"Now that Passover is coming, the poor of this city will rejoice: they will not be the only ones without bread."

"The committee for the winter carnival should not be seeking \$5,000 from the city for the ice palace. Instead they should rent it out for an ice cream parlour during the summer."

"The only goods sold retail, never wholesale, are votes."

"It is not all one world. In Russia the reactionary Black Hundreds are against revolution, but in America the blacks are for it."

"A wealthy but miserly town Jew refused to contribute to the orphanage in the capital on the ground that there is an orphanage in his own town. The president of this local orphanage heard of this and called on the wealthy man. The latter explained, 'I told them that since I do not give even to our own orphanage, they cannot expect me to donate to the institution in the capital.'"

"The Board of railway commissioners reports many fatalities among its passengers and employees. At this rate the time will come when would-be suicides will find their fate simple. They will purchase a railway ticket."

"A Montreal policeman arrested a thief who stole several bottles of whiskey. These are clever policemen; they capture what they are looking for."

"There was a disturbance in the Boston theatre where J.P. Adler played The Insane Man. He is a great artist and infected his audience."

"A Portuguese man is under arrest for extorting money from his countrymen on behalf of the Black Hand. But how many white hands are extorting how much from the residents of the city and go unpunished?"

"Charles Brown cheated the police. Just when he confessed to them that he had murdered his wife, he died in the station."

"Poor cows. The Shochtim have been on strike several days."

"Three hundred miners died in an explosion. But why the explosion? They were buried even before the event."

"The legislature is considering a measure to ban the customary treating friends with alcoholic drinks. But the lawmakers are not likely to adopt it. The law may lose them many voters."

"The legislature is considering abolishing the requirement that no one can be elected alderman who does not possess a home. No worry; after he is elected alderman, he will soon possess several homes."

"A very progressive bill would insist on a doctor's approval for a couple to marry. But if the doctor is married he would forbid the healthiest couple to be wedded."

"The American government proposes to stamp the face of Abraham Lincoln on its pennies. This is wise, for if it had decided to do so on the \$10 coins few Americans would become familiar with their great president."

"The builders' union in New York refused to admit gravediggers. The syndicate is afraid they would bury the union."

"Some Jews are not observant. They are unaware of the custom that drunkards are traditionally sober on Simchat Torah"

"The Jewish Forward wanted to ensure that their staff would not eat bread during the Passover. So they instituted a lockout in the face of a strike."

Schneour was shocked that Premier Taschereau set the price of a man's life, in his compensation bill at \$3,000. "The low price will be taken into account by management in considering the cost of repairing and installing machines and in improving noxious working conditions." (Mar. 26, 1909)

Schneour edited a series of Yiddish periodicals: the Pipernoter, the Canadian Rooster (1910-11), the Voehenblatt, the Kemfer Shtimme (1912-13), Dos Vort (1915), Dos Folk (1917).

He published a short poem in the Adler, "Prayer for a Poor Man" on October 27, 1908 and another poem on December 7, 1908 on a winter thaw, "Be not impressed if the sun sometimes shines on our world. It will soon disappear and leave an angry and cutting cold."

B.J. Goldstein dedicated his sketch, "Scab" in the Adler to Schneour (1909).

Schneour wrote an essay on the Italian Jewish scholar, "Caesar Lombroso on the Spiritual World" in the Adler of March 23, 1909.

"When several years ago Lombroso announced his belief in spirits, and in the possibility of evoking them and communicating with them on the reality of their other existence, it sounded as a true wonder."

Lombroso announced that a forthcoming book would record many cases he had examined of spiritual beings who moved solid objects, of haunted houses and of teeth work they accomplished in human mouths.

On December 11, 1908, the 300th birthday of John Milton, Schneour wrote a lengthy article on "A Poet, a Champion of Liberty who is celebrated wherever English is spoken, wherever the sense of right and of freedom are appreciated and wherever the beauty and nobility of thought are honoured..."

"After an adventurous lifetime of action and service in the cause of democracy and liberty, to which he deliberately sacrificed his eyesight, the blinded Milton was able to feel the shadows of divine wings touching his footsteps and he still envisioned the King in His splendour in the wondrous Beyond. His spirit wandered beyond the bounds of space and time as he pictured future generations and centuries in his imaginative Paradise Lost and Samson Agonistes."

In his columns "On Persons and Events" Schneour was sarcastic when he wrote, "The Hindus of British Columbia should be eternally grateful for the offer made them of free tickets to Honduras, free land and pocket money - an offer made by British Columbians if only they would pack up and leave Western Canada.

"But J.B. Harkin, the government agent appointed to arrange for the removal of a thousand B.C. Hindu residents to Latin America, quickly recognized that the project is impossible of execution, simply because the Hindus did not wish to move.

"The government commission wished to meet with the Hindus in their Fairview Temple. But the mass of the Asiatics were in the sanctum sanctorum upstairs and it was suggested that, if the commissioners climb up even without wearing shoes, a report would be sent to India that the Canadians had desecrated the holy room.

"Eventually the priest came down and told the commission that the men had no intention of removing from Canada. Mr. Harkin was not heard, and they nearly came to blows. But the entire plan has come to nought." (Adler, Dec. 9, 1908)

"Were the Hindus as homeless, as alien as the eternal wanderers as the Jews, such an offer might have been enthusiastically accepted, regardless of the motives behind it; for, in truth, it is unpleasant to remain in a country which is always seeking to be rid of you. But the Hindus feel they are as legitimate, as proper and as true British subjects as the rooted natives. Why should they wander to a land they know not?" (Dec. 18, 1908)

Schneour commented, "The Hindus were British subjects long before they left the Asian subcontinent, as are British Columbians, and are therefore as much at home and as fully entitled to all rights in the Canadian colony as are the other residents of Victoria.

"If they had been strangers, unprotected immigrants, such as Jews, they could unceremoniously be ordered to pack up. But they cannot be as rough with British subjects. When a government wishes to rid itself of them, it needs to put on a good face and pretend to do the Hindus a favour and take them to a land flowing with milk and honey, at no cost to the Asiatics."

The anti-Japanese and anti-Oriental movement in the United States frightened Schneour who feared that it could extend to a diminution of the privileges of citizenship in many directions. In Canada he noted "the deportation of the Adler family, including the Canadian-born infant, the wife weakened by giving birth and himself in chains - back to unwelcoming Roumania - all because they are Jews, the saddest, most despicable destination for an unfortunate child of exile." (Feb. 5, 1909)

"The Hindus sense their power as British subjects and they can afford to thank those who would be rid of them, but no thank you.

The Adler cited police justice on the streets of Montreal where a Jewish milkman, Mr. Cohen, was attacked on a Sunday morning by a street robber seeking his money. Cohen struck the man with his can and bloodied him. A policeman was informed of the incident and set forth in search of Mr. Cohen for delivering milk on Sundays. He was released on bail for the day. (Mar. 23, 1908)

Schneour proudly records the story of Jewish farming colonization in Canada from Ste. Sophie to Alberta, in the Adler of December 30, 1908.

Schneour observed the widespread movement for political reform in Canada as a protest against corruption in government and immorality in business and administration, not least in Montreal.

He noted in particular the work of young Mackenzie King, commissioner investigating the strike in the cotton industry, who had investigated the needle trade industries. In cotton, too, he found unconscionable wage and working conditions, where entire families working could not earn bread. Schneour noted that King recommended not only higher wages and better working conditions, but actually turning the workers into partners of the invested capital.

Recognizing fully that there is a great distance between a commissioner's recommendations and legislated reforms, Schneour appreciated the reform process and hailed the progressive forces for change and for legislated improvement. He noted in particular the classic religious movement for such alterations in the western world as the Protestant Reformation, which led to changes in life style, to the weakening of the chains of religion, the renaissance of nations, the development of art, of critical research, of unlimited knowledge.

"And speaking of Canadian Jews," Schneour wrote, "we may bring another factor into consideration. This week we will be observing our national festival of Chanukah even as Christians celebrate their Christmas.

"In Jewish society the reform movement is not a movement from evil to good, from conservative to improvement; rather to damaging, tasteless imitation of the alien, which does not lead to a renaissance of our own ancient universe; rather to a distancing from our own rich life, to the tearing of the bonds that unite us to each other and to the national heritage.

"Are these preachers of Zionism as a movement on behalf of their Russian brothers aware of how much more our children know of Christmas than they do of their own Chanukah? Are they aware that the entire Jewish youth in our country are more Christmas-gentile than Chanukah-Jews; all this because exile, even in lands of freedom, leads us to our national destruction? Do they appreciate that their type of Judaism is the product of the exile in which we must live, even in the lands of freedom?

"If they do not understand and feel all this, at least may they learn that their 'unfortunate brethren' reject their condescending Zionism, their assimilatory Zionism and the remedies they offer to others." (Dec. 25, 1908)

"It is not surprising that at the recent convention of Reform Jews we heard members admitting shame of being associated with the Jewish nation." (Jan. 29, 1909)

At this time B.G. Sack wrote on February 7, 1909 of the vicious nature of L'Action sociale in his report to the St. Petersburg Der Freund. "L'Action sociale was describing the Jews and other European immigrants as a menace to the country. L'Action had ascribed the growing crime rate in the cities on the continent as due to the waves of immigration. Reducing the number of newcomers to the country, many of them Jewish, would eliminate the violence and criminality.

## ON THE JEWISH CONDITION

Schneour wrote on "Heroes and the People." (Dec. 23, 1908),

"Opinions differ on the relations between the hero and the people. Some hold that the people must be prepared for the soul which is destined to appear in the popular hero. He, in turn, is the expression of the emotions and demands of the entire people; his soul is the assemblage of the sparks of the soul of the entire people; the great individual is the embodiment of the many, the microcosm of the totality.

"Others believe that the hero creates a new soul for the people, that he is distinguished from his environment by his awakening new demands, and that he is not merely a miniature of the great soul of his people but, on the contrary, that the influence and the sparks of his great and rich heroic soul enter into the people's soul. He need not express the ready demands of the people, for his heroic and prophetic vision create expectations all their own, open new heavens and a new thirst for gentler and nobler forms of living.

"Russian author Stepniak measures the soul-bonds between Garibaldi and the Italian people by the number of folk songs and folk tales that centre on his figure.

"Jewish life in exile is losing its spiritual talent by the constant diminution of the juices and springs of popular poetry. In the age of the militant Maccabees, the masses of our people created a vast volume of popular songs relating the acts of its heroes. Such tales as the lasting measure of oil, the heroic tales of warfare, the angels who fought for the Jews, and others in the apocrypha and later records were created in the rich soul of the masses of the period.

"Living under oppression and fighting for its existence, it was nevertheless concentrated on its land, leading its own life where it had created its own history. Its soul had not lost its riches and multiple dimensions, nor its ability to reveal itself in the heroic folk sagas and folk tales of the Jewish people.

"But in the unequal and constant battle of two thousand years of exile life the Jewish people are fatigued, and lose their spiritual ardour. We do not have any Jewish love songs, not even a folk tale or a threnody on the passing of Herzl, a tribute to his sacrifices for his people, an appreciation of his love of our people.

"The people has been too impoverished for this national hero to awaken the fantasy of the nation, not a people's flower from the nation without wreaths or laurel. Exile has chained the body and the spirit and the creativity of the individuals and of the national group."

Five years after the passing of the great inspirer of Zionism, Schneour wrote,

"If Herzl were alive today, with our anxiety in our current problems, in fear of our destruction, in our fading perspectives for our hopes and our future, he would lead us now to sense the Middle East awakening to freedom, with the opportunity for the Jew." (May 16, 1909)

"Those who call on Californians to wage war on the black and yellow races are themselves more yellow and blacker than the races they would fight," Schneour

wrote on February 5, 1909 in his "Week In Week Out" column. But he went further in his feature on "Personalities and Events."

"We already hear that the Japanese are not the only heathens targetted. Jews in the New World have already noted the special implications for them in discriminatory treatment of foreigners. During the recent economic crisis, newcomers such as Italians, who suffered unduly and who saved some money were able to return to their native lands, where they were welcome.

"But where was the Jew in trouble to go, the man with no native land? A classic instance of this exile homelessness occurred in Montreal a few days earlier, the case of the D. Adler family, the man who found himself without means of subsistence. His wife was in good health but weakened, having given birth just after arrival in Canada. He was chained and the family brutally deported.

"He will be forced to knock on the doors of his hated bloody Roumania where he has no rights and whence he had fled, the lowest, the most tragic stage to which exile can drive its child, an alien on the entire globe, the model Jewish wanderer on the bosom of the sea, of whom Morris Rosenfeld had written, 'wandering, scattered Jews, without friends or joy, without hope of fortune; solitary as stones. The earth is harsh to us and refuses us a spot. As we travel, no one awaits us. Do tell me, I plead, where are we bound?'"

"The Adler had written of the M. Roback case at Beauport outside Quebec City where the priest and the local anti-Semites conspired to drive out a local Jewish merchant, the brother of Abraham Roback, soon to become one of Harvard's great psychologists. (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 41)

"It is an incident which would be shocking even if it occurred in Russia. But in our Canada it passed without notice. The anti-Semites' version of the case was published in Action sociale catholique, the most important Quebec periodical and one of the largest in Canada.

"We had hoped that our Jewish storekeeper, who does business here, will leave our parish. His landlord had duly notified him that, as his lease was expiring in May, Mr. Roback cannot remain in the store. Our Jew set out on all roads to find some good souls who would provide him with refuge, but the answer was negative, no one would sell to him or rent to him. Bravo! Within a few days he would become the wandering Jew, driven from our doorstep. The Jew kept on searching for a spot to continue his prosperous business, but everyone continued to refuse him.

"But, woe and thrice woe, there appeared a virtuous man of mercy who was exploited by the Jew. We say exploited. He sought to act courageously, so he sold to our Jew a fine piece of land at the heart of our parish, and the Jew won his victory, again at our cost. What do you think of our parishioner?"

"Let us state initially that he acted anti-patriotically when he permitted him to settle among us, there, people who are forever outspoken enemies of Christianity. This man is the cause of Jews eventually occupying our parish. This must happen because selling him his land is to give the son of Israel a hold for Jews to trade, as everywhere, as our natural competitor.

"Hear, our fellow Canadians! We are always the same. We swallow each other, and we weep after we learn that we have committed an error.

"Fellow parishioners of Beauport! It is not too late. There are French storekeepers, our brethren. Let us encourage them. Let us follow the good people of St. Joseph de Beauce who have organized against the Jews. Their effort is now crowned with success.

"The fearful ones who never want to injure anyone, because it pays them; they argue that it is a crime against justice and against humanity to hurt anyone.

"You can tell them that friendship to fellow men does not mean shutting your eyes to your own welfare, failing to defend yourself against your sworn enemies. Justice means rendering to each man what is due him, but not to give to aliens monies which our own people need as badly as the strangers do, or even more urgently.

"Tell them that justice does not require them to sell land to a Jew who will utilize it for more intense and damaging competition.

"Can you imagine a fine Frenchman from Beauport planning to establish himself in an area entirely Jewish? Can you imagine the Jewish gentlemen who would depart from their Jewish friends to buy from him? You surely are not so naive as to say, "Of course."

"One more word: Please give copies of this statement to all your interested friends."

The Adler concluded that "Mr. Roback acted as a Jew should act, fearlessly and courageously. He will gain the respect of his Christian neighbours." (Mar. 3, 1910)

One major populist concern during the first half of the century was the manner in which the important Jewish institutions were carrying out their community responsibilities towards their wandering brethren. It was the source of conflict with the Baron de Hirsch Institute in Montreal and the basis for the formation of the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, etc.

A. Kassof, as one who has been working in shops owned by French Canadians, wrote to the Adler, "I could tell you much of the anti-Semitism there, with the term 'Juif' as despised as the term 'Zhid' was in Russia. The support of the editors is very helpful." (Feb. 5, 1909)

Another reader, David Schwartz, wrote that Jews, including a friend of his, prefer to employ non-Jews for such tasks as snow cleaning from the fronts of their stores. (Feb. 8, 1909)

Reading of the racist violence in France, Schneour related it to events in labour Montreal when eight Jewish applicants for jobs in such plants as the Dominion Car & Foundry Co. were attacked severely by French Canadian workers also seeking work.

The superintendent sought to exculpate himself: he bore no responsibility for the violence which he found, after careful research, was directed by native Canadians not only at Jews but at other immigrants as well, such as Poles, Chinese, Hindus and Italians. (Adler, Dec. 8, 1908)

"Does this make our lives easier, will we suffer less? Only assimilationists with gentile hearts and eyes blinded by exile can fail to see that we remain outsiders for the natives whose parents were also outsiders."

## SCHNEOUR AND THE INSTITUTE

In October 1908 Stanley Bero, a serious community worker with fifteen years of experience with the Industrial Removal Office in the United States, was named to the labour office of the Baron de Hirsch Institute.

With his familiarity with American Jewish institutions, Bero was able to indicate to the philanthropic Montreal community the benefits of uniting and intensifying the local charitable institutions. He cited the experience of Baltimore which united its charities in 1908 and nearly doubled their income within two years; Boston tripled its income.

Montreal, with a Jewish population of 35,000 has only 415 contributors in its Baron de Hirsch Institute. In 1908 it raised only \$4,500 for the needy who are assisted with \$1.00 weekly support. Two thirds of the members have been contributing \$5.00 annually for many years.

The Ladies Benevolent Society raised \$6,000 by their one bazaar, and the Ladies Hebrew Aid Society collects \$2,000 annually.

Bero urged the unification of Montreal Jewish charities in the interests of efficiency, "just as the merger of smaller businesses is proving economical."

Bero invited Schneour to open their series of lectures on various social topics. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series no. 43)

Schneour chose to speak of the movement set on foot by American philanthropist Jacob Schiff, by the Germans' Hilfsverein der deutsche Juden, and by Adolphe Cremieux of the Alliance universelle israélite to unite the Jewish communities of the world into a parliament of Jewry, based in Paris, to deal with common problems. The Anglo-Jewish Association rejected the proposal but suggested convening an ad hoc international Jewish Congress when important questions arise.

The Brussels Zionist Assembly in 1905 had proposed such an assembly, but met with no response. (New York, Tageblatt, July 19, 1908; Adler, Sept. 25, 1908)

This developed immediately after the second Socialist Territorialist convention where N. Syrkin raised the question of a Jewish parliament to organize the diaspora.

"Brainin, editor of the Adler, raised the question of a world congress of all groups in Judaism on June 6, 1912." (S. Belkin. Die Poale Zion Bavegung in Canada, 1904-20. 1956. Pp. 162-63)

He proposed a local federation of Jewish charities governed by delegates from constituent bodies meeting from time to time to develop common activities, while the component bodies continue their defined programs. (Adler, Feb. 5, 1909)

It was clear inside and outside the Institute that basic changes were required in the organization. The Adler had recommended in January 1909 the unification of the philanthropies in the interests of efficiency, and Stanley Bero wrote of the same plan. But clearly "the ambitions of officers, each devoted to a branch

of the community, long devoted to a particular institution, hamper the joinder of energies."

Unification under pressure can injure the entire society. This became apparent at the first gathering to deal with the crisis when the head of the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society, established as far back as 1877, stated it would never surrender its independence. Merger was out of the question.

A new Ladies Relief Society was organized on February 10, 1909. (Announcement in Adler, Feb. 5, 1909)

By February 1909 the representatives of the Institute, the Benevolent Society and the Ladies Hebrew Aid Society met for the purpose of arranging for cooperation rather than merger; i.e., for each group to work in its own area, while remaining in constant contact.

"The consolidation of all groups would have resulted in savings in salaries and expenses and better use of energies. But there would be a loss in dedication of personnel; the loss might be greater than the gains. It is a measure of order in communal management of the major philanthropic agents to act for the good of their beneficiaries.

"The present funds are for the 'general fund' of the Baron de Hirsch Institute: The funds of the ladies' groups exist, one for aid to widows, orphans and deserted wives and the other for the elderly and the sick.

"But the welfare problem was not resolved. For all this applies to only a part of community needs; yet many forms of need are entrenched in this city which are in a shameful condition.

"For instance, what of the persons not requiring bread for the day but a loan to become self-supporting? The society existing on paper for this purpose has no members or funds.

"With the present arrangements the community will be able to establish such needed institutions and, in general, could mobilize for more effective fundraising," ("The Union of Philanthropies," in Adler, Feb. 16, 1909)

The Adler supported Bero's suggestion for a unification of the Montreal charities. "The community is still small and its activists are struggling to maintain their charities; they will be glad of an opportunity to unite so that they might find their task easier.

"Indeed, Montreal has the advantage of having one institution much larger than all the others, and if the Baron de Hirsch Institute would agree to unite with the others, the smaller groups would not consider it a slight.

"The Institute possesses enough space to accommodate some of the other institutions, which would make possible a better administration, and the Institute would gain a class of members which it cannot reach today and would become a truly popular institution." (Jan. 20, 1909)

There was a movement in Montreal towards such a unifying Jewish Kehillah, a non political philanthropic organization in the anglophone sector parallel to the broader Congress movement in the Yiddish community. This west end activity

eventually culminated in the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies nearly a decade later, just before the broader Congress institution assumed shape in 1919.

After some time Schneour returned to the plan for a World Jewish Congress. He recalled that Herzl had stated during the debates on Uganda at the sixth Zionist Congress that if the project of the central African settlement were adopted by the Zionist movement, it would be necessary to convene a World Jewish Congress. (Interview by I. Medres, Adler, May 10, 1963)

The Adler reported a September meeting in Berlin where a permanent Arrangements Committee was named to create a centre for all independent Jewish colonization associations, with representatives of prominent Jews from various countries who appreciate this work.

"The condition of the Jews in Eastern Europe calls for the immediate establishment of such an institution. The revolution in Turkey lends support to such a project and renders it the duty of all responsible Jews to contribute to its work."

The Executive Committee met on October 27. The Jewish Colonization Association emphasized the importance of farm settlement of Eastern European Jews forced to emigrate by conditions in the lands of their homelands. (Nov. 23, 1908)

Schneour's lecture was introductory to the project of a Canadian Jewish Congress and a World Jewish Congress.

"We see the development of movement of unity of exile Jewry and of preparation for the liberation ideals of the Jewish people. Any such movement in the past had come about as a result of external propaganda, which could attract few select elements of Jewry. The masses of the depressed poor have remained indifferent to these lofty and distant objectives," Schneour wrote on March 21, 1909.

"What we are witnessing now is based on current needs, often working on the subconscious yet intelligent appreciation of events, perceived by victims of pogroms. These excesses would have been less costly in blood if the Jewish self-defence had not been the affair of a few individuals or, at best, small parties, but the cause of the entire Jewish people, of a vast Jewish association. The migrant who had to move under frightful conditions had to learn that he need not have suffered, need not have been so exploited if the Jewish migration had been defended by an organized Jewish nation.

"The American Jew had to conclude that his own condition would be better and his honour not trodden under the feet of every anti-Semitic official, every priest or journalist, if a powerful, well-organized community spoke up for Jewry instead of a fragmented mass. Every exile Jew realizes that as an individual he is a nullity.

"Without external agitation but under the pressure of life, the Jews of varying groups, rites and parties, have begun deliberately or spontaneously to unite in the common cause of the Jewish interests.

"So even in our condition of crisis, and of despair, we require an activity of hope. We see the masses of our people begin to cohere under the standard of unity. We note that the association to regulate Jewish migration is attracting

various congregations, lodges, unions, warring parties and individuals as distant from each other as east and west.

"As we see it, the day is not distant when in every community united Jewish institutions will be formed into national federations and all will cooperate in a mighty Jewish institution which will incorporate the prophecy of Ezekiel, the ingathering of the dead bones into a vivified noble person with movement and with a soul."

This is the first recorded debate in North America about representative Jewish institution, a Canadian debate which resulted, after a decade of conflict, in the convening of the short-lived Canadian Jewish Congress in 1919 and fifteen years later of the reconvened and permanent Canadian Jewish Congress.

## PENURY

The penury of immigrants in Montreal was scandalous, and there was but one voice to protest and to attempt to arouse some correction, even if in vain.

On June 14, 1908 principal Gordon reported to the Baron de Hirsch Institute School Committee that some of its children were badly in need of shoes. The purchase was ordered.

In November teacher A. Feigelson submitted a list of children absent from school for lack of suitable clothing and shoes. The Ladies Benevolent Society was asked to care for the girls and the Institute ordered clothing and footwear.

The Adler inquired from the philanthropy that had assumed responsibility for the relief of the needy, about such cases as highlighted by the Adler family in January 1909.

On January 28, 1909 immigration inspectors came to the home of shoemaker D. Adler, took him in chains under arrest, into an ambulance, and placed his sick wife in the dominion immigration hospital, for deportation.

Neighbours told reporters that responsibility for the brutal acts lay with the Baron de Hirsch Institute which, they said, had led the government to deport the family not yet two years in the country; Mr. Adler was unable to earn a living and had become a public charge.

The Institute declared that Adler had been receiving \$4 each week from them when they received a letter from government that Adler had applied for assistance to them. The authorities wrote again inquiring whether it could increase its assistance as \$4 was not sufficient for the family. The Jewish body replied that it had no further funds to allocate to the case. The government requested the Institute to inform Adler to prepare for deportation as a public charge.

The Institute informed Adler of all the circumstances and suggested that he be not stubborn. Otherwise he would be removed from Canada by force and taken on a good vessel to his home town; pocket money would be provided by the Jewish group. (Adler, Jan. 28, 1909)

The Adler reported on March 9, 1909 that the Institute had a number of applicants arrested for disturbing its offices.

Young Moses Druker, one of those protesters, accused Institute staff of recording that each had been granted \$3 when, in fact, he was given only \$1. Druker was arrested and sentenced to six weeks in jail. (Adler, March 9, 1909)

Police were called and one was accused of smoking in the room. The man denied the accusation explaining he had never smoked in his life.

Moses Druker was among those who had been thus arrested and tried on March 8, 1909. He was sentenced to six weeks imprisonment, being unable to pay the \$6 fine.

In fact the Institute during those years was notorious for its disrespectful treatment of its applicants. This is documented in the writings of Konrad Bercovici. The essays of Institute director S. Bero do not contradict these allegations about this state of affairs, truly Victorian.

The Adler, with limited resources, investigated the working of the Institute, the measure of assistance it gave to applicants and the treatment of these applicants at the hands of its personnel. It was an area of investigative journalism that it followed for a number of years, even as it questioned the role of the Institute in the community.

The Adler's was a far-reaching democratic social and political program on behalf of the Canadian immigrant society for three decades, until the arrival of Samuel Bronfman in the presidency of the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1938.

The report of the Institute of February 1909 shows cash allowances for 238 families (1156 souls), \$2,051; 68 widows (292 souls), \$346; 12 tuberculous (42 souls) in Ste Agathe des Monts and 15 in Montreal (63 souls), \$436; coal to 300 families (1235 souls), \$1207; medicine and physicians' services to 382 patients in the Institute and 39 at home, \$148. Totalling \$4187.

Stanley Bero, manager of the Baron de Hirsch Institute, responded clearly,

"The Institute does not have sufficient funds to meet the needs. Recently we distributed to well-to-do citizens hundreds of copies of an appeal; the entire membership of 400 uptown responded with several hundred dollars, this from citizens each of whom can contribute \$3,000, yet they remitted less than \$10 each when they sent anything, and the lower town sent \$200.

"We are therefore forced to refuse many deserving cases. We are therefore also forced to select from the applicants. The hungry people cannot understand. But what can we do? This week three tuberculous patients whom we had aided passed away, leaving families behind. Do we cut them off to help a healthy young man who calls upon us?

"Last Friday we were out of funds, and we so informed the waiting men and women. We were insulted by the crowd, a condition which we would not tolerate in private life. We had to take steps to prevent a more scandalous condition." (Adler, March 12, 1909)

The Adler nevertheless insisted, in its editorial on "Who is Guilty?" that "in any conflict the weaker party is in the right. It is the suffering needy who are justified. With very few exceptions they are decent, respectable, embittered and reluctant to put out their hands because they are in desperate straits, humiliated, in quest of a pittance; they are not only refused, but are also insulted. When we deal with living beings asking for assistance we must enter into their plight. We must at least put ourselves in their condition, ameliorate their pain with an understanding word. It is much to expect from persons who deal every day with other people's problems. It is expecting much from the employees of the Institute."

On the other hand, officers of the philanthropy complained about public indifference to the needs of the poor. "Only 400 of the community population of 30,000 are members; not one of them contributes \$1000, and only several gifts run into the hundreds; 13 citizens contributed \$50 and 15 the sum of \$25;

most give \$5 or \$10. The Jewish Colonization Association gives the Institute a small subsidy, but all this income does not meet a fraction of the requests.

"Some members of the public are under the impression that we have treasures which we are keeping for ourselves, and we are threatened with scandal. We, too, are but human, and sometimes we lose our tempers, we admit.

"Above all this should be borne in mind by the contributors to philanthropies: they must be informed that they are dealing with citizens who are not bereft of pride and who are pained by indifference. The contributors to the Institute must realize that scandals can be averted only by their generosity." (Feb. 21, 1909)

The Institute invited the officers of all Jewish institutions to a conference on March 15, 1909 for emergency action.

"Dozens of families apply to us each day for relief of indescribable need. The Institute spends up to \$100 a week on this program, but this is but a drop in the sea of misery, of hunger and cold." (Adler, Mar. 12, 1909)

"This is the first appeal of the Institute to the broad Jewish community for aid and counsel. It is a request that should not be denied. We are aware that there is some bitterness and criticism of the administration of the Institute, some of it possibly justified. But this should keep no one from the conference, from the opportunity to improve matters," the Adler wrote on March 14, 1909.

"The Institute cannot meet its obligations at this critical time. Scandals and arrests come about because there is no way of satisfying the needy. You must come to hear the explanations of the Institute and to find ways to eliminate the scandals. The Institute is inviting you to express your thoughts and to resolve the social problems."

The first conference met on Sunday noon in the Baron de Hirsch Institute in the presence of a variety of representatives of popular groups, synagogues, lodges and radical organizations, under the presidency of Lyon Cohen who delineated the urgent needs of those who appeal to the Institute and the deficit of the philanthropy. The conference added four members from among the delegates to sit on the relief committee which distributes grants to applicants.

The Adler confirmed in its editorial of March 17 ("The Institute and the People") that "many had believed that the philanthropy had considerable funds from the Baron de Hirsch at its disposal.

"Come without prejudice; without our participation the Institute cannot fight poverty in the face of general indifference to the suffering of their brethren. Boycotting the conference will only intensify the crisis and can lead to the closure of the Institute.

"The need is so great that the Institute must appeal to the men of downtown. We should all join and correct what needs to be corrected, according to our understanding."

The March emergency conference appealed to downtown moral support and named four neutral persons from the immigrant society to witness the distribution of aid allotments and working of the Institute.

One of them, M. Wilensky, wrote on March 29, 1909 that he "had criticized the Institute as heartless, but now he realizes that to do their job effectively they would need to be without hearts or conscience, for to hear each of the tragic histories, to see the tears, the insults and complaints in silence would end the patience of the strongest man."

### THE SAD END OF S. SCHNEOUR

Schneour was stricken in 1926 in the course of an address on Palestine. For thirty-two years he survived in a hospital, a forgotten worker for his society, until his passing in 1958.

On March 2, 1958 the Adler remembered "the man forgotten for three decades who, in his prime, was so dynamic and so witty in his oratory and in his writing and so influential in public affairs."

## SECULAR SCHOOLING

With all the dedication that inspired the Orthodox schools in the community, there were ills there that led other citizens to search for alternatives.

There was another Jewry in Canada beside the conserving community, with another self-definition: also rooted in Eastern Europe, also Yiddish, but radically different from ancient Shtetl synagogue and Yeshivah from which it stemmed and from which it departed half a century ago, yet taking with it the heart and treasure of Judaism - its language, history, literature, nationalism, loyalty, an appreciation of its religious tradition and its dedication to the survival of the nation and its people

This secular community was oriented on the Hebrew civilization dating from the Bible and Abraham to the present time, yet sensitive to the world of the present time and to future time, with the intention of surviving in the meaningful present for the shaping of the future.

From this perspective this Jewry born in Europe rejected ancient traditions, including the creed and customs. It developed a gallery of leaders, thinkers and prophets and created a new Judaism - nationalistic, profound, militant - with a host of new institutions, ideals, programs. Among its decisions was to leave Europe for the New World where it built the Jewish society of the New World, and for the Holy Land where it built the Jewish State of Israel.

These were the Jews who came to Canada, and this was their new community. It is a moot question: how many, numerically, of those who came to Montreal were secularists, revolutionaries and how many were religious of the old tradition, who lived their old life here in synagogues, with their rabbis, seeking to perpetuate ancient European Jewry? This is a story all its own.

In Montreal the community of the men of the Adler were the architects of the new Jewish world, with their press, unions, literature, philosophic concerns, Zionism, community organizational loyalties and, now, education.

As the spokesman for these options at the time, Shloimeh Wiseman, recalled,

"Before the outbreak of the First War, Montreal had several Talmud Torahs, each following the outdated concepts of parent groups. There were also many old fashioned private Chadorim, and even more peddler Melamdim, each of many whom met the modest demands for Jewish education in his own primitive way.

"The Hebrew language was somewhat taught in a very unpaedagogical manner which could evoke no love from the children. Yiddish was criminally neglected. The officers and the teachers considered the language a jargon, or spoke it ungrammatically themselves.

"Educating girls was considered unnecessary." ("On the History of the Jewish People's Schools in Montreal" in Folks Shulen Buch, issued on the Fiftieth anniversary of the Schools, 1929. P.8)

Dr. S. Gold long and vividly remembered exactly the spirit and the intentions of "the Montreal immigrants from Shtetlach from Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine,

Roumania and Galicia at the beginning of the century, students from Chadorim, Yeshivot and, in some cases, from the 'reformed Chadorim,' who arrived with great hopes. For this was the age of promise reigning in the small towns whose sense of a new age coming was dominant - of Zionism, nationalism, socialism, Yiddish, freedom and liberty.

"In the dark dusty shops, where lights burned all day, in a mishmash of bundles, cases, machines and lamps, men were chained to the electric sewing machines. A thin young lad was sitting at such a machine, pressing a button which started the motor with a lightning screech; another press, another screech all day long, from dark to dark. The automat does not call upon the mind which is somewhere far away. Between the near past and the vague future, there is a kaleidoscope of melodies and images: 'Let us carry the banner and flag to Zion. In Odessa there is great tumult; the sisters and the brothers are in revolt, and you are leaving', as a long day passes.

"In a small back room on St. Dominique St., on Clark or on Vitre St. the purchased supper is on the table, a book or a holy volume are at the side, a tiny sacred spot on a busy street, a poor Sabbath in a poor week. The lost souls, curiously meet, recognize each other in silence and approach in the cutting room, at the press iron.

"The foreman plays a part in the recognition, for he sees the youth whose mind is not on the machine and foresees that 'no good will come of him,' and the judgment spreads. In the course of time he is proven right." ("Lehrer Noveck," in Adler, Sept. 7, 1952)

J. Solomon, the intellectual leader and teacher of the Montreal Poale Zion group, describes the political climate of the Jewish immigrant society of 1904 when he arrived in Montreal. There were three Zionist groups somewhat active - Clarence I. de Sola's Agudath Zion, the Bnai Zion Kadimah and the Dorshai Zion. Sack adds three smaller groups: the second Dorshai Zion, no. 2, an orthodox group; Bnot Zion, Bnoth Zion Kadimah. But they were little known among the new arrivals. On the other hand there were many "Genosse" groups of Socialists who flooded the community with pamphlets, periodicals, leaflets, invitations to well-attended lectures and debates with free admission on such topics as individualism, cosmopolitanism and other such solutions of world problems - but never on the Jewish problems.

Not for D.H. Lazarus, Poale Zionist activist, and not for the hundreds of his modern-thinking associates, not for them the Cheder and the Melamed, the religious monopoly of curriculum, the untrained teachers, the absence of world Jewish history, of Yiddish or spoken Hebrew, of paedagogy, of modern Jewish problems, of the newly formed Jewish communities and institutions, of the Holy Land, of current Hebrew and Yiddish literature and of girls and women on the education agenda.

He remembered the origin of modern Jewish schooling in 1910,

"We were not motivated to introduce socialism or to spread atheism or agnosticism but to correct the demoralizing non-education represented by Barney the Melamed, to prevent our children from being ravaged by ignorance of Judaism.

"We were influenced by the great author and thinker Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky who called for modern secular education. His teachings were heeded by many of the

new immigrants who possessed substantial worldly knowledge; some of them had graduated from Hebrew high schools or had even graduated from teachers' seminaries. Others bore high ideals of the Jewish renaissance."

A movement of rather more militant highly secularized dissatisfied workers arrived in Canada during the first decade of this century, often through London. During several years there they had come under the influence of such anarchistic teachers, agitators and editors as Rudolf Rocker, a German who attached himself to the Jewish workers, had learned Yiddish and became a distinguished figure in this literature.

Wolf Chaitman narrated the pre-history of the educational issues of the time in American Jewry. Himself a participant in the Montreal decisions and their implementation with the setting up of the first Jewish schools, he was a teacher for fifty years in those progressive, national Jewish schools.

The dominant Yehudim seemed to be concerned only with assimilating the immigrants. One of their spokesmen stated publicly, "If Dr. Zhitlowsky proposes to preach Yiddish and Jewish nationalism here we ought to fight him. We might do well to listen to those who would diminish Jewish immigration to America."

Yiddish playwright Jacob Gordin foresaw the disappearance of Yiddish on the continent within fifteen years, "no great loss." This was the position of the socialist assimilators. Jewish schools were a reactionary heresy in their eyes. Jewish education meant the separation of Jews from progressive humanity, a wall between Jews and the non-Jewish world.

As Zhitlowsky formulated it, "In the final analysis the struggle against assimilation is the battle for the soul of the Jewish child. Should his pure innocent soul belong to the Jewish people and to its future or to assimilation, the idol that gives birth to half-beings, half Jews, half gentiles, half androgines, neither to God nor to mankind? Those who win the child win the future."

The Poale Zion and the Socialist Territorialists joined Dr. Zhitlowsky in his campaign against the assimilation of Jews in America, but even many of them were doubtful of the practical possibility of creating a Jewish national progressive life in the lands of exile. Only members of a Serpist Group, concentrating about the Dos Naye Lebn, took up the banner of Jewish national radical schools.

Within the eclectic Poale Zion there was a pervasive division between those who gave primacy, in the allocation of their limited resources, to the upbuilding of their Jewish labour society in Palestine and those who would make space also for a creative new Jewish life in the lands of exile, for such programs as revolutionary Jewish education. This was, to a large extent, also the basis of the difference between the Poale Zion and the Socialist Territorialists. Encouraged by Zhitlowsky, Zuker and Schneour began negotiations in Montreal for the union of the two organizations months before the Chicago unification convention.

In this light a conference took place at the end of 1908 for a joinder of these two parties. Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky had formulated a concrete program for the Poale Zion and the Socialist Territorialists for common activities in Palestine and in the lands of the Jewish diaspora.

H. Noveck, "one of those who stood at the cradle of the secular Jewish school movement and who helped found and lead the present Montreal Peretz School which as far back as 1916-19 was the largest secular Jewish school on the American continent with over 600 pupils under one roof," contributed an article to the Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky Jubilee Book on his 70th Birthday - "Battles for the Secular Yiddish School" in New York (Pp. 44-47),

"As early as spring, 1909 Zhitlowsky formulated in the first issues of his Dos Naye Lebn a plan for founding Yiddish socialist schools for the young generation in America. From the beginning there was a distinct division in the young movement in favour of the plan. Those impelled by the Poale Zion emphasized the Zionist and nationalist content, with Hebrew as a compulsory subject; among these, Hebrew outweighed Yiddish.

"On the other hand, there were some, also among the Poale Zion, who were called 'pure Zhitlowskyites' who accepted the Czernowitz program which declared Yiddish as the national language of the Jewish people, who have no 'romantic longings' for Hebrew and would not burden the curriculum with a second language. The schools led by this faction naturally laid much stress on the socialist aspect of education and, in the place of Zionism and even Poale Zionism, sought to acquaint their pupils with the present folk lore and the folk life of the Jewish people.

"These differentiations led to splits in these schools.

"Three Canadian cities: Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg, and Chicago were the fortresses of the purely Yiddishist, Zhitlowskian tendency. The debates were later transmitted to New York and other centres. For decades these Canadian centres remained 'Zhitlowsky cities' and the local Peretz schools followed the line which their founders, young Zhitlowskyites, activists, leaders and teachers from the ideological environment of his Dos Naye Lebn, established. These young enthusiasts had been captured by his personality and his ideas. They were the new intellectuals who arose in the Russian Revolution of 1905 and had brought fresh youthful idealism, a thirst for learning, a natural bond to the Jewish people and the creativity of its new culture.

"Zhitlowsky was the rebbe whose slogans they followed, and it was by the 'rebbe's power' that they set to founding the new schools."

Chaitman records that the debate on education of Jewish children in Yiddish and in Hebrew which took place at the Montreal convention of 1910 was not a spontaneous event. When Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky convened a special conference on this subject in the winter of 1908-09 the delegates who later in 1910 adopted this program, rejected it as an element of normal, progressive Jewish life in the lands of exile.

At a Poale Zion meet in Chicago in 1909 the party resolved to combat assimilation and to attempt to maintain Jewish culture, utilising Hebrew and Yiddish in this struggle.

The formation of the Farband Labour Zionist Order at this time furthered the educational project, as its members had shown an interest from the beginning in establishing such schools.

Noveck records Zhitlowsky's popularity in the immigrant society. His 25th literary jubilee was celebrated in 1912, with Montreal as the centre of the

worldwide observances. At the height of the event, when he was about to respond to the messages, he burst out in uncontrollable tears.

During one such festive night his disciples arranged for a sleigh party on Mount Royal.

"Drops of whiskey were available for the drivers as well, and the snow-bedecked sleepy Montreal streets heard folk songs and Chasidic melodies. At the top of the mountain all descended to dance Chasidic Hopkas. The Christian drivers forgot their concealed anti-Semitism and joined 'the Rebbe' in the dance."

Eventually at a conference in Chicago the Poale Zion adopted the joint program of combatting assimilation and advancing the cultural condition of exile Jewry in both Yiddish and Hebrew. At this time, too, the new Labour Zionists organized the Jewish National Workers Alliance for the wider advancement of this program in Palestine and in the lands of exile. The first Jewish national radical school was founded in New York in 1910. The following year it had 85 pupils. ("The Birth of the I.L. Peretz Schools" in Adler, Dec. 26, 1975)

## LABOUR FOR SCHOOLS

The Adler was proud to have been among the first in America to propose modern schooling for Jewish children, in this case essentially Jewish day schools such as were already in existence in England. As their proponents saw the Free School scheme, they mainly avoided the need for Jewish children to attend Jewish schools in the later afternoons, when they were tired and unreceptive after a full day of public schooling.

Long after the Adler had made its proposal, a Baltimore reader repeated the same plan in the New York Tageblatt, reaffirming that "under existing conditions the children cannot learn Jewish subjects. They remain alien to the culture of their people, estranged from all Jewish customs and values and learn only the bad in Americanism. The fault lies with the Jewish community, a lasting badge of shame on our history in this land."

The historians of the Montreal I.L. Peretz Schools of 1938 have been able to reconstruct the names of the participants in the earliest discussion groups in private homes which considered setting up a school in the spirit of the Poale Zion and the Socialist Territorialists; several anarchists soon joined them. Before they assumed organized form they were already under the influence of Dr. C. Zhitlowsky's Dos Naye Lebn.

"We regarded Zhitlowsky as a prophet," S. Bercovitch later remembered. "We did not merely read his works; we studied them. We read each of them alone, then we read them together, aloud, in my home on Friday evenings: H. Noveck, I. Slobodsky, E. Cornberger and W. Chaitman, commenting on each of his words and finding subtle intentions in them. Our favoured activity was arranging his lecture visits to Montreal.

"Of course, it was Zhitlowsky who sparked our interest in a school through his writings, his lectures. Whenever he visited us, which was frequently, he would demand action from us. I remember that during one such gathering I argued that we had no teachers. He insisted, 'If you have no teachers, you, Noveck and Slobodsky become teachers. Teaching does not fall from heaven.'"

The project was supported by J.L. Malamuth and Pruzhansky who had followed the progress of the school movement in New York and Toronto.

These pioneers who investigated the practical possibilities of such schools and the principles which would underlie them included S. Bercovitch, M. Blechman, the Belesman sisters, N. and I. Cheifetz, W. Chaitman, J.L. Malamuth, H. Noveck, I. Slobodsky, D. Serkin, B.H. Small, A. Parnas, I. Pruzhansky, L. Zuker, Kamarov, E. Cornberger and S. Schneour.

Months later they were joined by I. Ortenberg, W. Baranovsky, T. Geller, N. Flynn, C. Jacobs, H. Hershman, M. Trossman, B. Lachovitzky, H. Finkelstein, H.M. and Moses Caiserman, I. Rich, M. Shmuelson, the Belesman family, A. Welicovitch, Breineh Rudy, L. Zuker, J. Abel, Cory Vital, N. Avrutick, J. Rosemarin and Solomon and Abraham Schneider - a directory of the cultural activists of the first decades of the immigrant society. (The I.L. Peretz School Book, issued on the 25th Jubilee of the school, May 29, 1938, edited by Jacob Zipper)

Ernest Cornberger, of assimilated Viennese parents, had come in contact with Ber Borochoy and Solomon Kaplansky, founders of Poale Zionism, during his Austrian student period and became a committed Zionist socialist. He arrived in Montreal in 1912 and became a leading member of the movement and its educational program.

There is a record of his attendance at a public meeting in the Market Place across from the Monument National which was addressed by A. St. Martin. When a member of the audience confused the socialist orator with his questions, Cornberger volunteered to reply in perfect English.

During the negotiations for the purchase of the Guilbault property it turned out that the vendor, a man from Paris could speak only French. Cornberger conducted the talks; the Frenchman later conceded that he had not heard French so spoken since he had left his native land. Cornberger had difficulty learning Yiddish; his German kept interfering.

In 1917 he joined the Jewish Legion to serve in Palestine.

All these names recur in the columns of the early Adler and in the minutes, archives and histories of the Labour Zionist movement.

During the first planning days of the Jewish secular schools, Slobodsky began experimenting by assembling some Jewish children on the mountain, reading them Jewish legends and playing with them. He reported his experiences to the men and women in the group and even blamed them for not following his procedure.

Years later one of the principal shapers of the school system, Solomon Bercovitch, writing from Detroit, admitted that "in the early days many of us did not appreciate the great obligation which we were assuming; we could not appreciate the great potential which such a school possessed. We did not even dream of the colossal factor it would soon constitute in our lives, that Yiddish schools would so quickly spread over the entire world. We certainly did not estimate the network of paedagogical and national issues involved in Yiddish language schools. I ask whether, if we had foreseen a tenth of the school problems which we understand today, we would have had the courage to become teachers and activists in Yiddish schooling. This was as true in Montreal as in other centres. Today we should thank God for our having been young and naive enough to assume a task beyond our powers. As I look back I begin to understand the great force of faith and the force of the human will.

"In Montreal we removed the few books which the Poale Zion had placed in the Baron de Hirsch Institute, collected several hundred more volumes from citizens in the community, rented two rooms above Hershman's book store, sponsored concerts and maintained a public library for quite a few months. Later we called a conference of various organizations and set on foot the Jewish Public Library."

"In Montreal the Baron de Hirsch would be the natural initiator for our school scheme," the Adler reiterated on October 30, 1911. "If we could combine the public school with the Cheder, our children would receive a normal education and would know and love the Jewish subjects. Money would become available if we could dispose of our share of Protestant taxes."

The general sentiment in the immigrant society is reflected in a letter to the editor of the Adler on October 16, 1911 which had urged the "establishment of national people's schools for the sound education of our children.

"But are there such schools and does their experience indicate what they can accomplish? Where are the text books, and where is the requisite methodology?"

"As a father I admit that until recently I had given little attention to Jewish issues. But my children are growing and I am awakening to our condition in the family, to the great differences between them and me. I am a radical and my children are concerned only with ball games and races. Besides the younger child is constantly peppering me with questions: why does the class study the New Testament and I do not? What is the difference between a Jew and a Christian? Why did Johnny call me a sheenie?"

"I must admit my answers do not satisfy him. I do not wish to implant radical ideas in him and embitter his life with class struggle. I am beginning to understand that before we liberate all the peoples we must become at least as free as they are. I do not want my children to be alienated from me."

The Adler journalist-storyteller J.L. Malamuth responded from the editor's chair,

"There are Jewish national schools in New York. They are new but they are proving themselves. There are classes in reading and writing, the people's history and the people's poetry and popular songs. The children are devoted, interested and promising.

"There are text books: Zalmen Reizen's anthology in four volumes and other text books of literature and Bible and Talmud tales. There are selections from children's stories by Sholom Aleichem, Abraham Reizen, Sholom Asch, and Montrealer M. Shmuelson.

"If more schools were set up elsewhere we would create a children's literature, if we only had who to write for. Besides, the world never stopped working for an ideal just because it was not convinced that it will be easily realized. It only depends on how much energy and inspiration is devoted to the ideal.

"As a radical I appeal to you, and to others who feel as you feel: look at things as you really see them, muster courage and admit error. The time has come to stop dreaming of heaven and neglecting the earth, anticipating paradise tomorrow while we live in hell on earth.

"If we expect a tomorrow we must work for it today. If you feel your children need such schools, build them. Talk to your friends, your neighbours, convince them, bring it before your organization, your union. You will find colleagues.

"The leaders of the schools in New York will help you; the intellectuals in your community will hear you out and will understand you."

This education movement was a true revolution whose consequences extended throughout Jewry, far beyond the radical society which generated it and far beyond the Hebrew and Yiddish ideologies at its roots. The lives of children have been revolutionized, and even more the course of their families; all this even though the programs of the founders have not all been realized.

With a poet's intuition Jacob Isaac Segal recognized the linguistic crisis,

"Nowhere like in America did Jews experience as painful a tragedy as the spiritual relationship of children and parents.

"In the past, traditional education which occupied the seat of honour in Jewish life was directed at enabling the child to pass from Cheder to the Beth Midrash and Yeshivah. In those days such hopes were consonant with the condition of life. But the alteration in living conditions and the development of the spiritual state of Jewish society have necessitated a new form of education suitable for modern times. It had to develop.

"Most Jewish parents here were born in Europe. They have brought the Yiddish language with them, a specific culture, a social orientation and customs particular to the masses of Jews.

"By teaching Hebrew and Yiddish and their literature, the Jewish schools have created the firmest bridge for communality. Familiarity with Jewish life in various lands and at various periods opened new worlds, for there their parents and ancestors had lived, yet important epochs of remote and of immediate Jewish life are related to the background of our literature.

"The teaching of Hebrew, emphasized in the curriculum promoted by the Poale Zion in their schools, are binding the Jewish generations to the wells of ancient Jewish literature which are inalienable from our contemporary spirituality. Hebrew is our bond with the rising community in the Holy Land, created on fresh foundations, rooted in the world Judaism which is shaping our life today.

"Our schools are not confined to literature and language. They properly emphasize studies of the social development of our time which are so misrepresented in government public schools. This needs correction in schools shaped by Jewish workers. Discussion of current events will familiarize pupils with labour conditions, the operations of capital, the dangers of imperialist reaction, war and all that is vivid and creative for the life of people.

"It is raising the appreciation by Jewish children of the Jewish artists and of those who are founding the spiritual resources of our national and cultural life. A precious foundation has been laid in America and elsewhere for Jewish education."

## THE CONVENTION

October 1910 marked a great date in Canadian - even North American - Jewry: the fifth continental convention of the Poale Zion gathered in Montreal, for the first time in Canada. Assembled by the local committee headed by Schneour, it adopted a program for modern education of Jewish children and, within months, began to implement it on the spot, in Montreal, precisely in populist Papineau.

The souvenir journal of the convention edited by Schneour, resounds with memorable names of American and Canadian Jewish thinkers: Labour Zionist ideologists Nachman Syrkin and Baruch Zukerman; Montreal Poale Zion pioneer M.L. Sack; Myer Brown, founder of the Jewish National Workers Alliance; poet and Bible translator Yehoash, and Adler editor Dr. E. Wortsman. B.G. Sack contributed an essay on "Canadian Labour and Immigration."

The sixth session of the convention on October 22, 1910 was devoted to the proposal to establish Yiddish radical schools within the party's program of activities in the lands of exile.

Although he was probably not a member of the party, Zhitlowsky attended the Poale Zion convention and debated with Dr. N. Syrkin the plan for the founding of secular schools. The discussion on the Yiddish language issue between the two giants of the national-socialist camp was sharp and elevated. When the manager of the rented hall sought to disperse the delegates, as he needed to prepare the hall for the banquet, the delegates continued the debate on the stage, behind the curtains. Zhitlowsky argued "If you reject Yiddish, the Jewish proletariat will reject you." He won.

The discussion was heated, with many delegates maintaining that such schools, especially Sunday schools, already existed. But the crucial debate was between the proponents of Yiddish and of Hebrew.

Dr. C. Zhitlowsky argued that the Poale Zion ought to set up schools and give a moral foundation to the movement. Both languages should be taught in order to satisfy the Hebraists as well. Yiddish instruction will win the masses for the Poale Zion. Dr. N. Syrkin supported Dr. Zhitlowsky's stand, and the convention accepted their resolutions. (Adler, Oct. 24, 1910)

The Poale Zion convention closed with a brief address by C. Schneour. (Adler, Oct. 21, 1910)

What was distinctive about the labour movement which convened in 1910 was the Zionist standard, the most intensive attachment to Judaism in all its historic forms and issues, and in its conflict against assimilation which had strong support in the workers' immigrant society.

This embracing of Judaism created a gamut of problems within the secular Labour Zionist movement, particularly in regard to traditions in life and learning and in priorities in loyalties, such as religion, Zionism, Hebrew and class struggle - a range of personal variations and combinations within the institutions which determined policies and judgments. Their expressions of these emotions and reactions constitute much of the literature of this period of Canadian Jewish history.

This sizeable sub-society is worthy of some examination because it was a widespread phenomenon which influenced large areas of Judaism. The personal diversification can often be analysed semantically and biographically, because here it is possible to trace familial histories. We can often relate convictions and policies of activists and leaders and teachers by family customs, parental and grandparental prestige, the scholarly tradition of Hebrew pronunciation, the careful semantics of Hebrew or Yiddish speech, inherited respect for revered families, etc. Since the history of this period is reasonably documented and is the product of the leadership of many known personalities and is remembered in the community, the vivid social mechanics of this history lends itself to substantiation.

This polychrome explains the richness of educational and social activities and variations of programs of the relatively small movement, most notably the two Montreal school systems which were virtually born together at the October 1910 convention. For some sixty years the I.L. Peretz School and the Jewish People's School, led by their respective principals - J. Zipper and S. Wiseman, constituted remarkable cultural dynamos of education, literature and communal politics - which, in their great decades, made Montreal one of the "cities and mothers in Israel."

Montreal, the site of this continental gathering, not surprisingly was where this ambitious and radical proposal which revolutionized Jewish education was formulated and adopted; it was also probably where it was first implemented in Canada.

It was not only the political orientations within the local immigrant community that brought about the consequences of the passage of the congress resolution. The denominational school system in effect in Quebec distinguished the Jews from Christians and provoked resentment and discrimination. In consequence a feeling existed among the Montreal delegates that they ought to lead the continent in sentimental corrective measures.

S. Belkin noted that Montrealers felt the more responsible for the implementation of this far-reaching decision adopted in their city, since Quebec had a confessional school system. The idea of a school system for Jewish children was therefore current in various circles in Montreal before it developed in other centres.

In the presence of B. Zukerman, Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky and Dr. Syrkin, representative ideologists from all over the continent gathered to chart educational statesmanship which was ultimately to shape the democratic Jewish community, its literature and the self-government of the lands of exile a program which was parallel to the state which they were later to recreate under the leadership of Ben Gurion and of Golda Meir.

At this Montreal convention the movement decided to meet the challenge of Jewish education in the modern age which was posed by the existing schooling facilities of "melamed" and "cheder" and the primitive Talmud Torah, with unplanned curricula, with limited class time for biblical history and Talmudic-age ethics, modern Jewish history and thought, world-wide Jewish activity, and for literature.

The convention decision was ripe for realization in the context of the social atmosphere, for within months the first of these schools were established in Montreal, Toronto, New York and elsewhere: modern Jewish schools in Yiddish

and in Hebrew, Zionist, labour-oriented, using modern paedagogical methods and curricula, welcoming girls as well as boys.

There were important subtleties in this program which produced schisms in the society's ideology and in concrete realization. Large sectors of the immigrant community were excluded from the institutions thus founded. One such characteristic Montreal group, the anarchist Freiheit two years after the Poale Zion convention, sought support for a Rationalist Sunday School for Jewish Children which would mobilize for warfare against the ruling classes, against rabbi and priest, policeman and gendarme. (Folkszeitung, Aug. 23, 1912)

H. Noveck recalls some of the heated debates at the 1910 conference, notably those between the pro-Palestine who preferred Hebrew to Yiddish as the prime Jewish language in the planned school and, by implication in the state to be restored, and on the other hand, the pro-Yiddish. The discussion focussed on "the twin mountains," Dr. Zhitlowsky, the eternal Yiddishist, and Dr. Syrkin, Hebraist.

The delegates were divided on the language question with a majority, largely Poale Zionist, leaning towards Hebrew; but the newly affiliated Socialist Territorialists were intensely Yiddishist and supported Dr. Zhitlowsky's "Exile nationalism." W. Chaitman, veteran ideologist and teacher, saw the conflict of the time - often in the warm home of S. Bercovitch, an intimate centre of the city Yiddishists - as reaching far beyond the teaching institutions, as a battle for the recognition of both Jewish languages and all their cultural heritages by the radical labour movement. ("Some History," in I.L. Peretz School Book issued on 25th anniversary, Montreal, 1938. Pp. 28-29)

The heated debates on the program of the Yiddish schools extended to attitudes towards the religion in a society which was virtually unanimously agnostic. But even among them were intensely felt differences.

Bercovitch recalls a meeting at which the most active and devoted member Jacob Pruzhansky begged that classes be not conducted on the Sabbath. He wished his younger sister to enroll, but mother would never permit her daughter to attend a Jewish school which desecrated the day of repose. Slobodsky responded with a lengthy lecture on religion and free thought. Besides, the school would operate only on weekends, and it would be impossible to avoid Saturday classes. Pruzhansky left the organization.

The debate continued for many decades in various forms within the secular schools and within the Jewish internal literary and cultural spheres. Noveck recalls being struck later by Moishe Dickstein with a chair at a meeting where the national pro-Hebrew central committee of the Poale Zion Party attempted to adjudicate the Montreal controversy.

Dr. Wortsman, editor of the Adler, was not enthused about the Yiddish radical schools. "It is nonsense to establish schools with the partisan spirit of radicalism, for a school must not be influenced by any partisanship.

"Yiddish schools are the product of Yiddishism, an evanescent fashion, intended to combat Hebrew and to deride Hebrew literature. These Yiddishists deserve only our pity; similarly, the Hebraists who do not want Yiddish are equally ridiculous. When one Russian Zionist leader said he would prefer Jews to speak Russian instead of Yiddish if they do not choose Hebrew, he only demonstrated that even a Zionist can serve the assimilation of our people.

"Yiddish and Hebrew, more than any other agency, can keep the Jewish people together.

"Neither Yiddish nor Hebrew alone can preserve Judaism. The nationalistically minded favour the development of both these languages and their literature.

"We cannot evade the European languages, and we need a press and books on Jewish topics in all these languages. We are surprised that Rabbi H. Cohen is advocating teaching Hebrew subjects in the English language; A. Parnas was right in opposing the suggestion." (Adler, Nov. 30, 1911)

With the passage of nearly four score years it requires a historic perspective and a world view to situate the process and the event as the Labour Zionists of America gathered in Montreal to chart important lines of fateful future.

As appropriate a document as any to clarify the implications of the event upon Jewish education and culture came from Dr. Zhitlowsky when he marked the quarter century of the I.L. Peretz School, the successor of the pioneering Jewish National Radical School of Montreal.

"Twenty-five years ago there were not a hundred pupils in our schools on the continent. Today these schools have spread all over the world where large numbers of Jews of East European origin have migrated; the pupils in our socialist and radical schools exceed 600,000. Not all their alumni have breathed the spirit which they have learned in our educational institutions into the life they have entered subsequently. But we find many young people imbued with the ideals which motivated our schools: the foundation of human progress, of the national renaissance, social justice and international fraternity." ("To Our Holiday," in I.L. Peretz School Book, Montreal, 1938. Pp.6-7)

The convention in effect founded the network of schools which revolutionized Jewish education even outside the secular ideology. Neither Sephardi nor Ashkenazi paedagogy had been marked for centuries by worldliness or by modern educational philosophy until such methods were introduced into Judaism by the political and social thinkers of the Montreal conference. Directly the chains of the Jewish People's schools, the Peretz Schools, the Sholom Aleichem Schools, the Reisen Schools and even the Winchevsky Schools of the world owed their existence to this North American Labour Zionist gathering; and with them the vast modern religious school system on the American continent which quickly, after some resistance, adopted the application of scientific, systematic education to their curriculum.

The implementation of the Montreal resolution is the history of modern Jewish education which has a Hebrew pre-history in Europe of the Reformed Cheder (Cheder Mtukan) with its new teachers' paedagogic methods, Ivrit b'Ivrit, manuals, curriculum, etc.

The Montreal deliberations resulted in Canadian and American Yiddish schools, the introduction of community school organization, the welcoming of girls, the social concerns, current events, emphasis on folklore and history, and paedagogical training.

Orthodoxy reacted first by opposition, barely stopping short of excommunication, but soon began to emulate the modernity of the Yiddish schools, particularly when the Jewish People's Schools innovated with the introduction of Jewish day schools.

There appear to have been pre-1910 American pioneer efforts in the same direction as the Canadian. But the major impulsion seems to have come from Canada. A legitimate debate regarding priority appears to lie between Montreal and Toronto. The latter centre was represented by A. Bromberg who migrated to New York, as did H. Noveck.

Fifty years after the event Adler editor Israel Rabinovitch remembered his sister Shayne Chayeh and her husband Volodya Baranovsky returning home from a meeting and telling the family of a decision taken that evening to establish a National Radical School. Being "green," he asked for an explanation. "It will be a school where the children of radical and progressive parents will also be able to study Judaism; true, another kind of Judaism, not the old Chadorim. Now there will be no excuse for not giving children a Jewish education."

"Much water has flowed under many bridges since then; two world wars, the greatest tragedy in our history, the restoration of the Jewish state in Israel. It seems as if centuries have passed since then.

"Wolf Chaitman, one of the early principals of that school, a Talmudist, a gentle soul of rare qualities, is still one of the great scholars which the teaching staff has welcomed since its pioneering years," Rabinovitch wrote. (Adler, June 23, 1963)

To understand the making and the working of the immigrant societies - this pre-history of the Jewish Peretz Schools of Montreal is a typical example - we need to familiarize ourselves with any of the army of its volunteers. Again Hershel Noveck is only typical of the hundreds who paced the streets of Canadian cities during this half century of Jewish history.

He chose the Poale Zion as his group; it could have been another of the ideologies competing in Montreal for his Jewish missionary and creative zeal. In his record of this choice he wrote the activist curriculum vitae of the decade; participation in the Kellert strike of 1911, the general strike of 1912, the Jewish Public Library of 1912, the formation of the Canadian Jewish Congress of 1919. He founded the Peretz School 1913, teaching in its first classes; and when he was mobilized as full time principal he complained that he was "forced to rob the school of \$50 a month."

But a more authentic picture emerges in his reminiscences of those days.

"Many of the builders of the schools of 'green' Montreal are now spread over the wide continent. Some are in the true world, affirming with their tombstones that this country is our permanent home. Montreal today is settled by newer arrivals.

"But surely Montreal still has marks of our presence, and not mere signs and furrows in the heart but concrete monuments: the Peretz School, the Jewish Public Library, the newer People's School, the Canader Adler; there is Lazarus' Bookstore and the Baron de Hirsch Institute whose own library was the gathering place of the greenhorn intelligentzia, Prince Arthur Hall where the Peretz School was born, as were the unions and radical organizations and institutions. Above all, 'the mountains' where most 'green' of Montreal passed their summer days and the times of crisis. Many such crises occurred on weekdays. But who cared? We were young, we were involved in the world and its problems; we read of the problems of mankind; we had no families."

The institutional system developed in the immigrant society of this period is also significant for its mechanisms. One of its central traditions was the frequent conventions of representatives of quite various institutions - not least of the synagogues - to give voice of this Yiddish society on a wide variety of immediate concerns to the entire society.

The pre-history of the Jewish Public Library records - after Alexander Harkavy's 1887 experience with the Hovevei Zion in setting up a Hebrew library for its 30 members - that Schneour and L. Zuker served on the executive of such first attempts to organize a public library at 404 Main St. in 1912. Leon Chazanovitch, M. Shmuelson and R. Brainin appeared at conferences and campaign efforts to that end.

These conferences became political instruments, led by spokesmen of ideological conviction and training who very often were the veritable leaders of the Jewish downtown. Indeed, they often negotiated among themselves in the preparation of resolutions before such conferences, and in semantic terms they referred in derogatory terms to the naive men of the "societies" and of the synagogues. The effective language of these institutions, in preparation and in resolution, was the folkloric. The limits of social control lay in an inviolate sanctity of the basic creed become common to the Jewish civilization of Eastern Europe and to the freedom traditions of the New World.

The Labour Zionist was not the only such structure, and Montreal was not the only centre where the immigrant community, with its numerous cultural and social institutions, were each functioning in their own spheres and exerting their influence beyond their delimited agenda; and it matters little to establish relative strength.

What is significant is the mechanism of consultation whereby the needs of the community were discussed and the large numbers of citizens invited to study each of the cultural and political issues of widest general concerns through frequent conferences through which general information percolated widely. By means of the various "societies" eventually strong voices emerged - in toto, a functioning, sensitive, democratic evolution.

The process dates back at least to September 1908 when the Workmen's Circle convened a conference to mobilize the women of the Jewish quarter of the city in favour of a bread strike. Various organizations named strike committees. A mass meeting of women was called in the Labour Temple for a Sunday afternoon. At the request of the participating unions the organizers extended their program to include meat prices.

The politically oriented entered later into the movement nor were the Poale Zionists the only ones.

The cosmopolitan, non-nationalist radicals - later some of them evolved into the communist movement - were at least a force, but their technique usually was to form their own evanescent peripheral groups with their own powerful internal educational training.

The voice of their community became coherent within the totality of the Montreal community, particularly as the Baron de Hirsch Institute was in the midst of strengthening its Legislative Committee.

The weak link in the democratic autonomy was the absence of public financing.

In a letter in the Adler on November 6, 1910, soon after the Poale Zion convention, H. Rubinstein proposed that Montreal could usefully call upon the current experience with denominational schools in England, where secular subjects are taught according to the government curriculum, and religious studies are dealt with separately after normal school hours. Such schools are maintained in England very successfully under municipal administration. The Baron de Hirsch Institute was in a position to establish them in Montreal, he suggested.

Rubinstein approved the Poale Zion decision "as being in the interests of Quebec Jewish children who are at present forced to study under Christian influence with the connivance of their parents. They learn about English and French heroes rather than Jewish.

"The Talmud Torahs do not resolve this problem, for the best energy of the children is being siphoned off by the Protestant school system. Jewish children should be educated by trained Jewish teachers instead of by Christian teachers who are often anti-Semitic and expose the children to vulgar jokes and allegations."

Rubinstein was one of the speakers at the opening of the Mile End School two months later, in January 1911. (S. Belkin, Die Poale Zion Bavegung in Canada, 1904-20 Montreal, Actions Committee of the Zionist Labour Movement in Canada, 1956. Pp. 197-98)

There was a series of starts to the establishment of the first Canadian Jewish school of this type, all emanating from the same group in the immigrant society. In spite of understandable differentiation in the precise definition of programme, there was fundamental unity in intention, because the large group came from one of two ideological institutions solidly established in the immigrant society: the Poale Zion and the Socialist Territorialists; both nationalist and Zionist, both committed to Jewish survival and therefore opposed to assimilation; in point of fact, the two merged during the period of the establishment of the new schools.

To look decades ahead: when the new school was founded, the internal differentiation was so intense that it soon divided into two schools; but after half a century of separate, historically creative educational activity, the two schools, by now the I.L. Peretz School and the Jewish People's School, merged into one institution.

## MILE END FOLKLORE

Marie Poirier defined the area which the Jews called Papineau as bounded by Garnier on the west, Chabot on the east, Belanger on the north and the CPR tracks on the south. The district is also sometimes known as Rossland. ("Les Immigrants juifs au périphères de Montréal: le quartier Papineau", presented at the Jewish Public Library, March 12-14, 1988)

As she investigated the origins, differences and the composition of the Jewish groups in the peripheries and the circumstances of their settlements, she asked: "Were those living in the densely Jewish area in the centre different from those who went out towards the periphery?"

The Baron de Hirsch Institute noted in 1905 the diversification of the professions of the arriving immigrants: carpenters dispersed throughout the suburbs of greater Montreal and stamped their folkloric mark on the literature and theatre civilization of Papineau.

Like other ethnic immigrants to Canadian cities, such as Italians, who also were attached to their rural background, some Jewish newcomers to Montreal missed their Shtetl households, cheap land, gardens, kine and goats. They compromised proximity to their factory workplace and were ready to walk long distances to the smelly factories; they set up small businesses or found jobs in such nearby heavy industry as the CPR - especially as steel workers, tinsmiths, carpenters - close to Papineau.

Their attachment to rural spots cost them the intellectual pleasure which they might derive from the proximity of the already considerable cultural and religious circles present in urban Montreal, and marked them as distant "provincial" society, soon reflected in Canadian literature.

If educational activism in Quebec is not surprising in this context, its precise territorial scene early in this Jewish school history is startling. It highlights a modest suburb in northern Montreal which was relatively distant from the Jewish ghetto, yet has an important place in the annals of Montreal's Italian and French Canadian nationalisms and that of its immigrant Jews.

Mile End at century's beginning was distant from its needle trade sweat shops, yet within its tramway lines - and even within walking distance. Chickens and cows could be raised, much as they were raised in small Shtetlach, some little distance from the busy ideological centres such as Peanut Park, the employment centre in the Jewish ghetto. The newly arriving Italians, always seeking modest treasured little homes could develop their ethnic church which defended local claims in schooling and language within the parish.

Those who read the macrocosmic history of Montreal's urbanism will be less surprised, for the district plays a remarkable part in French Canadian nationalist history through Father Philippe Perrier (as told by Chanoine Groulx in his Mes Mémoires) and in Italian Québécois history.

Mile End has entered into French with its anglophone pronunciation as a strange linguistic monument recalling this English contribution to the construction of Montreal.

In the proximity of these alien folklores from the continent, the cozy cultural and clerical aristocracy centering on Father Philippe Perrier, and Groulx and Henri Bourassa began to feel uncomfortable with the aggression and alienness of European migration and the encroachment of the industrializing downtown.

Baruch J. Goldstein, talented young columnist in the Adler who in later life was to become an important Yiddish drama critic in the United States, took "A Walk in Papineau" and reported, in June, 1910 under the nom de plume of Reb Boruchel,

"Another tells me, 'Papineau will become a city, but the people! They are not good, absolutely, not for anything real. We cannot stop them from taking other people's bricks and nails. I have bought tar paper three times, but I no sooner yawn when, hocus pocus, it is gone, like in the water. Is this justice?'

"And why should I not believe this? When they tell you that a comet will turn the world over with his tail, do you not believe it? For a man will believe anything until he sees it with his own eyes, which is why everybody wants to see the comet, and why I wanted to see Papineau. And it happened.

"I was sitting quietly when a friend came to ask me whether I want to see Papineau. What a question!

"But it was more complex than appears. Because we were travelling with his wife and their infants; he suddenly felt ill and I carried the infants on the trip to Papineau, as well as her ten parcels, each weighing at least 16 pounds. You would do the same; you are also a gentleman. I was lucky that the infants were young, each less than 25 pounds.

"I had long intended to go to Papineau, but it is a long and complicated trip, with several cars constantly changing direction. But after many considerations I made the trip to legendary Papineau. The very 'nieu' ending of the name was exciting. At home when they added a 'nieu' to a person's name it indicated that he was a special person; if he hits you in the face you will see stars and your grandmother in her grave...

"The wondrous tales they tell of Papineau: of the goats that live on trees there, that the stranger will not touch money on the street, but nails and boards must be kept in safes. You need to post a detachment of soldiers to guard them, and even then you are not secure.

"Another spoke of Papineau as a Jewish realm, and children born there had to be taken to the city to see a French Canadian or an Irishman. But a third witness testified that there are more French than Jews there and that their rascals beat old Jews on the street when they find weaklings. A bluffer told me that there are two moons to be seen every night in Papineau, and that the sky is so low that people must walk bent over. Another told me that Jews never quarrel there, and that trees are always red with black leaves.

"I advise my readers to go to Papineau to drink milk there, eat latkes, and they will be my friends for life.

"How do you like our Papineau? Come on in and see it from the inside.' He brought me to his poultry, his garden where all that is good grows luxuriantly, and explained every variety; 'these are berries, and these are vines, genuine

grapes, only the chickens pulled them down; we planted onions here and potatoes.

"They have an evil decree here; we are not allowed to work Sundays. If you drive a nail in on that day, you can be martyred, and fined \$20, that thief America, not even a single nail. So it took us longer; within the week you will find a fortress here,' as he shows me where the bedroom will be, where the front room and where the kitchen.

"I dropped into the library, a fine black case with a window in the centre with the markings of some store. The librarian was polishing the glass and the doors. There are all sorts of works for sale here, on dentistry and on mandolin playing, a hat with a feather, pyjamas without buttons, books on philosophy, pictures of couples looking at each other after declaring love; and if you need a stovepipe hat or a pair of glasses... In short, if you walk in naked, you can emerge a regular Yankee with a book under your arm. Which is why it is called the Library.

"Another told me, 'You know we also have congregations, societies and parties whose meetings last deep into the night, sometimes till the cocks crow. Chickens are numerous in Papineau and each can raise the dead from their slumber. So you can imagine all the roosters of Papineau beginning to compete and to force the meetings to come to an end.'

"Another resident complained, 'We met a dozen times and decided to put up a small synagogue. A community must have a sacred place where they can meet. We do have something of a Minyan where we can quarrel and sometimes even slap around a bit.' But it is not serious. They have forgotten that they have laid a foundation, that they have already invested some \$150, and now they are begging outside Papineau. I could see that he longs for a synagogue of his own where he could pour his heart out in prayer for a good year, pour his heart out to the Creator of the Universe and, if necessary, poke the Parnass in his ribs because he injects some Torah teachings without authority. Yet I had to promise him to do something to realize his project.

"A congregation wrote a member who owed one dollar, 'By order of the president, it was decided to inform you by registered mail that if you do not come to settle the account, the matter will be turned over to a lawyer. We ask you to come and pay and to save the considerable expense.'

"Such letters are not proper for congregations who will soon learn better, for some members may not be able always to pay their dues.

"Generally 'les Papineau' live in harmony. On Sundays they welcome visitors from the city. Some days a thousand come and - it is well that they do not hear this - they often develop a strange appetite and they dispose of all that has been prepared and grind it all up. Their hosts encourage them. 'Eat, take some more,' advice that is followed energetically. I hope no one comes to my home.

"I tell you, fine people, these Papineaus."

A folksy letter from Isaac Bugman to the Adler of January 19, 1910 prophetically notes that "the Jews in Papineau are increasing and have just about completed their homes. It would be worthwhile for them to consider their communal needs. For example we need a Cheder where children could learn

Yiddish; we need a synagogue. There is a bit of space fenced in, waiting for the public to notice and to start building. But apparently it is a long wait.

"We do have a congregation, but it has accomplished little since it was organized.

"As you see, nothing has been done in Papineau which will in the near future be a Jewish community."

A vivid report on a parallel Jewish suburb of the time derives from Elzéar Boulay, a French Canadian militant friend of Quebec Jews, in the Yiddish translation of B.G. Sack.

"Recently I took the Amherst street car, transferred at St. Jean de Berchman up Papineau Street where, I knew, there was an important Jewish settlement.

"Some call the area St. Jean de Berchman, others Rossland, but I think it is generally known as Rosemount.

"Clearly there are many Jews there; more than 200 families set up their homes in this new centre of activity. Their families are not small, no different from our French Canadian families. Their children play happily near their small homes; not exactly palaces, but the children are satisfied.

"These Jews have opened groceries and other small stores, and new buildings have sprouted nearby honoring the Jewish spirit of enterprise and exemplary economy. Most of them arrived here without money, but they managed to acquire land by virtue of their patience and energy, and to set up their homes; some of them are still being built. Wilder, the owner of the furniture store, was one of the 34 pioneers of Rosemount. I would wish my French Canadians followed their example in enterprise. It leads us to speculate whether this race is truly indestructible. It might well have sunk under the weight of persecution during centuries.

"The Jewish Rosemount, but several miles from the city, can in fact live the life of the village. Many of their homes may not have been built artistically; the interior of others many not be complete, but they all feel at home. The residents are nearly all property owners; they are attached to their nests.

"They act as in families, unceremoniously, in accordance with custom, with common openness and sympathy. There is no polish here. The ladies of Rosemount do not hesitate to go to the well for water. They live amicably with their Christian neighbours. There is a measure of mistrust because they do not know each other well. But peace will reign if our anti-Semitic sectarians will not plant their poison here.

"The Catholics have a church and a school here, and the Jews have a fine synagogue and are building another.

"I only regret that I cannot speak to them in the language of their ancestors. I would wish to hear the secret of their success in their mother tongue, but with my poor English I could at best feel the sense of their heart." (Adler, Nov. 28, 1911)

One of the continent's gems of folklore is a long illuminated manuscript record of the first Jews of Papineau prepared in the 1950's by Ichiel Herman, the self-

conscious archivist of the complete minutes of the gloriously named Tifereth Jerusalem Congregation of Rossland, which he founded and whose minutes he kept, and later enriched with dozens of humorous tales from Yiddish lore. His hundreds of pages begin in 1906, "the following population of Papineau consisted of Ichiel Herman, Joseph Nebock, Joseph Laferman, David Dov Lazanick, Simon Applebaum, Birenbaum, Isaiah Engel.

"As we are too few to form a congregation for the New Year and the Day of Atonement, we all went together to the city for communal services and left the women and small children in the little homes we had just began to construct. When we returned we were greeted by nearly all our young wives in one house with a cheerful 'Happy Holiday' and wishes that by next year we shall have our own synagogue, to which we responded 'Amen.'"

By winter 1907 a meeting with a further dozen residents convened in president Miller's home and decided to form the Tifereth Jerusalem Society, with fees at 5 cents weekly. An agent from the Ross Realty Co. impertinently took it upon himself to build a synagogue for the district committee.

"The Ross Co. set aside two lots for a synagogue and immediately secured a deed. The papers are in the hands of Miller."

The second congregation, Chaverim Kol Israel, also built their synagogue nearby, with its 225 families, between Marquette and Papineau, Beaubien and St. Zotique.

Dr. Ezekiel Wortsman, predecessor of Reuben Brainin as head of the Adler (1910-1912), editorialized on Nov. 13, 1910 on "Papineau Road",

"We can console all who bewail the decline of Jewish life in exile.

"Widely spread Judaism may not be aware of the news, so we consider it our duty to announce that they may rejoice that Papineau Road has two Jewish congregations; Papineau Road is building two synagogues for prayer. It will have two cantors, two presidents and two sets of 'sacred vessels,' religious functionaries.

"Your geographical learning may not reach so far, nor are you aware of this Jewish kingdom; there may be other Jewish kingdoms outside your ken. So learn and enjoy learning.

"Papineau Road is a suburb of Montreal, the capital. It has no running water, sewers, light, no health or life. But it has two communities of Jews, mainly poor and depressed, most of them labourers and peddlers. It has no Talmud Torah, and children grow up without a trace of Jewish learning. Yet this kingdom already has two communities with the resounding titles, 'All Jews are Comrades,' and the 'Glory of Jerusalem.'

"We report on two congregations already, but before writing this report this settlement may acquire a third, possibly the 'Extension of the Berdichev Congregation,' or a fourth, the 'Congregation of all Israel are Enemies,' and before this is printed Papineau may have a fifth, the 'Congregation of the Observers of Tuesdays.'

"For Papineau already has two hundred Jews and, with our growing population we might acquire another five Jews, and if A is president and B is Gabbay, and C is treasurer are D and E, and etc., lesser persons?"

"All this is no joke, for we lack words for this form of Jewishness. We had believed that when Jews will leave the lands where they had been deprived of civil and human rights. where they had been confined to ghetto politics; when these Jews came to these free lands, where they can enjoy all freedoms, they will rise above the village pettinesses, to a vivid sense of life, and a further and more interesting range. Yet it appears that they have transplanted the quarrels of Eishishock and are bringing our entire city to shame for reasons of vanity and parish pump dissidence.

"Leaders' of one congregation on Papineau Road come to us to malign the members of the other; then those from the latter visit us to tell all that is evil about the first.

"Who needs two synagogues in the kingdom of Papineau? We may accept that they need a chapel there for undisturbed prayer; but why two, to waste money and energy and power for victory, when one is too many? Yes, power, a curse that is not mentioned in the Bible. Everybody seeks to teach the other a lesson, to prove his strength.

"Judaism does not interest either party in Papineau any more than the snows of yesteryear. If it were otherwise, they would first put up a class for children where they would teach a word of Jewish, about our great past; they would set up a club where they could read a paper after work, discuss communal affairs. Instead they multiply synagogues to quarrel about cantors and chicken killers. Is this how Judaism blossoms in Canada?"

H. Wolofsky, the publisher of the Adler who wrote a humorous column "The Hammer" under the nom de plume of Yankel Schmid (Jacob the Blacksmith), sent a messenger to the two synagogues. "If you put a copy of the Adler between them, you could not spread it out. They have no money, but they bought two lots at \$500, and the members are busy cutting boards and banging nails as smoke arises, so that we will have a Tifereth Jerusalem synagogue out of Jerusalem land.

"But matters cannot rest so; last Sunday Rabbi H. Cohen and other Montreal dignitaries were called out to celebrate the initiation of the construction of the 'All Israel are Comrades' (Chaverim Kol Israel) Congregation.

"I'll tell you how we get there. You take a street car and change to another car, then to a smaller car, then to the large car, where a smaller car awaits you with the sign, 'To Jerusalem'; the sign is not yet made, but it should be; it will take you to Papineau.

"Let me tell you my view of our Papineau Comradeship: Papineau is growing, and there will be as much gold as there is mud there now, and a third congregation will arise. The 'Searchers for Peace Congregation,' exactly between the two, and the Searchers will search for peace until they break the walls to the two others and will rename the new structure the 'Great Chapel of Papineau,' and to appease the two synagogues, the new congregation will be called 'Tifereth Jerusalem Chaverim Kol Israel, the Searchers for Peace, and the Great Chapel of Papineau.'

"I would therefore advise the candidates for its presidency of the large synagogue (and who is not a candidate?) to memorize its name. For is it appropriate for a president to open a meeting as he stutters at pronouncing its name?" (Nov. 27, 1910)

The following day the Adler complained about long and numerous letters from members of the congregation. The editor suggested a committee of four to meet with the editorial staff to bring peace to the community. ("Papineau Road," Nov. 28, 1910)

By the 1920's Papineau had loan societies, a YMHA branch and ladies' groups. A high percentage were home owners. The Montcalm area became an Italian centre. But the two synagogues remained until 1962.

In the absence of other classroom data on the Rossland school, the visit to Congress of an old man from Florida who had attended that school some seventy years ago is helpful in reconstructing primitive old Montreal. He had had only a few years in the school, but he had been fortunate to have had a devoted teacher who had come from Palestine early in the century. He had taught him so much Hebrew that he still remembered not only the meaning of the prayers but he had acquired a sense for the history and the connotation of each word. His conversation was a Hebraic symphony.

In the late 1930's Yiddish poet N.J. Gotlib convalesced in Papineau, which he recalled as "a quiet suburb of tumultuous Montreal. Like in Lithuania or in Poland, in the poverty of tiny Shtetl, the Jewish world lived in a small town, old-fashioned home, without rush or sound; we live in an obscure home.

"A friend counselled: the air is fresh; I will come to, here; I will walk for hours, sleep longer, eat more, see more sun, pace long hours with my thoughts in the blue spring, the length of lawns and fields, sing the verse of birds, absorb the buzzing.

"An old oak, crowned in green, in the golden field within blue space; I come to stand in his gray shade, sharing his gold and green and blue.

"An old woman who had been living long in Papineau, was now pouring fearful curses on her neighbours. They fear the evil omens pouring from her mouth, plead with her to cease her maledictions, fearing she will bring them to their grave. They buy her off with some dishes, old garments, for they are bound to their homes near her. One more credulous woman pays her fifty dollars a year not to curse her." (Montreal, 1968, Pp. 61-63)

## THE FIRST RADICAL SCHOOL

On October 18, 1908 a Talmud Torah was established by the Tifereth Israel Congregation in Mile End. A Mr. Abramson was elected Gabbay and Mr. Sobel of 1540 St. Dominique, secretary. Inscription of pupils was announced a week later at 642 Clark St. Classes took place, according to the Adler of November 4, daily from 9 to 6; Mr. Johanson was listed as president of Talmud Torah and I. Schlesinger was vice-president. (Adler)

B. Gourland was elected president early in November 1908; K. Goldberg was chosen secretary; Mr. Shapiro was named teacher. (Adler, Nov. 4, 1908)

The Adler of August 14, 1910 notes the existence of the Poale Zedeck Congregation at Mile End and of the United Mutual Aid Association of Mile End. The congregation was incorporated by Quebec Act 17 Geo.V, chap. 118, assented to on April 1, 1927.

Poale Zedeck Congregation of Mile End was represented at the People's Alliance conference by president B.B. Shechter and Secretary M. Gillford. (March 1915)

The Levitt, Milstone and Tenenbaum collection, Shuls, A Study of Canadian Synagogue Architecture, (Toronto. P.66) records that "Poale Zedeck is located in an area commonly known as 'Mile End.' In the first two decades of this century it became the northern extension of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood, and yet maintained itself as a distinct Jewish community. The synagogue was nicknamed the 'Workingman's Shul.'

"It was being formed in September 1910, at 97 Marcil St., when the members themselves dug the basement which served as the synagogue building for the next ten years. Mr. Morris' father was a carpenter and worked on the synagogue himself. All of the members contributed their skills and the one member who owned a horse did all of the carting. That year they observed the High Holy Days in rented rooms.

"The sanctuary was built between 1920-22 when this neighbourhood was already the second largest Jewish enclave in Montreal."

Poale Zedeck as the name of a Chevrah with its proletarian connotation is not common, especially in the New World, but it did appear in European history: in Pavloch, Kiev Gubernate, in 1808 the tailors' Chevrah so named maintained a Pinkas; the fur hat and wig makers of Jassi in 1797, the Poale Zedeck, also had a Pinkas; the Moldavia Poale Zedeck synagogue in Wladen existed in 1801 as did the Poale Zedeck craftsmen of Pultask of 1861. Contemporaneous with the Mile End congregation were the famed Mussar Poale Zedeck of Novoradek of 1903.

For many decades the Montreal Poale Zedeck Congregation served its community from 7161 St. Urbain in Mile End, at the corner of Beaubien.

Distant as it was from symbolism, the Poale Zedeck synagogue in Mile End reflected the artisanal and pietist tradition of this "suburban" district in its very name, the Workers for Justice.

Characteristically it had a place of honour in the early history of the Labour Zionist Movement in North America. It is not surprising that its programs of Zionism and of education spread widely in folk spheres such as the synagogues and popular institutions of labouring Montreal.

By the same token it is also not surprising that the anonymous men of Mile End stumbled into these highlights of sophisticated modern paedagogy of Judaism.

By some chance, but not out of character, this minor unpretentious synagogue, distant from the central institutions of the immigrant society of Montreal, has entered significantly in the history of Jewish education on the continent.

To understand this in the fullest extent we need to situate it in the time:

At the end of 1910 Mile End enters the educational annals of continental Judaism.

The Adler announced on November 14, 1910 that "the Poale Zion here will establish a school which will be the first Jewish National Radical School in Montreal. It will consist of two classes and will accept 33 pupils. It will be situated in Mile End. A school board has been named and rooms have been rented. The board of the new school will meet next Tuesday for the first time."

This is the beginning of the history of the modern Hebrew education; of modern schooling, of Yiddish schooling, of the "improved Cheder" in the New World, of the Jewish National Radical schools, of the I.L. Peretz Schools, People's Schools, the Sholom Aleichem Schools, the Abraham Reisen Schools, the Winchevsky Schools, the Jewish day schools, the Labour Zionist schools and of Jewish education as a total community responsibility.

It is the biographical framework of the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jewish girls as well as boys, of their parents, of thousands of activists, psychologists, theoreticians, teachers, paedagogical technicians, political guides, philanthropists and of great educational leaders all over the world - not least such Montrealers as Yehudah Kaufman, Shloimeh Wiseman, Jacob Zipper, L. Zuker. H. Noveck, W. Chaitman, S. Dunsky and Winnipegger A. Golomb.

Locally it was not the beginning of Jewish education in Papineau; a Talmud Torah was already in existence at 2499 Papineau Ave., across the CPR tracks in 1909, (Adler, Apr. 25, 1909), but it was not known to editor Wortsman in November 1910.

The Poale Zion announcement about opening a Mile End school evoked the editorial opposition of the Adler. "They are proposing to open the first radical school in Montreal... A school cannot be radical or conservative, liberal or socialist." (Nov. 29 and 30, 1910) A reader proposed that the committee distribute forms to the pupils which would indicate, before opening classes, whether the parents desire Hebrew or Yiddish or Karl Marx, etc." (Dec. 4, 1910)

On January 23, 1911 the Yiddish press announced the official opening of the Jewish school in Mile End. Among the speakers: Schneour, Jacob Zipperstein, M.L. Sack, Rubinstein, etc. Those wishing to attend will take the St. Lawrence car and stop at the CPR tracks. A committee will await them and will lead them to the place."

School classes were held, Zipperstein remembers, in two rooms in a private house, possibly on Mozart St., three days a week, as early as 1910. The rooms were rented from the Poale Zedeck who also conducted services there, or directly from the owners.

There were some twenty children registered, half of them in an elementary class. Zipperstein taught them Hebrew and Yiddish every day from 4 to 6 p.m. Some parents paid tuition fees.

A report of the evening notes Mr. Hallman (?) of the Poale Zedeck among the speakers. (Adler, Jan. 24, 1911)

We find traces of this nameless one. The record is unclear about the old pious tailor on whose initiative Mile End established the first Hebrew-Yiddish school in the world, and what was the role of Ellman (or Hallman) of the Poale Zedeck Congregation. Mr. Hallman or Elman lived in Amherst Park, adjoining Mile End. He would come every day to make the fire to heat the classrooms. It was he who begged the teacher to wear a hat while he was teaching.

Classes continued until Passover when funds were exhausted. The teacher, who had received \$10-\$15 monthly, left for Joliette.

In retrospect H. Noveck, secretary and one of the founders of the school, recalled his first efforts as a modern teacher in Montreal, in the National Radical School, "My only background had been the Petrikov Yeshivah and the reformed Jewish school back in Europe.

"But as our schools were set up, the first secular schools chose teachers from the untrained shop workers and entrusted them with the education of the children. These educators of ours were very well prepared with great Jewish and universal learning; prepared with a great love for the new Jewish culture.

"Their great love of Yiddish and of the child who is about to inherit the living word, and their intellectual wealth, their familiarity with the range of ideas in contemporary Judaism, their devotion to the splendid ideals of national liberation and of justice in society - all this shaped our first teachers into ideal paedagogues. Our first instructors and pupils still live with the romantic enthusiasm of the first years of our schools."

"In many senses they were well prepared indeed. They had great Jewish learning and often considerable general knowledge; they were prepared with a great burning love of the new Jewish culture which they were disseminating. They were prepared by a youthful idealism to till the soil for this culture. The achievements of these men without training arouses wonder.

"Old-timers surely remember the old folksongs and older Chassidic niggunim from Vitebsk which we had sung at 199 Main St. at peanut banquets, or walking late at night in the parks, romantically enriching such melodies as 'You Lovely Little Girl' or 'You Foolish Boy.'"

By 1911 he was elected a delegate to the world convention of the Poale Zion.

Israel Rabinovitch described Noveck as "the indefatigable worker who never ceased to carry the Burden of the Commandments of Yiddish culture" and J.I.

Segal crowned him: "he immured his days and nights into the walls of Jewish education."

The consistency of this idealism is testified to, wryly, by Noveck. When his beloved brother opened a cloak factory and suffered a strike, the socialist teacher Herschel did not speak to him for fifteen full years.

Bercovitch arrived in 1907 in Montreal and became one of the most active members of the Canadian school movement and of the Poale Zion.

He was guided by the principles laid down by Dr. Zhitlowsky which stated that the schools are not dominated by the political parties, even though they came into being as the education merger of the Poale Zion with the Socialist Territorialists. (National Archives, CJC, S. Belkin Papers)

He taught three classes at Mile End when he was the only teacher for two years, with a registration of some 60-70 pupils. The school was called the Radical School No. 1, and was maintained by the downtown school.

During the 1912 tailors' strike, in which he was active together with L. Chazanovitch, he arranged for the Poale Zion to show a film and to issue a bulletin on the strike and, incidentally, also on the ideals of the movement, with the proceeds devoted to the strikers' fund.

Together with H. Noveck, Bercovitch was the major worker for the Jewish library sponsored by the Poale Zion, after the months or years when B.G. Sack and his brother Noah cared for it, during the pre-history of what became the Jewish Public Library under the sponsorship of Brainin and Kaufman in 1914.

After their departure from Montreal it was L. Zuker and H.M. Caiserman who led the institution.

Beside the faded memories of Zipperstein and H. Noveck (1892-1952) we have the writings of the leading literary critic of the age, S. Nizer (born Charney) who wrote, "On the initiative of Hershel Noveck and others, the first National Radical School in Canada was founded in 1911 - the Mile End School of Montreal." (In Kampf far a Neier Erziung (In the Struggle for a New Education). P.39)

The classic historian of Yiddish culture and literature, S. Nizer based his record upon the 1938 report by Noveck,

"We in Montreal need to remember and to remind others that for some time before the present Peretz School a modern Jewish school existed in our Mile End. Our older members probably remember that soon after the Poale Zion convention of 1910, we founded a Jewish school in Mile End, on the initiative of an old observant tailor, in the basement of the Poale Zedeck synagogue there.

"I. Zipperstein, a member of the Poale Zion, was the teacher. S. Schneour was named principal, and I was secretary. I do not recall how long the school continued. But I do remember a problem we faced then: to teach with our heads covered or uncovered (and in a synagogue at that!).

"I remember vividly our celebrating the opening of the school in some Irish Shamrock Hall in Mile End when we trod the Mile End mud rail tracks and farms looking for the hall where the Irish Shamrockers listened to our alien

Jewish Peretz Schools in Celebration of the Twenty-fifth Year of their Existence, Montreal, 1938. P.20)

Zipperstein records that arrangements had been made for the inauguration of the school to take place in a hall where an Irish wedding had taken place. After the ceremony guests and musicians simply joined the school group, and the Poale Zionists were able to afford entertainment at their ceremony.

One of the founders of the Mile End school was L. Saul Elstein, Socialist-Territorialist and later Poale Zionist, a resident of Montreal from 1909 to 1913; later in Toronto.

Wolf Chaitman also notes the existence of the school at Mile End whose official name is not on the record. He refers to a condition which was valid for the entire area: it did not arouse the interest of the intellectual circles of Montreal because it was far from the Jewish centre. Chaitman touched the nerve of the nature of Mile End.

Later the critically minded S. Belkin was dubious about the accuracy of the original version; he remembered that the Noveck, on whose initiative the Mile End school was set up, was only eighteen at the time.

Belkin concludes that classes continued daily at most for some five months; not ten as had been stated, and not three times a week.

The population began to decline and the school may have closed the following year; but B. Lachovitzky remembered that it continued until 1923.

One of the founders of the Poale Zion, B. Lachovitzky, was a resident of Mile End from 1911 to 1919. He reports that the National Radical School functioned for four or five years, under the direction of S. Bercovitch and Chaitman, with Lachovitzky as secretary. Later A.S. Sacher taught there.

The Mile End affinity for the Poale Zion is evidenced by the formation of branches of the Poale Zion in this north end of the city in 1912 through the efforts of B. Lachovitzky. One of the leaders of the movement, H.M. Caiserman, frequently visited Mile End to lecture on a variety of themes. The branch endured until 1917 when many of its members left the area.

Similar "suburban" activity at Mile End by Lachovitzky and Jacob Weigensberg led to the formation of a Poale Zion branch in Lachine.

Lachovitzky organized a Farband branch in Mile End in 1912 with 30 members, with young Moshe Shapiro as secretary until 1914. His father operated a grocery store there. "This was a time when organizations were born like mushrooms overnight, and newcomers were looking for people to discuss with."

Lachovitzky recalls meeting a man in a doctor's waiting room who was waiting to be examined for admission into the Workmen's Circle. While waiting, Lachovitzky convinced him to join the Farband and to be examined to this end.

Lachovitzky also records an early branch of the Jewish National Workers Alliance, the Farband, at Mile End which existed from 1912 to 1915.

The Poale Zedek Synagogue, small and distant as it was, indicated great vigour in its earliest times. At the end of January, 1914, the Poale Zedek

The Poale Zedeck Synagogue, small and distant as it was, indicated great vigour in its earliest times. At the end of January, 1914, the Poale Zedek Congregation at Mile End participated in the setting up of a new committee on Kashruth. It was represented by L. Shapiro. (Adler, Jan. 22, 1914)

In the summer of 1914 we hear of the Poale Zedeck Talmud Torah but four months old - a reminder of the instability of the area's community. At the end of the school season, there were examinations; the examiners were two of the leading Jewish citizens of the country: the traditionalist Rabbi Hirsch Cohen accompanied by the secularist philosopher-biographer-journalist Reuben Brainin. (Adler, Aug. 20)

In 1915 it protested against New Testament instruction to Jewish pupils in the Montreal Protestant schools, and the penalty of the children's losing marks if they failed to attend. (Der Veg, Dec. 19, 1915)

The Adler, November 16, 1915 list of Montreal United Talmud Torahs includes the Talmud Torah Poale Zedeck at Mile End, later represented by N. Schachter in 1917 the Talmud Torah Jerusalem in Papineau and the Talmud Torah Tifereth Israel Annex. There is a record of the Talmud Torah on Marquette St. in Papineau and one on De la Roche in Amherst Park.

The teacher in the Poale Zion school was Zelda (Michlin) Ackerman who made her own mark in Canadian Jewish paedagogy. A year after this Poale Zedeck experience, in September 1915, at the founding of the Jewish People's School, she joined its volunteer teaching staff. By 1917 she was in charge of the kindergarten which was then being established as part of the long-range program to reorganize the afternoon school eventually into the first Jewish day school. A very detailed curriculum program for the kindergarten was being prepared.

One of the memorable events in the annals of the school was the visit on February 11, 1929 by Goldie Myerson, later Golda Meir, prime minister of Israel, to Miss Ackerman's kindergarten classes. (S. Belkin. Die Poale Zion Bavegung in Canada, 1904-20. Montreal. Action Committee of Labour Zionist Movement in Canada, 1956)

During the same period it elected delegates to a conference to discuss the future of the Jewish Public Library. (Ibid.)

The Mile End Hebrew Loan Syndicate was represented at the People's Alliance, the precursor of the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1915 by Mr. Maze, president and G. Michaelovsky.

The Association participated in forming the Canadian Jewish Congress when its Isaac Mozes and G. Michaelovsky attended the 1919 organizing conference.

In 1919 the Papineau Gemilath Chassodim Cooperative Syndicate was represented by Isaac Malcovitch of 1588 Marquette Street and Mordecai Trehub of 1294 De la Roche St at the 1919 Conference of the Congress.

Activities by the People's Relief Organization in 1916 on behalf of stricken Jewry in Eastern Europe were conducted at populist Mile End "more intensively than anywhere else in Montreal," under the leadership of B. Lachovitzky.

A parallel existed in Montreal with the Italian group and their relations with the Catholic Commission. In 1915 the community felt it also had an interest in

schooling. Bruno Ramirez and Michael Del Balso wrote in their The Italians of Montreal, from Sojourning to Settlement, 1900-1921 (Montreal, Les Editions du courant, 1980, P. 32),

"This may be one of the earliest examples pointing toward a new awareness that Italian settlers in Montreal were taxpayers, with all the implications that this might have had. The first case of ethnic pressure politics occurred in 1915, when Italian voters pledged to fight for the absorption of the parish school into the St. Edouard School Commission, and later into the Montreal Central School Commission."

As they wrote, "The larger school enrollment registered at the parish was not enough to satisfy the educational needs of a community. Italian parents were forced to set up alternative schooling arrangements. The then priest of the Madona della Difensa parish described the numerous cases of classes set up in basements and private halls to provide this essential service."

This was not the end of the National Radical School of Mile End. With the war there came an upsurge in the Jewish population there; many newer arrivals were sympathetic to national and radical ideas. These new arrivals assisted the Mile Enders in opening a school on October 23, 1915 at 27 Buller St. under the sponsorship of the district National Radical School Association, aided by the Young Poale Zion of Mile End. Forty-six pupils enrolled. Solomon Bercovitch was seconded by the Montreal group as teacher. The Mile End National Radical School at 77 Coulard St. was active in December 30, 1915. (Der Veg) By September 1916 there were 60 pupils divided into four classes.

## THE MONTREAL YIDDISH SCHOOL

Immediately after the 1910 convention, Noveck records, "members determined to establish a national radical school. A group of activists met in the home of the Komarovs, the only members with an established home, even with a telephone. The first decision was to name Noveck as the teacher, regardless of his total unfamiliarity with any phase of paedagogy. Available associates were Jacob Slobodsky, S. Bercovitch, Pruzhansky and K. Bercovici."

When the Yiddish school was formed in the city of Montreal, under the name of the Jewish National Radical School (later the Jewish I.L. Peretz School), Schneour presided over the convening meeting on November 14, 1911.

The National Radical School in Montreal opened a Sabbath and Sunday school under the direction of Noveck, Wolf Chaitman and J. Slobodsky. They were soon joined by Bercovitch, Pruzhansky and Seikin.

"We were not concerned with the cost of maintaining the school. The teachers would serve without payment and we would pay the rent from our own pockets. I was paid \$2 a week and Slobodsky would live in one of the classrooms. Our problem was the cost of opening the school which we estimated at \$100, clearly an enormous amount. But Noveck and Slobodsky went collecting and returned with \$30 and one friend who pledged \$12 a year.

"At the beginning it appeared, as M. Shmuelson estimated, that there might be as many as seventeen children enrolling.

"At the opening of the school the possibility of a hundred pupils was envisaged by some, but only fifteen pupils were actually registered. Space was sublet from the pressers' union in the Prince Arthur Hall which was then being completed. But it was not ready on May 15, 1913 when it had been announced that classes would begin. So we moved into a ground floor store for the first weeks, conducted registration in one corner and a storytelling class in another. Capital on hand: \$70; tuition fee was 25¢ per week.

"In the absence of seats, a Dorchester St. carpenter invented a novel series of reading stands, but the pressers refused to allow them in.

"It was decided to add volunteer teachers: American-born Mrs. Chasye Slobodsky and Liba Seiken and Bercovitch.

"There were only collapsible tables; blackboards were not permitted; only a tablet which lay on a bench and the teacher brought each pupil to the tablet and taught him writing. Children were permitted to go to the next room to play with an assistant teacher if they so wished in this institution of liberal education.

"Each teacher was not assigned to instruct his class in all subjects 'lest each of them impress his personal stamp upon the child, an offence against the individual development of the child.' So Slobodsky was the specialist in storytelling, Noveck taught reading and Bercovitch taught fine writing. Finkelstein became the history teacher.

When the school closed after a few months the teachers and pupils continued to meet to play, to read and to discuss Yiddish literature for eight weeks. It reopened at 15 Guilbault St. near Prince Arthur.

"By September the school with 150 pupils had grown to require a home of its own, with classrooms on Guilbeault St. A principal, Talmud Torah teacher H.M. Finkelstein, was engaged with a salary. Classes met three times a week; with pictures on the walls, open on Saturdays till eight in the evening. The teachers remained for long discussions about each pupil, over sandwiches, followed by folk songs, dancing, and then a meeting at which each instructor reported on the tales he told and how he told them. One evening a child was found eleven at night listening in through a keyhole on the teachers' discussions which were based on the loving intuition of the enthusiastic autodidacts.

"One teacher introduced a pupil who wrote humorous sketches, in class to the visiting Sholom Aleichem, prophesying 'He will surpass you one day.'"

Bercovitch recalled an examination of the graduating class in history, on a Sunday with Leon Chazanovitch as the external examiner. The children awakened Bercovitch at five in the morning in quest of some pages missing from their notes. They then went up the mountain to study until the examination began at two in the afternoon and lasted till six, covering Jewish history from Abraham to Ber Borochoy. The children kissed joyfully when they were told all went well. Chazanovitch had tears in his eyes when he paid tribute to the children, "only now have I learned what Montreal education is."

"In May 1914 the school operated by the Poale Zion and Farband and the tailors' union, moved to 1020 Cadieux and opened the first Yiddish kindergarten in America.

"Those early months witnessed a crucial victory within Jewish society in the legitimization of Yiddish. It became clear to all that Yiddish was a proper language of instruction, not a jargon secondary to German or Russian as the tongue of the intelligentsia of immigrant society. It was a full fledged instrument of expression and of literature. It was the knell of assimilation in the Jewish quarter and the assertion of Jewish nationalism. Yiddish speech resounded with new pride as did Yiddish song and folklore. The voices of Kaufman's Chassidic melodies and Pinya Maram's Poale Zionist anthems broke a grave barrier."

As principal H.M. Finkelstein wrote later from Cleveland, "The phenomenon of the Yiddish secular schools opened a new chapter in the history of the Jews of the Americas - a new orientation within the Yiddish intellectual society which bonded them with the Jewish masses and in particular with its labouring class."

A typical citizen, Moses Goldberg, an anarchist, had found a loose page from the old class history instruction notebooks; it dealt with the divisions in ancient Palestine between Pharisees, Saducees and Essenes. "If you can drum this into the heads of our children here, I will give you a medal as well as my contribution." Chaitman invited him into the class. He was won for the school.

Summertime the children would move to the mountain where they had set corners for each group. Sundays was mountain time for the classes; after an hour or two the entire school gathered for an open air concert, attended by a vast crowd. Rebecca Roisenblat, who grew up in Montreal as a Yiddish poet and folklorist, is remembered for her rendering of the women's liturgical "God

of Abraham." One evening, as she concluded her song, an elderly man broke into the circle, pushing a \$10 bill into her hand. "It is more than twenty-five years since I heard a Jewish child speak Yiddish."

Dr. Solomon Gold, then a medical student in his teens, remembered how Chaitman introduced him to the teachers of the school.

"A private house on a poor street; a large sign with its name, a foreign name. Intellectuals, long-haired, pince-nez, speaking with long words, looking down on everybody outside.

"Crooked wooden steps, corridors with noisy children running up and down on the steps with Jewish books and scribblers. Eventually I found a door marked 'Office.' I knocked. Eventually two persons responded, 'Come in.'

"A small room, a desk, chairs, books everywhere, pictures of Jewish writers on the walls. There is no place to sit.

"I came into the little crowded office of the Shule, which was actually the kitchen of a poor, private residence transformed into a place of learning. I came to offer my services gratis as a teacher. There were several volunteer teachers there who spoke of equality and democracy, but who behaved with the haughtiness of an elite. They were the 'intelligentsia', the 'idealists.'

"Three men are talking Yiddish, standing, each word counted as if set in type, ready to print. Speaking such Yiddish is already something.

"The three were Noveck, Chaitman and Bercovitch.

"The first impression: Bercovitch, tall, blond, young giant, exerted all his efforts to restrain his echoing laughter so that his mouthful of teeth should not show, as befits an intellectual.

"Chaitman, tall, thin and quiet, neatly dressed as if on his rendez-vous with his bride. This was a festive day for him.

"Noveck, middle stature, well padded; a large head of curly, rumpled hair which he was always combing back, to no avail. What with controlling his hair and buttoning and unbuttoning his jacket which was bulging, pockets full of newspapers, journals, pencils and ordinary papers, wiping his glasses, coughing occasionally, even as he was conducting a heated discussion, and simultaneously casting out a command, and making a note which he would stuff into an overflowing pocket - he was a man overflowing. But his memory was extraordinary, and he had no need of his notes. It seemed as if his body would not contain his excess of energy. It was a great enthusiasm that had wound a powerful spring.

"Indeed, it was this tension that kept all the wheels turning, singing. Jewish Montreal was materialistic to the point of impudence. It needed his supernatural élan vital, a consuming sacred passion to begin to realize a dream in such a grey coarse reality.

"What was the dream of this Polish Jewish boy, the student in the Beth Hamidrash during these days of promise, I often asked myself, the period of the great messages of nationalism, socialism, the awakening of the labouring class, of the people and its language, of progress and of liberation, of its folklore and its

legendry and folk song; to bring light into its cultural life as a rejuvenated nation, to march hand in hand with other progressive nations mounting to the morrow of a new fraternal humanity?

"Such a dream intoxicated him. Was it naive, theatrical? Yes, he reminded one of the spectacular 'Arise, let us go' prayer which might have appeared melodramatic in a man less wise. His impulsiveness and enthusiasm overflowed, but others about him were captured by his ecstasy and tore themselves into the occasion to act in his new school projects.

"No task was ill befitting, for in each humble effort there was the Peretz conception of 'if not still higher' which elevated labour to a high sublimity. He did not seem to demean himself as he went out to seek donations, for deep within him there warmed a bright morning and his heart sang the melody, 'For from the radical school the next generation will come to me?' He went on his collection proudly and full of joy.

"Chaitman was sitting at a desk, preparing lessons to be hectographed for distribution to the pupils. There was a dignity in him that gave this menial task a sense of sacredness and ritual.

"He caught my attention, this silent man, a realist, among the emotionally charged 'idealists,' who stood about. Yet, amidst their heated discussions, the utopians often turned to Chaitman for his views. I quickly realized he was both the rudder and steadfast wheel, and I was drawn closer to him.

"My offer to teach without pay was regarded by the sophisticates as a joke. Their suppressed smiles were discouraging, until Chaitman declared, 'Let us give him a class and see.'

"Chaitman came to observe me, and after a week's trial he reported that the only qualification I had, as a teacher, was that I could teach; the rest would come in time. I was in.

"Years went by, and I got to know him better. He had been brought up in an orthodox home in Lithuania, in the Tsarist days. A quiet, neatly dressed, well-mannered man, Chaitman was gentle in speech.

"After a long and hard day in the factory, where he was one of the 'hands' (the want ads in the newspapers referred to 'hands' rather than human beings), he would go to his room, wash, shave and dress in his best; and then, like a groom going to meet his bride, he walked to the Shule, where he was transformed into a prince, into the man of mind, heart and soul.

"In time he left the factory to become a full-time teacher in the Shule. For years he persisted under the most difficult financial conditions, until, having married, he became a father.

"It did not take long for the Jewish intelligentsia to discover the house of the Chaitmans, where coffee and conversation abounded. The residence became the 'Beys Haknesses,' and Mr. Chaitman's presence made it a 'Beys Hamedresh.' All the lost souls who needed a place to meet people, to unload their heavy minds and souls, to fulfill themselves, gravitated to the Chaitman household.

"Tolmatch read a good article. J.I. Segal wrote a poem and had to read it to good listeners. Louis Benjamin had a quarrel with the human species,

Rabinovitch was up in arms about some inconsistencies in the world of politics. The artist Aleksander Bercovitch, the Pascals, the Gutherzes and many others came out purer than when they went in. The house really became a Sacred Temple." (Solomon Gold. "Wolf Chaitman, a Man of Dignity," in Viewpoints, vol. 8, no. 1, 1973. Pp. 31-33)

Years later the Adler remembered him,

"As he walked on Main St. with a group of children, often from picnicking on the mountain, singing Yiddish songs, Noveck's inner worth influenced not only the children but, no less, the cynics who remained standing, listening, and possibly thinking.

"The movement needed an ideological consistency; it needed heated debates on every iota, with Noveck at the heart of the understanding. The synthesis between tradition and modernism, nationalism and internationalism, enlightenment and Chassidism, rationalism and legend, the populist language and modern Yiddish, between Hebrew and Yiddish, even the spelling of the name Yiddish took evenings of meetings, at which he always arrived with a stock of arguments, as if his life depended on them.

"Noveck loved the children, the attractive ones or the others, children who would come after the hours in public school, to sit in poor narrow rooms to learn Yiddish, to read Peretz, to sing hearty folk songs - how can they not be attractive?

"He loved the simple Jewish folk songs. Sometimes tears would appear in his eyes at the final rehearsal before a concert. The perfection of a melody, with several hundred children, strangers only yesterday, proclaimed the modest, bashful folk songs with so much pride and warmth.

"Children would cling to him. Wherever he would be children would soon assemble around him screeching, noisy; and he, always Puckish, cheery, bashful, but with an open smile, would seek to out-scream them, would fail with his smile and would wait cheerfully until they would restore order among themselves, for they wanted to hear what 'Teacher Noveck' had to say.

"Please,' and they pleased.

"We worked together for years in the schools, respected each other but never approached each other closely. Possibly, he had found his way and I was still seeking mine...

"I was pained when he left the school and the city; I, a mere university student, entrusted with the principalship.

"I entered the school the day after he left. I felt it was somewhat like the day after a carnival. I remembered the sad melody, 'What happens when the synagogue is shut?'

"The school was not shut, but I could sensibly feel in every corner that Noveck is no longer here." ("Teacher Noveck" in Adler, Sept. 7, 1952)

In his recollections, from New York, of the founding of the I.L. Peretz School, H. Noveck chose to dwell on "the wonderful camaraderie of those precious years

of his youth, his own, and of the school when all was so green and juicy, when environment, heart and soul united and created the world of the school.

"Many waters have flowed since those 'green' months and years. Some are already in the World of Truth and their graves affirm that our city is our permanent home. The present community consists largely of more recent arrivals; but there remain sufficient clear footsteps and signs of our times, the first. Not only folds in the hearts of comrades, but concrete monuments such as I.L. Peretz School, the Jewish Public Library, the somewhat newer Jewish People's School. The Canader Adler is still appearing, Lazarus Book Store, the Baron de Hirsch Institute and its library which had been the centre of assembly of the 'green' intellectuals, notably the nationalist-socialists.

"We ought to celebrate the jubilee of Prince Arthur Hall where the Jewish National Radical School was born and where all Jewish unions and radical organizations were formed. Above all, there is still the mountain where all newly-arrived Montrealers passed their summer festive days which were the more numerous on week days because of the frequent economic crises.

"But who cared? We were young, and busied with the problems of the universe and were engaged in modern literature; then it was Knut Hamsun. So we read. We had no families to provide for.

"So when the mild Passover days came, we captured the mountain. We discussed, heatedly, historical materialism and idealism, anarchism, socialism, Poale Zionism, territorialism, Bundism and, of course, Yiddishism and Hebraism. May we record that we turned Montreal into a centre of Yiddishism and a fortress for Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky?

"When the arguments became weighty, we began to slap each other around for the pleasure of it, or string out a song. Old Montrealers still remember the first folk tunes and Chassidic melodies which we also hummed at peanut banquets in the small Vitebsk Hall at 199 Main St. or on late evening walks in the parks. What truly youthful romantic intentions we injected in, 'Maidele du Shaine' (You Beautiful Maid) or 'Du Narisher Bocher' (You Foolish Lad)."



## A PUPIL REMEMBERS

Esther Kershman, a graduate of the National Radical School, writes,

"I've forgotten what I had for breakfast, or if I had any, but ---

"I remember: the school near Prince Arthur Street on Cadieux Street, near a lane, which I reached by crossing the road from my home on Colonial Avenue, going through the lane towards Prince Arthur St. and there it was, the Jewish National Radical School, across the road from where Rabbi Judah Rosenberg lived, my grandfather constantly with him.

"It had been a residence, not different from those around it. The interior was the same as when it had been built. The bedrooms were classrooms; the living room was our auditorium, and the kitchen also served a purpose for treats now and then. But for me, that school had a radiance. It was a fun place, a learning abode, a home away from home with loving adults caring for me.

"I remember: the loving atmosphere in that school, the teachers - mine was Shloime Gold, later, Chaitman; the pot-belly stove in the classroom that waited to be lit when our teacher arrived from McGill on those cold winter days, my aunt Pearl. She was one of the teachers; so was Isadore Ortenberg. The two later married.

"I remember: my grandfather's edict, 'You'll have to leave that school.' He heard they make the stove on Shabbos. For a while, I sneaked to school. After a time, my going there was accepted.

"I remember: Auntie Pearl wanted to go to Macdonald. There was no money. Chaitman, who brought eggs to sell from his farm in La Macaza (and had little of his own) paid the \$28 for her every month. 'You'll pay me back later,' he said, 'Meanwhile, go.' She later taught in Dufferin School.

"I remember: how school was a delight. On Sundays, outside the school, and on the sidewalk, Shloime Bercovitch, one of the teachers, teased us, played with us, pointed his long stick at us, 'Laig avec die hent far Shabbos' at which you quickly hid your hands behind your back. This is only icing on the cake. It was great.

"When I look in my mirror, now in the autumn of my life, I see a grand lady, very conscious of my identity, with a firm conviction of my heritage, and integrated into the larger community.

"It was ever thus... but how did it happen? To whom do I owe it? I am convinced that it was the school that I attended at the age of five and remained there until I was in my adolescence. In the cultural confusion of which I was a member, it was the early influence of the school and my family that gave me the security of who I am, that is my background and the understanding (carried on to my own children) that one cannot go forward until one is secure in one's past.

"I doubt whether the principal, Mr. Herschel Noveck, and the teachers had ever before had any teaching experience; certainly not teacher training. But the teaching was ideal. It merged basic studies in Yiddish with a combination of its

literature, Yiddish songs, stage plays, group activities in clubs supervised by the teachers, the pride in belonging to a great nation, the reality of the world and our history as seen through the prism of the life experience of generation upon generation of Jews. The teaching immersed us in the daily struggle deep in the heart and mind of the worker (we sang the 'International' at the beginning of each school session), in our nation's griefs and smiles and spirituality. Occasionally, a great poet or writer would visit us. I remember Chaim Zhitlowsky coming to us. We had, in a body, cleaned the school, decorated it, provided a concert for him, wore our best clothes, and revered him.

"It was a 6 or 7 day week, after the Protestant school dismissal. It was 6 days for me. Erev Shabbos meant washing my grandmother's kitchen floor and helping my mother. Saturdays was choir time at a large store front on the Main Street with Mr. Konrad Bercovici, and later Mr. Rosemarin, and Sunday was a longer and larger school attendance.

"The teaching staff was a cohesive group of young, enthusiastic people, all Poale Zion adherents. My teacher Shloime, later Dr. Gold, who, I noted, never had the money to buy a winter coat. He was a student at McGill, for whom we waited in those cold, dreary winter days to come and light the pot-belly stove in our classroom. He was a wonderful example of a scholar with grim determination, who would eventually combine his ethnic pride with his English surroundings.

"Of course one must not deny that my home reinforced my school. At home we spoke Yiddish; the school teaching of our holidays was reflected in the traditions of the home, and my sense of importance grew with the facts, dates, songs and the history which I could add to these events.

"My parents 'showed me off' to all and sundry, but it also induced a separation between me and my siblings.

"The Yiddish inflection I was taught at school was not the same as that was spoken at home. My parents spoke a 'tief Polish: flysh mit byner' Yiddish. They resented my Lithuanian, I saw that they soon adopted it, but with resentment.

"The influence of the school also extended to later life, to my politics, to my feelings as a person of substance. I remember a luncheon at the home of the eminent Dr. Wilder Penfield, when he asked me, 'You have a holiday at this time of year, Christmas, a kind of Jewish Christmas, haven't you?'

"Boldly, I answered him, 'Hardly a Jewish Christmas, since we don't believe in Christ; but we do have a holiday: it is called "Chanukah."'

"Tell me about it,' he demanded.

"I did."

## THE MARCH OF THE YEARS

Caiserman had come close to the Labour Zionist movement shortly after the founding of the I.L. Peretz School in Montreal. He had become a friend of S. Schneour and of other Poale Zionists. He had been a member of the Zionist Youth Organization as early as 1914. At the end of 1915 or early 1916 he and his wife, Sarah, joined the party and became outstanding leaders of the movement in Canadian Jewry.

During the war the National Radical School sponsored a concert on behalf of Jewish War Sufferers, December 21, 1915.

By 1916 the National Radical School, with its ten classes (three in Hebrew) was located at 2010 Cadieux; Poale Zionist Morgenstern was secretary.

In 1918 the Radical School acquired a three-storey building at 834 Cadieux St. from a French music school, on the initiative of L. Zuker, H.M. Caiserman, J. Magid and H. Hershman. The dedication took place in the courtyard on a Sunday, with Chinese lanterns. Pinye Maram led the Chassidic dancing after liquor dealer chairman Rosenthal opened a cask of whiskey.

The magnificent structure, with rows of trees, remained the home of the now I.L. Peretz School (since 1919) until the depression of 1930 when it lost the property.

Sharp differences of opinion among the founders in regard to the school program, especially in regard to the languages to be taught the pupils - between Yiddish and Hebrew - led to a rupture in the National Radical School.

The Jewish National Radical School (in 1918) formulated its program in regard to Jewish languages.

"We recognize Yiddish as the living language of the majority of the Jewish masses, and we assert that the Jewish child must receive his education in our school in Yiddish.

"Hebrew must be recognized as an advanced subject in our elementary school and may therefore be taught in the higher classes as supplementary to progressive education, as an introduction to ancient Jewish culture and lore. (Note: Hebrew may be taught in Hebrew or in Yiddish.) As we consider Hebrew an advanced subject, we cannot consider it obligatory in the higher classes but as optional." (Wiseman, Memoir, P. 50)

These schools were cultural and political centres for their societies, with a very mature program of adult education. In appraising their place in our history it will be difficult to determine whether they were schools for children, cultural centres, ideological sources of inspiration and confirmation or literary clubs. Following Harkavy, we find such names in the Montreal circles as Reuben Brainin, Yehudah Kaufman, Shloimeh Wiseman, J.I. Segal, Jacob Zipper, Samson Dunsky and Mordecai Hussid, contemporaneously with B. Sheps and Abraham Golomb in Winnipeg and Isaiah Rabinovitch (or Rabinowitch) in Toronto. They constitute a constellation which it is difficult to call simply a school; or else they are a new definition of a school in society. When we add to this professional personnel the names of such school activists as Moishe Dickstein, H.M.

Caiserman, L. Zuker, and a host of others it becomes clear that we are viewing a world with many dimensions which do not have their parallel in other centres on the continent.

The new schools thus formed reflected the broad thinking of the vast and varied gamut of the secular immigrant society, clearly distinct from the established Canadian Jewish society. But it was not the product of a homogeneous European immigrant society. It differed richly within itself on a range of vital subjects and on how its members sought to educate their children.

They varied in the measure of importance each of them attached to Hebrew and to Yiddish and in the degree of their attachment to religion and to Zionism. It was on these differences that the schools in Montreal and Winnipeg splintered into People's and Peretz schools; the former in each case being more actively Hebraist, religious and Zionist.

Being strongly ideological, they boasted of having on their staff and in their periphery leading intellectual personalities who influenced their society and the community very profoundly. This mobilization for social influence was deliberate, for the aims and strategies determined by their ideologies were concerned with community organization. They also utilized the media of democratic persuasion such as the press, the lecture platform, mass membership, conferences of institutions and adult education in the advancement of their social causes.

One such topic was their attitude to the Jewish religion.

At one end of the scale, simplistically, secular atheists felt that there is no role for religion in their thinking; their intention was to do without faith and theology and to ignore and even uproot all the religious elements that wind about every root and stem and flower of Jewish culture. In its extreme form that ultimately became the program of the Jewish schools in Red Russia. Even there the measure of success in this program is debatable. Stalin and his enemies, the apologists for Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union agree that this culture remained deeply traditionally Jewish.

In Canada the secularists were divided; they ranged in extremism (or consistency) from Communists or the Communist-tinged, such as the Winchevsky schools and Vancouver's Peretz School, through the Workmen's Circles which were influenced somewhat by Poland's Bund, to the Labour Zionist Peretz schools, to other Labour Zionists more Hebraically oriented such as the People's schools.

For the problem has been that in eliminating religion there was excluded a tremendous volume of Jewish lore which was precious to those who love all phases of the Jewish heritage. The educational issues included teaching of Hebrew, Zionism, Jewish traditions and festivals.

On this ideological basis the secularist movement developed a profound approach and a thorough secular scholarship in the areas of religious studies. This was particularly meaningful as they were among the first on the continent to apply the scientific, critical and academic approach to Jewish religious culture.

This involved a fine sophistication which revised Jewish history in nationalistic terms, developed an intense respect for old Jewish values and a useful filtering

out of the grosser and less acceptable superstitions which had attached to religious culture as it seemed to exist in the community at the time.

The fruits of this secular concern with religion became evident in the paedagogic history of such schools as the People's schools, in the Hebrew literary work of such men as Jacob Zipper, Isaiah Rabinovitch of Toronto, Shloimeh Wiseman, and in the Midrash translation of S. Dunsky. In point of fact, authentic Jewish religious studies in Canada were for decades at the hands of such secularists as Samson Dunsky, Jacob Zipper and Shloimeh Wiseman.

This was one form of the unique enthusiasm, the warm folk-kinship within this newly Canadian society which was, in effect, an intense flame of new Judaism. Its realization was a constant concern involving a very large proportion of its populace very deeply.

The state of mind of the young intellectuals of this period is well documented.

"Those who had but recently arrived from Europe knew Yiddish well, but coming under the influence of the assimilatory socialists, who were dominant in this society, they were reserved about accepting the Yiddish jargon. There was something superior about not knowing Yiddish. They spoke the language of their origin badly, and they were just beginning to master English. The languages of their serious reading and the idiom of their ideologies were Russian or German. So they continued half articulate, half dumb, in anything but their own jargon.

"Suddenly there came the Yiddishist group and the Yiddish schools and removed the tape from their mouths. It suddenly became stylish; Yiddish speech became a commandment.

"The children sang Yiddish and so did their listeners, their parents, those who attended school concerts." (Wolf Chaitman, in I.L. Peretz School Jubilee Book, P. 28)

Such laureates of Yiddish literature as Sholom Aleichem, Morris Rosenfeld, S. Niger, Zhitlowsky, David Pinsky and Yehoash visited the school at graduations and saw its pupils as the bearers of their cultural heritage.

A children's concert in the Prince Arthur Hall after the outbreak of the First World War was attended by 1500 pupils, parents and friends.

Mordecai Reisler of the National Radical School Jewish Children's Club formulated the crisis in world Jewry exploded by the war. The musical rendering of Simon Frug's "Brothers and Sisters, Do Have Mercy" continued his appeal, the children's choir directed by J. Rosemarin. The program included the popular "Eli, Eli" and "My Ko Mashma Lon."

Schneour wrote, "Education was rooted in the orthodox tradition, in the intimacy of the home by parents often of high competence, at other times by better organized congregations. These educational facilities were soon supplemented by new tendencies which found their drive in the currents of secular Judaism, well nourished by intellectual ideologies of the most advanced European revolutions: socialism, Bundism, Zionism, even proletarian internationalism.

"They were attached to the Jewish tradition, but perceived it in the light of the new nationalism. Some of these schools devoted all their energies to stimulate

the national character of the Jewish people, its identity as an oppressed group and its class awareness - all in a profound rupture, at times, with religious and messianic thought."

Concurrently with this activity in the new immigrant community there was the continuing life of those who had been Canadian for a longer span of time, some of them tracing back - at least as an institution - to 1760. Theirs was a cooler temperament, a more relaxed concern about matters Jewish, but it was not necessarily less involved, religious, personal or profound for all this.

The older synagogues in Montreal and Toronto continued their Jewish instruction for their young, even if during fewer hours in the week. They had to consider the readiness of their children to give up their time of play and of public school homework on the one hand, and on the other, the need of the parents to transmit a certain body of the Jewish lore to their children.

The Biblical image of the Flame of Faith appeared much more intense and consuming, and possibly more illuminating, in the society of the new Canadians than of the old settlers. The difference was marked and caused a profound change in the community.

The educational experiences of "uptown" may have appeared relatively unimportant in extent, initiative and in the colour of personalities. But in the perspective of history these mild schools have nevertheless proven valid in the evolution of later Canadian Jewry.

The reconciliation developed when the children of the immigrants came to feel, to act and to react very much as did the older settlers on the one hand and when, on the other hand, history "hotted up" the concern of the more Canadianized. It might have taken two world wars, a Lenin, a Hitler and a Jewish state to do so, but Jewish historic patterns worked out in Canada, as elsewhere.

Another early development that was then born proved of great formative importance much later: the settlement concept in social work which developed into the very great institution of the YM-YWHA's.

Originally this institution developed a philanthropic venture as an extension of immigrant assistance. We can separate out the adult men and women who believed that something social, civic and educational should be done for others, the less fortunate, not for themselves or for their own children.

This dates far back in community history, when the girls of the less affluent families were taught sewing - and were morally guided by kind and wealthier ladies. Montreal had a Jewish Endeavour Sewing School in 1902. The boys' movement in its origin had this thread of civics and humanitarianism until its later development into the Y. This was the spirit that animated the cadet corps and the Jewish Lads' Brigade back in 1898 in Montreal.

In the course of time these became community services needed as much by the established as by the underprivileged. This development is part of the history of social welfare, from philanthropy to society, to community service.

The intellectual ferment in Montreal Jewry's education did not go unnoticed in unfriendly French Canada. L'Événement of Quebec City foresaw with fear that "tomorrow the Jews will ask for their own schools which the legislature will not

be able to refuse. They will then ask for a Council of Public Instruction, and how shall we answer them?" (Nov. 27, 1912; cited in La Vérité, Nov 29)

A historic event in the immigrant society came about, in part, by the nearly simultaneous arrival in Montreal in 1912 of Reuben Brainin and of Yehudah Kaufman in 1913, two towering personalities in Jewish culture, both prophets of Hebraism in world Judaism. Their weight tilted the precarious balance on the language issue within the Jewish National Radical School. The pro-Hebrew force was supported by the Central Committee of the Poale Zion based in New York, which delegated their secretary H. Ehrenreich to Montreal, where he formally expelled Noveck from the party, even as Noveck was almost physically attacked.

One of the great Hebraic evenings in early Canadian history took place in Montreal in May, 1913 (14 of Iyar) when the Hebrew Centre fêted the Zionist giant Nahum Sokolov in the Baron de Hirsch Institute, under the chairmanship of Reuben Brainin, then editor of the Adler. The speakers included Yehudah Kaufman, Rabbi Herman Abramowitz, the Rev. Meldola de Sola, leader of the Shaar Hashomayim Congregation Lazarus Cohen and his brother, Rabbi Hirsch Cohen.

The arrangements committee included author S. Talpis, B.M. Weiner, journalist I.J. Yampolsky, Poale Zionist M.L. Sack (brother of B.G. Sack), H. Lang, B.Z. Speier, and Talmud Torah principals J. Skiebelsky and H. Lozinsky. (reported by E. Harris, Congress Archives researcher)

The Hebraists in the secular Jewish school administration felt strong enough to maintain a school of their own and decided to found their own Jewish People's School in 1914. An informal committee of Poale Zionists headed by Kaufman, Dickstein, A. Parnas and Meltzer established the new school which was soon joined by Mayberg, Z. Wolofsky and Esner.

Among the founding members of the Jewish People's School were Z. Wolofsky, D.H. Lazarus (The father of film-maker Felix Lazarus, of journalist Charles Lazarus and the grandfather of the young journalist David Lazarus; not to be confused with the anarchist bookseller), E. Greenberg and L. Meltzer.

"Ben Joseph" recalls "several Poale Zionists met in the Jewish Library to plan a school in harmony with modern education for a young generation worthy of continuing our ancient history and of absorbing the ancient and the new Hebrew and Yiddish literature. That was where we raised our first \$10." (Fifth Souvenir Book of Jewish People's School, 1920. Pp. 4-5)

The first home of this school was rented in 1915 at 502 St. Urbain St. Installation and cleaning were by the founders. The first teachers were volunteers. The only one paid was the principal, Abraham Samuel Sacher - who was also secretary, collector - at the monthly salary of \$50, half of the school budget. Pupils' fees were 10¢ weekly; 25¢ for three siblings.

Enrollment was 150 pupils during the first half year, mostly boys.

After these first months the day school was regularized, and teachers were engaged at \$7 monthly; classes five days a week, two hours per day.

For years crises persisted. The pipes froze and classes were discontinued for a month. In the face of this catastrophe, a dozen members contributed \$1000

towards the purchase of the school's own home within the year. It was dedicated in 1920.

When his People's School was five years old, Moishe Dickstein described "the painful Jewish educational scene on the American continent: on the one hand the continuation of the crippled, old-type Cheder in an American atmosphere; on the other hand an earnest modern school, full of idealism, directed to humane and Jewish education with a focussed perception of language and of national problems. All this while a city such as Montreal, with over 12,000 children in public school, having only 2,000 attending Jewish educational institutions.

"We opened our school with our beloved Yehudah Kaufman as principal, director and secretary and our teaching staff, frankly often stumbling in the dark as they adjusted our program to our classes and our circumstances."

As late as September 1924 the People's School, then located at 953 St. Urbain St. and soon at its new location at 2001 Waverley, corner of Fairmount, felt it necessary to attach to its printed Program of Studies a defensive note, "Due to the libelous misrepresentation of the program of our school, we request you to kindly read this pamphlet containing the detailed program of our school."

For many decades, in particular after the advent of Shloimeh Wiseman to the leadership of the Jewish People's School, Yehudah Kaufman continued to be its intellectual beacon in Montreal.

## IN TORONTO

A parallel movement established schools impelled by the same philosophy and title in Toronto, Calgary and Winnipeg during the same period. These schools were all similar in their insistence on up-to-date teaching methods, organization and curricula, on the inclusion of Yiddish, the modernization of Hebrew and on labour secularism.

They varied in the relative importance they attached to Hebrew and to Yiddish, and in the degree of attachment to Zionism. It is on these differences that the schools in Montreal and Winnipeg splintered into People's and Peretz Schools; the former in each case being more actively Zionist and Hebraist.

Being strongly ideological, these schools boasted of having on their teaching staff and in their periphery leading intellectual personalities who influenced their environing society and the community profoundly. This mobilization for social influence was organized deliberately. They also utilized the media of revolutionaries as did their counterparts back in Europe. They were developing their own philosophy of Judaism. They organized politically into labour groups, atheistic movements, for literary activities, for libraries, for Yiddishism, for socialism, for anarchism and for other causes.

Educational reform was an essential for them, and activity in this area became central to their lives.

These schools were therefore social and political centres for their society, with a very mature program of adult education.

S. Wiseman recorded the formation of the first of these schools on the continent: the Toronto I.L. Peretz School organized by the Zionist-Territorialists in 1910. Later the school was taken over by the Workmen's Circle who also established a school in Winnipeg. ("Modern Jewish Schools in Canada," in 1932 Souvenir Edition of the Adler. Pp. 86-87)

The Toronto group for modern, secular Jewish education included outstanding workers such as P. Frumharz, educator I. Matenko and journalist A. Rhinewine.

In Toronto, Matenko, a native of Makarov in the Minsk Gubernate, who had come to Canada with his wife and children in 1906, recalls the founding of the National Radical School in Toronto at the same time.

Inspired by the decision of the National Convention of the Poale Zion and the National Labour Farband in Montreal in 1910, the Toronto activists met and decided to establish a school of that type.

"We made a collection among our own members, with contributions ranging from 25 cents to 50 cents and added up the proceeds to a total of \$10. A number of members of the Socialist Territorialist Organization volunteered to teach: A. Rhinewine, E.H. Bromberg, A. Goldman, L. Koldowsky and P. Frumhartz as well as Matenko, who had had some years of teaching overseas.

"Registration opened on August, 1911 and forty children reported, significantly only four were boys." (Shul Buch issued on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the

Workmen's Circle-I.L. Peretz Schools, Toronto, 1936, Pp. 11-13.) "By the end of the year enrolment had risen to 110."

Frumharz observes that the percentage of girls in the Yiddish schools was so high because parents preferred to send their sons to Cheder for Bar Mitzvah training.

L. Koldowsky supported the Yiddish school. "For twenty years a militant socialist, he finds his political views consistent with his dedication to the Jewish National Radical School recently founded in Toronto to teach children Jewish history, Yiddish literature, music, legends and tales, and to imbue the pupils with a love for their people."

The activist wrote, "It is in perfect accord with socialism to teach our children to be close to our people, for every socialist is bound to assist in the development of his nation's language and cultural treasures. Unfortunately some of ours have confused internationalism, which is the union of all nations, with cosmopolitanism which is the destruction of all nations, a concept remote from universal socialism." (Adler, Oct. 22, 1911)

"One of the members, a carpenter, knocked together a number of boards and created long tables and benches and two boards painted black."

As they decided to have instruction in music, one of the members found a copy of Brunow's book of Jewish songs with music. The problem was a music teacher. But one of the young members had met a young man in the shop who could read music. A delegation went to visit him and so H. Rigelhaupt was mobilized as the first teacher of music in the school.

Paul Frumharz, Ontario pioneer of this movement, confirmed that the Toronto Free School was founded in July 1911 at 241 Simcoe St. by Labour Zionists, Socialist Territorialists, anarchists, the newly organized Workmen's Circle and others. Like in the Montreal experience, there were conflicts about Yiddish and Hebrew.

Frumharz remembered, "The Circle had been founded in 1908 with three branches consisting largely of socialists, territorialists and anarchists.

"The school removed successively to 260 Richmond St. W. and, in 1914 to 194 Beverley. In 1912 there was a branch at the Junction. The branch on Claremont north of Dundas was hampered by the Italian children who attacked the Jewish pupils from this Jewish Free School.

"The radical school, opened only a few weeks ago, is open to all children at no cost, and is not religiously affiliated. Enrolment numbers 55 children. A class which had never seen the Hebrew alphabet learned fifteen letters in five lessons and is already able to decipher words composed of these letters. Music teacher Rigelhaupt has organized a choir which performed at the formal opening of the school, in Zion Hall 1911.

"Among the teachers were volunteers who rearranged their factory working hours to enable them to teach.

"The Jewish National Radical School of Toronto, formed by the Socialist Society and the Workmen's Circle, were conducting six classes in Yiddish language, grammar, Jewish history, legends, literature, folk songs and festivals. The

Passover festival was marked by reading from Peretz, Sholom Aleichem and A. Reisen. The school 'aims at the return of the nation's children to their faith,' declared J. Matenko, principal."

Encouraged by socialist J. Simpson, member of the Board of Education, the Jewish committee petitioned the municipal body for the use of one of the public school buildings after class hours several evenings a week.

The Yiddish committee explained that it was important for immigrant children to enjoy parental influence. But the children naturally spoke only English, and the parents had not yet acquired the Canadian tongue. It was therefore beneficial for the children to learn Yiddish in order to maintain the family link, they pleaded.

The response came as a backlash. "You are correct in emphasizing parental supervision of children. But your proposal is impractical. We need to teach the parents English," the school authorities replied.

Toronto's morning newspapers echoed their Board of Education in lengthy editorials: the Jewish educationalists are conspiring to destroy the unity of Canada which is already suffering from bilingualism. (Cited by S. Belkin, Pp. 237-38)

Between 1915 and 1918 the internal conflict in Toronto with the Hebrew-inclined wing sharpened and A. Rhinewine initiated the Peretz Institute at 5 Grange Road.

There existed two continental coordinating bureaus for the new modern, Yiddish school systems. The bureau of the Socialist Territorialists, with affiliation in Chicago, was located in Toronto with Comay as its secretary; and a Poale Zionist office in New York headed by Ehrenrich. The Montreal school subscribed to both.

The Workmen's Circle, which had a strong branch in Toronto, assumed responsibility for this school after the retirement of the Poale Zion.

## EMBATTLED ORTHODOXY

Religious Jews were quickly aware of the profound challenge of these new educational institutions and combatted them vigorously. They were bitterly attacked by the orthodox as virtually Christian conversionists and as traitors to Judaism. They almost threatened their ultimate weapon: labelling them missionary (i.e., Christian) schools, they implied reading their proponents out of the Jewish community. L. Meltzer wrote of "The Excommunication of the First Yiddish School." (New York, Unser Shul, vol. 4, no. 2, Feb. 1934. Pp. 43-44)

Paul Frumharz (the name is resonant of orthodoxy) recalled that the Toronto anarchists "carried on a Yom Kippur Ball annually with dancing at Oddfellows Hall or the Labour Hall. This lasted until the twenties, when it ceased. On one occasion there was an altercation when one of them made a point of eating in front of the Shul. Rabbis in those days frequently preached against them, referring to them as 'Meshumodim' and warned parents against enrolling children in their schools where they would be 'farfirt' (led astray)"

In 1912 the late Rabbi Jacob Gordon pronounced a 'Cherem' (excommunication) against the National Radical School with all the accompanying rites: black candles, Sefer Torah, etc. The reason was that they had a picnic in Lampton Park on a Saturday. The 'Cherem' created no noticeable difference and left no effect.

Archie B. Bennett, one of the founders of the Canadian Jewish Congress, then youthful editor of the Canadian Jewish Times, expressed another position in regard to the "Violation of Religious Precepts by Jewish Organizations" in Toronto and in Montreal, (Aug. 16, 1912),

"Quite a commotion has been caused in Jewish circles in Toronto lately by the Freie Schule in arranging an outing for the children on a Saturday.

"Many Jews regarded this open desecration of the Sabbath, by people who pose as Jewish nationalists and who consider themselves fit persons to instruct the Jewish youth, as a gross insult not only to the Jewish religion but to the Jewish nationality as well. The Toronto synagogues and several Zionist societies have expressed their resentment of that misguided move by the 'Yiddishists' in unmistakable terms, and have taken steps to have the children of parents who have any self-respect withdrawn from the school.

"The Toronto school action was devoid of tact and national good taste. Young and materially weak, it can alienate sympathy and antagonize even liberal people."

Brainin, himself not a constant frequenter of synagogues, challenged the paedagogues of the Toronto National Radical Jewish School, "Are you committed to a Jewish generation educated in schools where religion and Hebrew are banned? What will keep your children loyal to their nation? solely on their knowledge of Yiddish? A Judaism based on literature which began with Mendele Mocher Sephorim possesses no roots, no soul, no vitality or cultural fertility. It will never withstand the force of the exile world and the influence of the cultures of the nations among whom we live. Can a house of cards withstand a storm?"

"If the founders of the new Yiddish had not themselves studied in Chadorim and Yeshivot in their childhood, if they had attended People's Schools which desecrated the Jewish day of repose with Sabbath picnics, they would not have the desire which animates them to ensure that their children remain Jews." (Adler, Sept. 6, 1912)

Chazanovitch responded, "Is there any distance between Rabbi Brainin, the great European, and a fanatical village rabbi? The sole difference between them is that one preached from a pulpit and the other from the columns of a newspaper typeset on the Sabbath. Say what you may, in this case our respect is rather directed towards the ignorant small town rabbi who mostly believes what he says and acts as he believes.

"As to the Jewish Sabbath being the greatest and most important social political reform, and the highest national and social institution, what is rest? Is it praying and stuffing yourself with Cholent and Kugel in the old tradition? Can mankind lose much by going out to free, beautiful nature?" (Folkszeitung)

L. Koldowsky recalls that on a Saturday the Gabbay of the McCaul Street Synagogue interrupted the services to warn that "a great catastrophe is threatening Toronto Jewry. A school has been established where Jewish children are being converted to Christianity. Young Jewish boys and girls are being taken from the Jewish faith. It's a shame. We have to declare war against them."

A delegation from the school visited the capmaker in his factory and warned him of the consequences of his attack upon the Yiddish school, which he saw as serious competition to the Talmud Torah. He was told that the Yiddish group was aware of his private life, including his playing the horses on Saturdays and possibly other sins, all the graver in the light of his moral pretensions.

He surrendered, and the following Sabbath he stood at the reading stand in the synagogue and withdrew his accusations. ("Thus was the Yiddish School Born," in the Shul Buch, 25th Anniversary Issue of the Workmen's Circle Peretz School, Toronto, 1936. Pp. 22-28)

In Winnipeg the orthodox group fought these "Christian missionaries" and put them under Cherem. This antagonism sufficed to lose the National Radical School the quarters they had secured in the Aberdeen Public School in 1914. The loose coalition of Poale Zion, Socialists, Anarchists, Territorialists and Bundists was forced to find other quarters the following year.

In Montreal A. Parnas recalled the intensive campaign against the modern schools which was conducted by orthodoxy who saw these schools literally as Christian missionary agencies. Classes on Saturdays were the least offensive factors of these secular schools; they were seen as leading the children to conversion to Christianity. That was the theme of monitory sermons in the synagogues. School activists were insulted on city streets.

The schools convened open air meetings to respond to these accusations, and the two sides came to blows.

The Orthodox party convened a public meeting to unmask the Yiddish "missionaries" in Prince Arthur Hall, but when Yehudah Kaufman asked for the right to respond, the partisans of orthodoxy left the hall en masse. (Jubilee Book, Pp. 66-67)

At a meeting of prominent Jewish citizens of Montreal held in the Adath Yeshurun Synagogue on the 29th of Sivan 1916, the following resolution of protest was signed by 19 rabbis and 69 other citizens:

"Whereas this terrible war has destroyed the ancient centres of Judaism, thus making it necessary for those Jews who are left to remain true to the religion and to take care that in our Talmud Torahs and Hebrew schools there shall be taught the Tanach, Talmud and above all religion and the fear of heaven, and to stand on guard against those who entrap Jewish children under the pretense that they are being taught Yiddish or nationalism, whereas in truth the last remaining spark of religion for which we have fought for thousands of years is being eliminated.

"And Whereas these so-called National Radical and Jewish People's Schools are anti-Yiddish, anti-religious and against our holy Torah, since it has been proved by reliable witnesses that in their schools the Sabbath and other religious precepts are brazenly transgressed:...

"We warn the Jewish public against the awful danger with which Judaism is faced because of this anti-religious movement; and at the same time an appeal should be made to the conscience of the leaders of this dangerous movement so that they may withdraw their depraved influence, and so that the children may return to the holy heights...

"A great danger hovers over our heads! We are being robbed of our children! Our holy religion is being uprooted from amongst them. The danger is very great, for these robbers are masked. They do not show themselves in their true colours. They do not openly reveal their motives. We refer to the National Radical and Jewish People's Schools. The term 'national' misleads you into believing that the schools are Jewish schools (Chadorim), whereas in fact these schools are against the Jewish religion; they practice the desecration of the Sabbath and our Jewish religious commandments.

"Is it not bad enough that because of circumstances, we cannot guard our grown-up children from breaking the Sabbath, that we should with our own hands pervert our small children, the holy lambs, the only ones whom we can still protect?...

"Do not support the schools where our holy religion is hated and despised and do not send your children to them.

"Leaders of the National Radical Schools!

"Although your deeds are perverted, nevertheless we would like to believe that your intentions are good but that you have gone astray. Think again of what you are doing. You are uprooting the old and ever new holy Torah which has lived with us for thousands of years and you are exchanging it for petty songs in Yiddish. You claim to be nationalists. You state that you wish to acquaint Jewish children with their history and with their heroes and great men who sacrificed themselves for Judaism.

"Have you thought for a moment who these great men were? Who inspired them to accomplish great things if not our holy religion? Who permitted themselves to be burnt at the stake by the Spanish Inquisition? They were men like the Holy Abarbanel and certainly not men whose Judaism consisted of a few songs in jargon with which to mislead naive women.

"You are our own children, our own flesh and blood! Consider our great distress, our dismay when we see how our holy Torah, our only inheritance is despised. Woe unto us that this has happened in our time!

"Jewish children! Awaken in yourself the spark of Judaism. Turn away from evil things! Cease from your perverted ways. Employ your youth, your strength and your energy for purposes useful for our suffering people.

"Leave the education of the children in the hands of those who have done it so successfully for thousands of years. Tear not, pluck not, do not embitter and rend asunder our embittered hearts! Return to us and we will return unto you. We hope that you will meet our words with the same sincerity in which we express them and we sign this appeal in great suffering and with fatherly love."

H. Noveck responded to the orthodox in the Adler of July 15, 1916.

"A resolution of protest was published in today's Adler signed by the local rabbis and other Jews, and directed against the National Radical School and the Jewish People's Schools. The resolution was phrased in a manner which did not warrant a reply. We find it necessary however, to give an explanation to the Jews of Montreal and to the parents of the children so that they may not find themselves under a false impression.

"Ever since the National Radical Schools were founded about five years ago, the local rabbis have never ceased to persecute us. They use every effort and every means with which to fight our schools, and in their fight they have forgotten one of the basic principles of the Jewish religion, i.e., that a thorough and honest investigation should precede accusations. We could at least have expected such an investigation on the part of the framers of the protest resolution. Unfortunately this was not the case.

"The resolution states that we entrap children under the pretense of nationalism, and that in actual fact we teach them something else. That is not the truth. The National Radical Schools were not established for the purpose of entrapping anybody. These schools are the result of a movement which has arisen during the last few years among the Jewish working masses in America.

"An inner revolt is taking place at present in Jewish life. Old, outworn forms are being exchanged for new forms. Both assimilation and the dogmatic forms of Jewish religion have lost their foundations, and the progressive national movement is becoming stronger. Jewish youth takes a most active part in all Jewish questions, and one of the problems in which this youth is interested is education.

"It is a fact that until recently we have had no serious attempt at Jewish education in America. Children attend the English-language schools, which have been like an assimilation factory for them. The Jewish children in America have become completely anglicized. They speak English and find themselves under the influence of an English spirit. An entire generation has grown up estranged from the Jewish people.

"If, as the Protestant resolution states, the rabbis have Jewish education in hand, then Jewish history will pillory them for having torn a complete young generation of the young from us and turned them over into the hands of the Christian, English-language schools.

"Our hearts are filled with shame and pain when we see the generation which they have educated, a generation which knows nothing of the Jewish people and of its culture, a generation which is even ashamed of its Jewish origin.

"Many children are ashamed to speak Yiddish with their mothers. They are ashamed to look at a Yiddish newspaper. It is not surprising that the rabbis, the so-called religious leaders, laugh at the Yiddish language, a situation which is not to be found among any other people or language. How comical it is when they write that we should leave Jewish education to them.

"We founded our schools in opposition to these so-called providers of education. We do not wish to leave Jewish education any longer in such irresponsible hands. We want the new Jewish generation to belong to the Jewish people. Our schools are an antidote to the English-language schools.

"In those schools they are taught the language, history and culture of the English and American people. We want our children to belong to us and not to them.

"The Yiddish language must become the language of our children, for that language is now almost the sole factor which binds our children to our people. They must become acquainted with Jewish history and they will then be proud of their Jewish origin, for they will then realize that we have also had our great heroes, just as do other nations.

"It is not true that we advocate and practise the breach of religious observance. We believe that religion is a private matter. The Jewish school should be like a public school. The curriculum should be suited to all kinds of parents whether religious or not religious. Every parent has a right to educate his child at home in his religion. The school should be devoid of religious instruction as it is among all modern nations.

"In the school the child should be taught to tolerate the beliefs of all persons.

"We have another demand of Jewish education. It is a fact that the majority of Jews in America are working people. The English language school is not only harmful to us in that it is Christian and anglicizing in its tendency, but it is also conservative in its social approach. We are workers who are oppressed in factories and in political life, and we want our children to be educated in sympathy towards the oppressed working classes. We want them to protect their own class when they grow up.

"Our movement is still young, only five years old. During that time we have had to overcome many difficulties. We began our schools without any money, but we have already achieved great success. There are now about 40 or 50 National Radical Schools in America where 6,000 Jewish working class children receive a modern Jewish education.

"In Montreal we already have about 500 children in such schools, and in our National Radical School we have about 350 children. The number of children in our schools grows from day to day, and that is no surprise, for the Jewish masses feel instinctively the sound basis upon which our schools are founded.

"It is about time that the rabbis and their supporters should know this and realize that their efforts are without avail. They have played their part. The future belongs to us."

During the excommunication campaign a leader of Hebrew education attacked the religious educators and explained the success of the National Radical School as being due to the incompetence of the Talmud Torahs management.

"The Yiddish schools are managed jointly by the teachers who lead the activists. We ought to do what the Protestants do; let the teachers teach and manage the schools. The public should only provide the material needs." (Adler, July 13, 1917)

As late as the fall of 1926 an anonymous leaflet signed by a non-existent "Independent Jewish Educational Committee" was distributed to depreciate the Jewish People's School in the eyes of its supporters. The objective of the school was said to help "our youth to grow to be broad-minded citizens with progressive ideas. In consequence the institutions of obscurity will gradually decrease; for we must all admit that religion is a thing of the past."

Many in the community, not least Lyon Cohen, were disturbed by this tactic, described by Shloimeh Wiseman as "a silly machination of a rather abnormal, intriguing person... an offender against public morality." (Canadian Jewish Chronicle, Nov. 1926)

Miriam Meltzer recalls the proletarian background of the early Jewish People's School established in 1914 as a splinter from the Jewish National Radical School (I.L. Peretz School).

"It is not easy to forget the religious fanatics who threw rocks through our windows crying, 'We do not need any missionaries.'

"We still remember carrying coal from our homes to warm the school, giving it our last dollars to pay its rent, and then borrowing from our neighbours for our own needs.

"Our members cleaned and washed the school we rented on St. Urbain St. near Ontario. Mr. Meltzer had a night job, so he served as principal, teacher and secretary during the day, and put a few dollars into the treasury to boot." ("Some Recollections," in Folk Shule Buch, issued on the 25th anniversary, 1929. P. 31).

Yet the example of these Yiddish schools influenced the traditional Talmud Torah to adopt many, or nearly all, of the innovations introduced into Jewish education by the radicals whom they had recently denounced.

Many of these changes were forced upon these schools by the evolution in the character of the pupils. Increasingly, these pupils were of Canadian background, each year further from their parents' and grandparents' roots in Eastern Europe. Ever more did the pupils demand from anyone who called himself their teacher certain standards of instruction, certain means of communication which the public schools had taught them to expect. The parent-teacher-pupil relationship of the Shtetl simply was not applicable in the new conditions.

## SECULARISM IN WINNIPEG

Winnipeg has its own Radical Jewish School history. A document in the Belkin papers in the Archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress summarized it,

"The Nationalist Hebraist Jews, having built their Talmud Torah and the Orthodox their synagogues, the Socialist Yiddishists decided that they, too, must have a medium of their own for self-expression. So in 1913-14 there developed a pronounced movement for the establishment of a Radical Jewish School, resulting eventually in the opening of the I.L. Peretz School, which was destined to become a very influential factor in the community, under the leadership of a group of young intellectuals like J.A. Cherniack, Dr. B.J. Ginsburg, J. Hestrin, Dr. D. Victor, Dr. I. Perlman, and enthusiastic devotees like B. Sheps, W. Keller, Pasikow, S.M. Selchen and Mrs. Keller Nathanson.

"At about the same time another group, the more extreme radicals, organized the Liberty Temple and installed themselves in their building at the corner of Salter and Pritchard, where they also eventually conducted a school under the auspices of the Workmen's Circle. The first executive of the Liberty Temple consisted of: L. Orlikow, president; F. Simkin, vice-president; S. Prasow, treasurer; M. Posen, financial secretary; M. Alcin, manager; L. Geller, assistant manager, and trustees: D. Goldin, H. Cirulnikoff, F. Penner, D. Faider, M.A. Grey, F. Donner, S. Elkin; H. Berkman, treasurer entertainment committee, and W. Gorsey, legal advisor.

"The first executive of the Workmen's Circle School consisted of: A. Goluboff, Goldsmith, F. Simkin, D. Matlin, L. Gutkin, G. Dorfman, Marchashov, Silverstein, Cork, Yaffe, Goldstein, Bergard, M. Goldin, Mrs. R. Alcin, M. Alcin, Mrs. Goluboff and Mrs. Glow.

"Later in the decade the I.L. Peretz School, finding that the number of pupils by far exceeded the accommodation available in their old inadequate home at Burrows and Salter, made plans for extension. A suitable building was offered them near the corner of Aberdeen and Salter. They purchased it, remodelled it and it soon became the most active Jewish cultural centre in the city. Under the name of the Peretz Institute the association pursued an educational program on the broadest lines, for young and old - and in a short time became a fountain of cultural rejuvenation. Around it were grouped the Jewish intellectuals. From its platform there issued a constant flow of progressive-Socialist-Nationalist thought, and from its classes graduated pupils mastering Yiddish and its literature."

"By 1930 the Peretz School attained an enrollment of 500 pupils, and became recognized as the largest Yiddish school on the American continent, and one of the - if not the - most successful."

It is only by chance that the record of the condition of the Winnipeg school in 1909 survives in the Adler (Oct. 31, Nov. 6 and 7, 1909). A three-storey building erected for the Jewish school was slowly reduced from its original purpose. Its top floor was rented out as a hall to provide revenue. A room below became a kitchen to serve the hall. A lower storey room was rented to a businessman "temporarily" as a stock room. The 120 children were crowded into the remaining three rooms and the bathroom.



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