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 42

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

MEN OF THE YIDDISH PRESS

Compiled by
DAVID ROME

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, CANADA

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INTRODUCTION

The first years of the Adler were complex.

B.G. Sack, a witness and a careful historian of the time, confirms that H. Wolofsky, and S. Wilensky, bookseller and Canadian agent for the New York Tageblatt, were its first guiding spirits. When the paper was established as a weekly Wilensky moved his bookstore to the Adler.

Wolofsky records, "Seven we were who attended the meeting. Two immediately fell out, their optimism being unequal to the prospects of the paper. The five who remained: myself, Wilensky, Sam Greenford, Jacob Lecker and Sam Sternklar decided to contribute each a thousand dollars, and with the capital of five thousand to proceed to the publication of a journal to be known, in accordance with Rabbi Glazer's suggestion, as The Canadian Jewish Eagle. Within a month, the Eagle (Adler) was a functioning journal, located at 508 St. Lawrence Boulevard, and boasting the first Jewish linotype machine in Canada."

To import the technology of a modern Yiddish newspaper into Canada was the complex technological process undertaken by Wolofsky.

Even the arrival of Michael Aronson in Montreal to assume the editorship of the Adler in 1907, on the midnight excursion train from Burlington, was adventurous. A group of Canadian merrymakers returning from New York noticed the young, puny Jew and decided to conclude their festivities with him. They exceeded the limits of their heroism when Aronson knocked the most impertinent of them to the floor and bloodied him. The conductor arrived and put the young Jew under his protection for the remaining miles. When Aronson descended from the train at the Victoria Station, with his slim parcel, he hurried from the stream of passengers not sure that he was not being followed by his French Canadian assailants.

In Montreal he knew only H. Wolofsky and a Mrs. Star (Sternklar?) who had engaged him on the recommendation of Gershon Rosenzweig, the New York restaurateur.

He saw his Montreal appointment as fortuitous, in a city with a considerable Jewish population, where he could work with a respectable staff of news editors, journalists and writers of sketches. It was a fantasy that bore him well - until he found that in fact he was the editor and the author of news, journalism and of sketches, the serial novel writer and

proofreader; he would also need to quarrel with the typesetters as well as with the publisher for his rights as editor.

The typesetters sent by the New York union were not quite apprentices. They certainly did not know how to adjust the linotype or to assemble the type.

Wolofsky had to deal with his workers on daily strikes and with the business end of the paper, a veritable salamander tree that feeds on itslef, consuming itself. He was not always prompt in paying the editors their salaries. But what provoked Aronson even more, as the editor recalled fifty years later, Wolofsky fancied himself a humourist and a connoisseur of jokes that he heard. He insisted on placing his contributions on the front page. One of his partners, a Dr. Stern (a dentist?) also intervened, and this led to Aronson's resignation. (M. Aronson, "Fifty Years Ago and Now," in Adler, Nov. 27, 1957. Pp. 26. 53)

In June 1907 Wolofsky had advertised in the New York Tageblatt for a typesetter for his forthcoming Montreal newspaper. Young Meir Kastoff, an inexperienced printer, volunteered for the venture, hoping to perfect himself on the job. Wolofsky accepted him at the going union scale of $15 a week.

On his arrival in Canada Kastoff learned of the complexity of his task at the decrepit machine, short of matrices. The linotype had been placed in the front window of 508 St. Lawrence and Kastoff struggled with it in the view of all Montreal gaping at the young man trying to make good with the machine, giving birth to the Canadian Yiddish press. It was too much and he had determined to return to New York. But Wolofsky paid another visit to the American metropolis, met with Kastoff's bride and persuaded her to come to Canada as well; she "will never miss the large city" he promised her. The couple married out of the Wolofsky home at 49 Cuthbert St.

The typesetting team was not complete. The paper, soon a daily, also required a hand setter and another linotyper. Mr. Ratner and Kastoff's friend of many years, Ben Small, filled the ranks.

The New York printers' establishment even attempted to organize a Yiddish local of the great International Typographical Union, but they never acquired the needed seven charter members.

Kastoff became one of the outstanding figures in the craft of the "Men of the Sacred Work." In his memoirs he recalled "a strike that setter Ratner led in the shop against author S. Schneour in which Ratner refused to set Schneour's articles."

Kastoff was an old friend of Schneour's from their days at the St. Petersburg Der Freind where Schneour had been a travelling agent for the Yiddish paper. Now they were comrades in the Poale Zion. The printer admitted that the writer had an atrocious script but this did not justify a boycott of his articles. Ratner and Kastoff came to blows, but Schneour won the strike.

Kastoff also ran into difficulties with Ben Small, who also married in Montreal. Small was active in the Jewish Public Library, in the Peretz School, in the Jewish National Workers Alliance and in the Kropotkin Literary Society before he joined the Communist movement.

Their personal differences became complicated by the political element and lasted many years.

One of the Adler's early contributors, B. Sheps, devotee of Asiatic mysticism who adopted the name of Almi from Montreal's Almi's Department Store, remembered that his father had left his Polish family in 1905 to search for a more hospitable exile. In a European Atlantic port he was, to no one's surprise, unable to buy a ticket for the United States, but tickets for Canada were much lower. So he found himself, one stormy winter night, on the docks of Quebec and on the sleepy streets of the city, with not a penny, not a word in any of his languages - Polish, Russian, German, Yiddish, or pure Hebrew - which the lone municipal policeman could understand. But his chattering teeth, frozen nose and face and small parcel told the policeman enough, and he brought the lone Jew to a warm place, and eventually to a Quebec Jew. (A. Almi. "Between Two Sevens," in Adler, Nov. 27, 1957. P.30)

Researcher Eiran Harris wrote, "After the third daily issue was published all the money was gone and so were three of the five shareholders. And, although Sternklar remained a shareholder until 1925, Wolofsky undertook the publication of the paper himself."

With the fourth issue the Adler began to appear twice weekly and then as a daily. At the beginning it had an English page, edited by Mr. Rosenberger.

"Carl Rosenberg, respected banker, whose offices were also at 508 St. Lawrence Blvd., was constructing a building next to the rented premises of the Adler. He offered the paper a new home and a loan of ten thousand dollars. As security Wolofsky surrendered title to his house and all his shares in the Adler," Harris found.

"With the infusion of new capital the paper again became a daily. Conditions improved but the fate of the Adler remained precarious for a while longer. An indication of the financial expectations was the attitude of Jacob Lecker. A coal merchant and former shareholder, Lecker would only sell Wolofsky coal by the bucket because he, and many others, did not believe the Adler would last a ton."

Sack notes that during this period banker Rosenberg was the virtual publisher of the Adler. His name appears frequently in its news columns. (Golden Jubilee Edition of the Adler, Nov. 22, 1957)

On November 3, 1908, the Adler triumphantly proclaimed a great day in its young history when it became able to issue its daily newspaper in eight pages, with an enlarged staff.

By this time the editorial staff included A. Wohliner as editor, A.A. Roback, I. Yampolsky, B.J. Goldstein and S. Schneour. The great Hebraist philosopher Reuben Brainin contributed articles from Europe as did Mordecai Spector and other great writers from overseas.

The Adler reiterated "its editorial objectives: to introduce Canadian Jews to their new homeland, and the rights and duties, incumbent with their new residence and citizenship, to raise their national awareness to lead their communal development, to reflect the institutional life of the Jewish group and to organize healthy activities in their society, all this on a high level of expression; even literary."

Harris reports that "Montreal witnessed a real estate boom in 1912 and the Adler prospered as well. Wolofsky repaid Rosenberg's loan and regained total control of the paper with great vigour. At this time he ventured boldly. He travelled with Peter Bercovitch to New York and secured the collaboration of one of the great leaders of world Jewry, Hebraist Reuben Brainin, as editor of the Yiddish Adler, summarily dismissing the incumbent editor, Dr. Ezekiel Wortsman.

"Prosperity also affected the company's total structure because in February, 1913, the company's assets and liabilities were taken over by the Eagle Publishing Co. with a capital stock of $45,000 divided into 450 shares of one hundred dollars each. The major shareholders and/or directors who remained for many years were: Samuel William Jacobs, Lyon Cohen, Harry Wolofsky, Israel Rubenstein, Sam Sternklar and A. Wexler. Louis Rubenstein was welcomed in 1917 and remained until his death in 1931.

"Monetary matters were the major topics of discussion at both shareholders' and directors' meetings. The weekly salary of editor Reuben Brainin in 1913 was $50 and that of Wolofsky was $60. A lease signed that year with Carl Rosenberg called for an annual rent of $2,000 during the first five years and $2,500 during the next five.

"The year 1923 saw the paper move to 4075 St. Lawrence and Harry Wolofsky's weekly salary move to $150.

"Two of Harry's sons were brought into the business - Daniel in 1922 and Felix in 1927. By May of 1932 the three Wolofskys were sole directors and major shareholders of the company."

THE YEARS OF DR. E. WORTSMAN

A.B. Bennett's recollection of the early years of the Adler introduces editor Ezekiel Wortsman in 1912.

"After Wohliner came Dr. Ezekiel Wortsman, inferior to the former as a writer, but by temperament more adapted to coping with the practicalities of editorial responsibility." (The Jewish Standard)

In Warsaw Wortsman had edited the monthly Yiddishe Tzukunft and was assistant editor of Nahum Sokolov's Telegraph. In that capacity he reported on the pogrom in Gomel and was arrested in that city. He escaped from Russia to seek refuge in the United States. He edited the Yiddish Atlanta Shtern, the Zionist Yiddishe Folk and the Boston Jewish daily.

Dr. Ezekiel Wortsman (1878-1938) was named editor of the Adler on July 14, 1910 and continued to February 1912.

Wolofsky's life with his early editors was not an easy one. To anticipate, when his appointees were mediocre, often of lesser quality than his other collaborators, dissatisfaction was general and the publisher was not the happiest.

"If my memory serves me correctly some misunderstanding developed between the editor and the publishers, and Dr. Wortsman left his post precipitately. In an atmosphere of unpleasantness the chair was taken over on a stopgap basis by Abraham A. Roback, then a philosophy senior at McGill and a frequent contributor to the Yiddish as well as to the Anglo-Jewish press," Bennett remembered.

When Dr. Ezekiel Wortsman assumed the editorship of the Adler he published a guide to the editorial policy of the newspaper,

"We call upon our readers not to expect revolutions, sudden upheavals. Our ambition is to turn the Adler into a newspaper of which Canadian Jews will be proud.

"This paper is published by private citizens. It is not supported by picnics or dances. Yet, we cannot consider it a normal business. It must be a public institution.

"An editor is fundamentally the superintendent of a synagogue in the finest sense.

"It is a difficult, responsible work which requires the cooperation of right thinking Jews. Politically it is liberal; in the Jewish sense national-cultural; to condemn damage whence it may stem.

"We call for tolerance and patience." (July 17, 1910)

In June 1911 the Adler announced additions to the editorial staff: Zisha Cornbluth, a native of Chan in Wohlin, came from New York to serve as city editor and as author of fiction serials. His Country Peddler appeared for months in the Adler; his drama, The Tiger, showing in the Monument National, was based upon a Maeterlinck production. (Adler, Oct. 25, 1911) He remained in Montreal until 1913.

Meir Shapiro was born in Tolochin, near Mohilev in White Russia. Wolofsky invited him to act as assistant editor of the Adler in 1911. Later he became the Toronto editor of the Montreal newspaper in 1912 where he covered the Jewish community scene and other Ontario events very energetically.

One of the series on "Prominent Jews" by Dr. Wortsman appeared on August 7, 1910.

The Adler proposed a far-reaching plan for advancement of Jewish culture: the formation of a Yiddish Literature Association.

"This literature has come to shine in the endless darkness of our exile life. It is not elevated in its trajectory, not profound in the spirit motivating it. Nevertheless it has brought life into the troubled and pained exile and the freshness of an oasis into the desert of Jewish life.

"There may not be unanimity in the faith that Yiddish represents the renaissance of the Jewish people. Geniuses need to arise to dig more deeply in its creative sources to fructify the desert of our culture into a richly planted garden. But certainly the new literature is bringing life and spirit into our poor little world.

"It should be dear to every Jew, created as it has been under the most unpromising conditions, in an impoverished and dispirited environment by authors with no material or moral reward. Our youth in particular should reward it by creating a welcoming atmosphere, applaud its writers, disseminate their work. In Russia and in the United States cultural and literary associations study this literature and seek to further its development.

"Nowhere is the assimilationist pressure upon our youth as great as in America, threatening our national dignity. Our young must therefore concern themselves with our literature more urgently than anywhere else. The greater the assimilationism the greater must be our resistance. Montreal youth must not lag behind other communities."

The physical quarters of the Adler, not less than its pages, were a centre for action as well as information and inspiration. In its earlier years the Adler editorially urged political unity and action, and its offices were the locale for the choosing of aldermanic candidates, with the anticipation of Jewish provincial and federal legislators.

The day of Mendel Beilis' liberation in Kiev from the accusation of ritual murder entered into the annals of the Adler as thousands of Jews assembled outside the editorial building on Main St. to gaze at the bulletin board with its foreign dispatches. The extra edition sold by paper peddlers for as much as a dollar a copy to lovers of souvenirs. Strangers shook hands and wished each other Mazel Tov.

One young man became hysterical and required medical treatment.

Even the walls outside the Adler characterized and displayed the economies and the rare culture of the immigrant society.

The building was constructed by the Eagle Publishing Co. at a cost of $150,000 under the presidency of banker Carl Rosenberg who was also known in the community, together with Mrs. Clarence I. de Sola, as the supporter of such artists as Pauline Lightstone, daughter of the cantor, who became world famous as Pauline Donalda. (Adler, Mar. 14, 1910)

Other tenants of the Eagle building included the Bank of Toronto, clothing companies, peddler supply firms, law and doctors' offices, and real estate bureaux.

"The Adler in the new 5 storey Eagle Building on St. Lawrence Blvd. installed a new press which enabled it to produce the paper more rapidly. The new equipment will ensure that press time for the Yiddish morning paper, like the Gazette, will be 6 A.M. instead of late in the afternoon for the next day."

During the installation, there were inconveniences and some country subscribers received the paper late. (Adler, Apr. 30, 1911)

Years later Jacob Zipper described his first visit to the Adler offices when he arrived in Montreal in 1925. "Loiterers outside the printing house loudly discussed the posters conveying the headlines from the morrow's front page. They were arguing whether they're typeset or hand lettered. One suggested that the lettering was that of a scribe. Another argued that no honest scribe would desecrate his profession to do this. 'In America they do anything.' One thing is certain; it is easy to read.

"In fact, the lettering was done by Nehemiah Segal, brother of poet Isaac Jacob Segal, the son of a scribe of Koretz of Chassidic fame."

PUBLIC ISSUES

The Adler was sensitive to the precarious fate of Yiddish and particularly to the hostility shown it by the anglophone Jewry on the continent, to a considerable extent of German background. In an editorial dated March 8, 1910 the Montreal daily wrote in tones of A.A. Roback,

"Aside from those who would uproot Yiddish, not from hatred of it but out of love of Hebrew, we have many who are prompted to the same objective by contempt of the non-genteel, impoverished sectors of Judaism.

"These consistent opponents are the 'cream of Jewry' with a dreamy gaze upon the distant, nebulous future; these sated Jews are comfortable in exile as they enjoy the lentils fate has given them, who despise the 'lower classes of Jewry,' the millions without lentils; consequently they despise Yiddish.

"The most effective of these are the German Jews, caricature Jews, the ugliest cast up by the exile, who ape the Americans and would prefer to see the masses of Jewry and their national Jewish way of life all relocated back across the ocean; these Jews who are no apes, whose customs and traditions and language blacken the family of the Yahudim and are like thorns on the road to assimilation. The Christian is a simple man and he confuses, 'Yahudim, Jews -- what is the difference; a Jew is a Jew, and a sheenie is a sheenie!'...

"We have a picture of such Yahudim in the Canadian Jewish Times in an article on 'The Doom of Yiddish' which notes that Jews are beginning to hold jargon in contempt, and that its demise is only too slow. The author cites Brainin in praise of Hebrew, the tongue of the prophets. But as we read his text carefully we see that it is not love of Hebrew that moves him but a concern that the Jewish jargon is responsible for American contempt of the Jew. It is jargon Jewry. The large masses of the Jewish people are the bone in the throat of the Yahudim. To destroy this Yiddish their men even borrow the instruments of the Hebraic idealists such as Brainin.

"Spiritual poverty and low estate can lead anywhere, even as can material poverty. These buttered-bun Jews, fatty souls are ridiculous when they speak of the sacred prophets and their noble Hebrew language."

The question of Yiddish arose in the fall of 1911 at the Baron de Hirsch Institute when Mr. Bielovardrovsky called for the minutes of the institute to appear in Yiddish as well as in English. President L. Cohen promised to have the issue taken up by the next board and, in the meantime, to have all explanations prepared for those who failed to understand any matters under discussion.

But a Mr. M. Marks found this backward and unnecessary. He proposed that such persons should attend the night schools of the institute.

The Adler developed a policy in regard to the leadership of the Baron de Hirsch Institute. It bypassed the conflictual stand toward the wealthier class in the hope, encouraged by the Cohens, that the common culture underlying all Jews would unite the entire community. The Adler pointed to the serious irritations created in the Institute and of its agencies: The philanthropists, who paid for the anti-tuberculosis sanatorium, saw the details of management differently from the views of the patients stricken by the disease in their living and working conditions. Some of them felt that those who call for the perpetuation of Yiddish are opposing progress.

The Adler urged activism coupled with patience, communal confidence and institutional faith. This was another illustration of the creative policy followed by the Cohen family in the annals of decades of Canadian Jewry. (Adler, Nov. 3, 1911)

The Adler responded to the Baron de Hirsch group: "Yiddish-speaking Jews are called upon to support the institute, and the institution was founded largely to aid Yiddish-speaking Jews. Its members include people who speak this tongue, and it is their presence that make it a representative body. Its leadership should reflect this composition. Its night school should include courses for persons such as Mr. Marks who would learn the language -- and the meaning of progress."

A grand masquerade ball in the Auditorium Hall on Bartlett St. in aid of a poor family on January 15, 1910 offered prizes for the best costumes. The prizes were on display in the window of the Adler.

In the fall of 1912 the Adler set on foot a movement for the organization of a Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, a plan which came to fruition with the convening of the Canadian Jewish Congress. (Adler, Sept. 11, 1912)

The Adler was the platform for its readers whose information remains of interest even four score years later. Elchanan Golosman of Rivière du Loup, P.Q. wrote to the Adler on May 5, 1910,

"From your issue of April 11 I gather that it is your opinion that the fear of some Jews of Quebec anti-Semitism is exaggerated, and that there is no base for such anti-Semitism in Canada.

"Unfortunately, we Quebec Jews know that we have the darkest black priests as the standard bearers of anti-Semitism, and they spread over the entire soil of the province contempt for Jews. As evidence we need only to refer to the Rivière du Loup weekly which is so full of this poison and gall that the Russian Krushevan needs to blush for it; it is without any doubt the reflection of the Quebec black infamy rooted here.

"We cannot be indifferent to this, and watch it spread anti-Semitism everywhere. It is our duty to inform all Canadian Jews of the danger facing us that they should prepare to arm against the black hand.

"If we search, we will find the means to weaken this most dangerous menace, for 'Israel is not alone.' We do not lack great minds. We need most of all greater unity; not waste ourselves on quarrels and on fruitless, baseless, mutual hostility. We need a powerful organization of Quebec and Montreal Jews prepared to meet the enemy. Once these elements will crawl from their holes, they will not return there. We must render them harmless by our united force.

"I cannot convey to you the persecution and the insults which Jewish country peddlers suffer. The priests of all churches urge the faithful not to buy from the Jews, not to give them shelter at night, for the Jews and the freemasons are the greatest and most serious enemies of Catholicism. And the Jewish peddlers are beginning to feel the consequences of this agitation.

"I would suggest that each of us voice our opinion of this, and that you provide the space for this in your newspaper. We must not be silent on this."

The Adler took pride in its 1910 civic programs to encourage the immigrant community to apply for Canadian citizenship and to register as eligible voters in municipal and other elections. Whereas only 29 Jewish residents had thus registered in 1907, by 1910 their number had grown to over 2,000, many of them with the assistance of a justice of the peace in the office of the Yiddish newspaper. (Dec. 8, 1910)

These concerns form part of the process that led within several years to the election of Jewish aldermen and of provincial and federal legislators.

The Adler became increasingly active in Montreal politics -- not without results. Its publisher took the initiative, in 1912, to convene the leaders of the immigrant society in the editorial offices to ensure the nomination of a Jewish candidate for the St. Louis Ward -- in the event Abraham Blumenthal. The effort was successful and he was elected, the first to sit on the Montreal municipal council since 1849, after Samuel Benjamin.

The Montreal Herald saw it as "a dangerous precedent."

This political victory was the more gratifying in the light of the experience of Harry Bloomfield and noted advocate Marcus M. Sperber on the provincial arena who sought the seat for St. Louis Ward. Bloomfield withdrew before the election, and Sperber failed to attract sufficient votes from Godefroy Langlois, Liberal leader and editor of Le Pays and militant defender of Jewry for many years. The anti-Semitic priest of the St. Louis de France parish had been agitating

against the Jews and their Liberal defender during this campaign. (B.G. Sack. MS. in Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives)

In April 1914 Blumenthal was joined on the city council by a second Jewish alderman Louis Rubenstein.

This was a significant stage in the process which some three years later led to the election of Peter Bercovitch to the provincial assembly and S.W. Jacobs to the Commons.

ON THE THEATRE

Dr. Wortsman was deeply interested in the Yiddish theatre, particularly in its quality as it was presented in Canada. He noted the frequent criticisms of the taste of the Montreal audiences as vulgar, but defended his fellow citizens. Canadians have but few occasions to visit the Yiddish theatre, "usually two evenings during the week, and not all the months in the year at that, whereas New York has four or five theatres playing every evening and two matinées a week.

"Last week Jacob Adler played Libin and Gordin, and Mitnick was forced to turn the overflow away for lack of seats; some 3000 spectators sought entry to quite good theatre.

"There can be various opinions on the quality of the Yiddish theatre, but in the context of the existing repertoire it must be admitted that Cobrin, Gordin and Libin represent a good choice. Nor can Montreal compare with New York and its million residents, its press, literature, dramatic circles and literary societies, etc.

"We can also be proud of the quality of acting which our audiences choose to attend, the Adlers, Kesslers, Liptzins, Tomashevskys, Mogulescos, Torenbergs, Moscovitches.

"Of course the spectators come for amusement, but that is no crime. Some New York theatres present light materials, but it cannot be said that they have turned their halls into moving picture theatres.

"It is not fair to expect the producer to sacrifice himself for the development of the theatre or the tastes of the spectators; he cannot close the theatre if his customers are not sufficiently refined." (Nov. 6, 1910)

In December 1910 he commented on a phenomenon that puzzled him: quality plays such as Gordin's that were produced by the Adler company proved just as popular as vulgar plays such as David Kessler's production, The Wedding Day. A member of the Kessler group conceded that Montreal was one of the few "provincial" cities that welcomed quality plays such as Yankel the Smith.

The editor recommended the revival of the literary society which would sponsor discussions of current theatre performances. (Dec. 6, 1910)

The Adler was frequently concerned with the theatre, but the Paris Théâtre français of 1911 became of particular interest to the Yiddish daily when it removed from its board Après Moi by the French playwright Henri Bernstein under pressure of local anti-Semites. These patriots felt that the morally corrupt Jewish playwright did

injustice to the French nature of his characters, both vicious and unctuous.

An editorial on the subject hoped that Jewish artists would be forced to devote their talents to the Yiddish media. (Mar. 20, 1911)

On November 3, 1910 Wortsman reviewed the presentation of Z. Libin's God's Punishment, with J.P. Adler and Sarah Adler at the Monument National.

"It is one of Libin's usual pieces which pretends to be literature and is neither literature nor shame but is adapted to the common Yiddish theatre with its exaggerated effects, revolvers and a moral.

"The play deals with the wife of a rabbi who had 'a past'; she has an illegitimate daughter whom she had deserted and who had become a prostitute. Her chaplain-rabbi by chance rescued her from prison without knowing her identity. But the secret is revealed; the girl loses her fiancé in the scandal and dies in consequence; God's punishment is visited on succeeding generations."

Strangely the following year Wortsman had occasion to review another play by the same playwright Libin, entitled Justice, dealing with the wife of a judge who had had an unhappy past with a violent husband. The judge was a cruel literalist on the bench, but when his wife appears in court on bigamy charges, he experiences a painful conversion to humanism, retires from the bench, proceeds to defend her and wins an acquittal from the jury. (May 23, 1911)

Wortsman devoted a lengthy review of Mirele Efros by Esther Rachel Kaminsky recently from Russia with Mme. Liptzin, the popular American Yiddish star. (Oct. 11, 1911)

The Adler's brilliant columnist Isaac Yampolsky mocked the inanities of the Yiddish theatre at the time. In a sketch of an exchange of artists in a literary café he heard a starring actor recall the beginning of his career selling drinks in the Yiddish theatre during summers and newspapers during the winter. He led claques from the gallery. When the leading man, playing a policeman, stayed too long and too actively and noisily at the saloon and was taken away by a real life policeman, our hanger-on stepped on the boards and became a real life star in the role of a policeman.

He wrote a humourous column on "The Theatre Industry,"

"Long live the thief, America! Everything there is an industry, even circumcision and the art of the theatre.

"If your script is legible and if you don't want to work in a tailoring shop you can apply to a theatre shop and can earn a respectable and quiet living there. The art of tailoring and theatre work are at the same level. Both are machine made.

"At home a tailor had to be able to thread a needle, sew, press, cut buttonholes and have practised for years. But here a greenhorn who never touched a needle enters a shop and becomes an operator in a week, joins a union and organizes a strike.

"This is as true in the theatre, not like in the locked up Europe where a foolish Frenchman spends seven years at a queer play Saint Clair or others who puff endlessly before something comes out. You can imagine the state of our New York theatre if it relied on such writers. Here plays are manufactured hurry-up, by the dozen, from the machine.

"The question remains: how is it done? We will explain it to our readers. I know many greenhorns who would like to enter the craft but they are afraid to touch the pen, because they think it requires talent, knowledge, a refined sense of hearing, a gentle eye for colour. They do not know that this does not apply to America. They are not needed here. Only hands are needed. If you have hands, brothers, take the pen and chop an A.

"Here are a few rules which will suffice for you to earn a living and a fine funeral after your death.

"First you choose a subject. That is important, but it is easy. That is what fashion is for. The latest in our theatre is a revolver, a bottle of poison, a flask of whiskey and a bastard. The revolver, the poison and the whiskey are not important; they are only tools like the tailor's thimble and thread, but the bastard - that is art.

"Once you have him you will find the entire cast. For let us see: the bastard does not fall from Heaven in the rain. He needs a mother. You provide her with a beautiful name; let us say Devoraleh. She must be a model of beauty and innocence. She is your heroine.

"The question arises, how does she come to a bastard? The answer is: she must have been misled. Now that we know that, there has to be a man to mislead her. He being a man let us give him a name. He has one, Max Finesilver, a fine young man and a smart one. So now we have the hero of the play.

"You ask, how can such a fine man play such a dirty trick? The answer is Love. But if so, let him marry, and that can be the end. But the trouble is that he has a wife, Chayeleh by name. So now we have the triangle in the play.

"Let him divorce Chayeleh and marry Devoraleh. But he loves Chayeleh too, he worships her.

"So he must be a charlatan. But he had once been a charlatan. However, a friend of his youthful years, Isidore, who has studied law and now was in love with Chayeleh unto death, offered Max his Chayeleh one morning, and Max married her. They lived happily,

but they had no children. This is not terrible, except for Max' parents. His father, Getzel the Red, loved moving pictures, but, Shprintze, his mother longed for grandchildren. She kept on intervening between the young couple. Isidore comes into the picture and intrigued between Shprintze and Getzel. So we now have the fourth and fifth and sixth characters and we can begin the action of the play.

"We learn that four years after his wedding Max was in a train wreck on his way to San Francisco. He was among the seriously injured. A Jewish family took him in; their daughter Devoraleh nursed him, and that is when love began. When he recovered he left a bit of a baby under her heart, and a false name.

"In short, in the upper months she sets out to find her Max. Red Getzel in San Francisco leads her to lawyer Isidore for a consultation, but the lawyer falls in love with her. His brother, who assists Isidore in the office, also falls in love with her.

"On his fifth wedding anniversary Max and Devoraleh arrange a party and invite the cast. When Devoraleh enters Max faints, as she enters labour. The Red Getzel concocts a plan for the festive couple to accept the baby as theirs. But Chayeleh understands and sues for a divorce. Max agrees and they go to a rabbi for such a divorce. Devoraleh poisons herself there while the rabbi marries Max to the dying woman. The child becomes the Kosher daughter of the married Max.

"Isn't this a play for ten Shakespeares, twenty Ibsens? For title Eternal Love ought to suffice.

"You can have any number of variations. Instead of only Devoraleh having a bastard, Chayeleh can have one two. The title can be The Kosher Soul.

"For a comedy, the revolver can miss its mark, and Chayeleh can marry the lawyer and Max becomes a gangster.

"You can peddle such plays at Liptzin's but do not let the manuscript out of your hands, for they can rob you in your sleep. You can become the head of the theatre industry."

The Montreal daily records that "Toronto is advanced beyond Montreal with its Yiddish theatre on Agnes St. at the centre of the Jewish quarter. It has the semblance of a church but the faded yellow paint arouses puzzlement. At closer examination the illusion disappears in melancholy, although it is taller than the surrounding structures. And then we remember that it is, after all, the theatre of a community of only 15-20,000 Jewish souls.

"The theatre holds 1,000 seats, including two galleries. Its orchestra consists of six musicians, among them a pianist, a violinist and a percussionist.

"It is remarkable that Toronto has such a theatre whereas Montreal with double its Jewish population has nothing in this realm. Someone of finicky taste might call it a caricature, but one of strong nationalist feelings will see here an indication of development of Toronto as a spiritual centre, not yet on a high level but with promise.

"For how many citizens can be attending the Yiddish theatre regularly in such a centre? A thousand might be an exaggeration. They would have to be faithful indeed if three performances a week are presented. We need to remember that they represent the true masses, and not all of them can afford the luxury of the theatre three times a week. Tickets must be at the lowest prices, so it is not to be wondered at that managers cannot maintain it better than they do.

"Last week they performed Broken Hearts; not an impressive show. The gallery and the boxes had long not been swept. Each time the curtain came down it spread a cloud of dust over the hall. The public was restless; conversations were proceeding throughout the play; mothers were lulling their infants to sleep with their usual melodies. One man, bearded and forelocks, was so happy with the play that he snored during the spectacle louder than the actors. A lady in the audience was so impressed by Libin's play that she fainted and caused a brief panic; some thought a fire had broken out." (Adler, July 6, 1911)

The Toronto representative of the Adler criticized the local Yiddish theatre, and particularly Pasternak of the Lyric Theatre. But the latter objected to the attack, recalling that he had recently sold his share to Rabinovitch at the end of April, 1911.

A further defence came from the editor of the Montreal Yiddish daily who felt that his "man in Toronto" was expecting too much. "Many larger centres than the Ontario capital -- among them Montreal -- have no higher standards. He cited a recent presentation in the Quebec theatre of Raizeleh. Some of the best Yiddish plays are presented in Montreal; yet the public accepts other productions which are in very bad taste such as Raizeleh, Shulamith and Kol Nidrei. It is very costly to bring entire companies of well trained actors from New York. The producers engage several stars, pair them off with local singers and the public accepts the bad with the mediocre.

"The visiting stars come to Montreal for a day or two, tired, without sleep, sometimes fatigued, irritable, insufficiently rehearsed. Even J. Adler failed to create the historic atmosphere as he starred in Uriel Acosta and virtually shouted his role, to the great satisfaction of the spectators in the gallery.

"Montreal has a much greater population and it is not too much to hope for a permanent Yiddish theatre there in the future. We do not have any Jewish music halls or vaudeville shows in the country towns. So our theatre at times becomes a music hall. Little children

need candy; our public is still a child. They are amused by shows which disgust those of better taste." (Mar. 3, 7, 12, 1911)

The editor notes that the directors frequently fail to indicate the passage of time or the aging of the characters by makeup, and often the poor personages nevertheless dress extravagantly and even wear expensive jewelry. (Mar. 24, 1911)

Gordin's problem play The Truth was presented at the Monument National at the end of December, 1910 by the David Kessler company. Wortsman found much insufficiency in the writing, (Dec. 30, 1910) and, in general, upon reconsideration, concluded that Gordin is overrated as the leading playwright of the Yiddish theatre. (Jan. 22, 1911)

Wortsman questioned whether Raizeleh, or Selig-Itzik the Klezmer was composed by J. Gordin. "Not even Lateiner or Zolotarefsky would have signed their name to such a piece," he wrote as he announced that he would not review it.

With his enthusiastic reviews Wortsman helped place Gordin's Mirele Efros among the classics of the Yiddish theatre. "Based as it is on Shakespeare's King Lear, this tragedy of a dignified mother who lost her children's gratitude is set in so Jewish an environment that it is a perfect portrayal of Jewish life placed on the Jewish stage by the Mme. Liptzin company.

"This season we have seen at the Monument National that Mme. Liptzin can set standards of artistic responsibility that David Kessler and Jacob Adler can emulate."

Wortsman reviewed English-language drama, The Melting Pot by Israel Zangwill which was performed in the Princess Theatre in March, 1911.

He found it natural that the theatrical world should seek to exploit the Jewish theme and the current interest in the integration process of future generations of immigrants to the New World. But he noted that as an artistic production the Zangwill play was deficient. The drama did not portray the life of Americans or of American Jews. It was declamatory and wordy and dealt more with a love conflict than with the clash of realistic interests. It presented a young American Jew, whose family fell victims to the pogrom of Kishineff and who fell in love with an American girl but soon discovered that she was Russian. He left her, only to learn that she had been a revolutionary and had escaped from Siberia. The young man made peace with the conflict and rejoined her. But he later found that her father had been a Russian general who had himself participated in the butchery at Kishineff.

Wortsman regretted that he had not seen the trashy play early

enough to warn his readers against attending the performance. (Mar. 19, 1911)

Wortsman was succeeded in 1912 by the renowned Reuben Brainin.

B.G. SACK

The saga of the Adler included the consistent corpus of sixty years of writing by Benjamin Gutelius Sack.

Lithuanian-born Sack (1889-1967), who at the time used such noms de plume as Goodman and Bonhomme among others, was one of the first pioneers of the Adler; he served the newspaper of the immigrant society from its earliest days to his last.

That society in its original home was deeply learned, indeed steeped, in its complex and ancient lore. But it did not have, for it did not require, information about the outside world in which it lived. Its political, geographical, historical, literary environment had been careful to keep this exterior universe a blank; its traditional educational system was careful to keep this information away. The languages of the outside world were not taught; the very instruments of learning, such as grammar texts, even blackboards, were non-existent. Indeed, Jewish folklore is replete with humour reflecting the ignorance and puzzlement of this society in the face of the outside world.

Only the rebels against the core and conforming society secretly indulged in the outside learning - and/or migrated.

In Montreal, as in New York and elsewhere, the Yiddish press deliberately set about to prepare the migrants for full understanding and participation in the broadest phases of New World life. Sack was the Canadian journalist who systematically devoted himself to introducing the world of headlines and events to the immigrant society.

Sack performed an extraordinary teaching function in the Montreal immigrant society throughout his life even as he studied his own period while interpreting it to his contemporaries.

A.B. Bennett placed the Adler in its legitimate position in modern Jewish journalism, "one of the marvels of Jewish newspaperdom on this continent. Its very survival in the face of the hazards and tribulations which are the lot of Jewish publications is a miracle in itself. The Eagle not only managed to exist, but during most of its days it maintained a very high standard of publicistic accomplishment. It suffered a lapse of ethics and quality during the reign of H. Hirsh who succeeded R. Brainin as editor. The founder and publisher, the late Harry Wolofsky, had no easy time keeping his paper afloat. But always he wanted the best.

"Benjamin Sack has always been one of the mainstays of the editorial teams of the Eagle; sound, solid, well-informed, forthright. He

reflected Wolofsky's highest concept of the place and function of a Yiddish newspaper in the scheme of Jewish life.

"In the early years of the present century, the Jewish population in the larger communities were in a state of bewilderment, struggling to achieve orientation in the new setting, and crystallize a characteristic manner and physiognomy. The majority of the folks were newcomers conditioned by the tradition and mores of their old-world milieux. They were confronted here by a totally different universe of practices and conventions. And it was imperative that they work out an adjustment between their own habits of life and the ways of the environment.

"Here the Yiddish newspaper played its part. In the first place, it had to purvey news of interest to its readers in the language best understood by them. Then, it had to reconstruct a rationale of Jewish significance out of the fragments of Jewish value that survived the shattering transplantation from the old lands to the soil of this continent.

"And then there was the matter of teaching the immigrant masses the meaning of American culture and institutions and working out a synthesis of the fundamentals of Jewism and Americanism.

"The Jewish Eagle of Montreal carried out is responsibility to its readership conscientiously and effectively. And throughout the years Benjamin Sack devoted himself particularly to make the Canadian scene understandable to the Yiddish reader. Sack equipped himself for his undertaking by a close study of Canadian affairs; he achieved a good reading knowledge of French as well as English, and gained access to historic and statistical data relating to Canadian institutions, keeping well abreast of contemporary happenings. Sack was thus able to write on Canadiana with scholarly authority.

"Sack's penchant for research led to his explorations in Canadian Jewish history. His published works on this subject are not only pioneering; they are standard." (The Jewish Standard, "Between Ourselves")

CHILDHOOD

Benjamin Gutman or Gutel Sack, son of Isaiah Lipe, was born January 31, 1889, in a tiny Lithuanian town by the name of Abele, of the province of Kovno.

Sack recalls Abele "with its Jewish homes, the stores, the warm hard-working people, many of them full of learning and Torah.

"Abele was an old village. As a child I heard a discussion between my grandfather and Reb Joshua Tzveigarn, a Cohen who had donated the land for the old Chassidic synagogue, and Rabbi Zalman Segal of that synagogue who was also the official rabbi. They talked of old times. I gathered that long, long ago Abele had been an important centre where French and German merchants had met. Some Jews had even learned French from them." ("Sketches on the Jews of Abele," by Israel Michael Michaelowitz in the Rakishok Yiskor Book issued in Johannesburg, and by Tack in the anthology Litte edited by M. Sudarsky)

"When I permit my thoughts to revert to my earliest past, they follow, link by link, back to half forgotten, rubbed off, paled, discoloured fresh disks which remind me of what had not been in my mind very long, so far from me, if only because of the barriers of years. Now, with a new freshness, they glow anew.

"Long forgotten episodes and figures, some of them childish, somehow relate to each other, become entities which are strangely near to me.

"I see my dear village of Abele consisting of two small crossing streets with its old synagogue, its Beth Hamidrash, the Chassidic minyan near my grandfather's home, the houses straw-thatched, the stores, the market on the hill and the Jewish faces - all sorts of faces - some cheerful and hopeful, some engaged in labour, in stores, some faces whence shone wit, perception and learning.

"As my thoughts speed past, I recall quickly, too fast to fix their names, each house and each roof in the town I left in my childhood.

"My parents were descendants of an old distinguished family of Talmudic scholars in Lithuania. Though my father was only a worker, he was considered one of the outstanding citizens of the town.

"My memory depicts home on Friday evenings when I was but eight or nine. The blessed candles in brass on the sparkling white cloth shine so mildly and lovingly with Sabbath joy. Each corner reechoes my father's 'Peace be on you, messengers of peace' which he had pronounced. He looks into a book, stroking his black beard. He

calls me near and seeks to explain something still unclear to me even now.

"Mother had just received a letter from my older brother who was studying in Eishishock.

"I see myself in Cheder, with my classmates. An older class is repeating their lesson. The lake just outside peeps in from the window with all its golden sunset. What a great sun, fiery, and how powerfully it shines!

"I remember the tragedy which the aged Moshe Shmerl and our Rabbi Zalman Riseman Segal, who would come often to visit with my grandfather, used to repeat so frequently of the drowning of the prodigy in this lake. He had been studying day and night all his life. He left the Talmud volume open at the page marked by his red handkerchief where he had interrupted his pursuit of the Torah to go for a swim.

"Suddenly a shock, anger and a blow, and I see colours and stars! My Rebbe Sheshke, a great scholar but a man fearfully easy to great anger, is standing before me, his hands raised against me for losing my place in the book.

"His wife interferes, 'You murderer, why did you hit the child? Can't you see the sun is in his eyes?'

"In the summer evening, voices reach us from a distance, but they slowly fade away, possibly from across the lake. The outdoors call, the green meadows, which reach to the end of the forest, call, 'Come children; enough of studying.' Indeed, why is the rebbe teaching us so long today? There seems no end to the day. How long before vacation; no rebbe, no studying, no fear of his 'noodles!' What a wonderful time when we can run outside, play with my penknife all day long, with buttons; and you quarrel with your friend about where his button fell near the hole. Or we chase the ponies on the field; we compete in jumping over mudholes, or we cut branches in the forest and make whistles.

"I remember myself in the Old Synagogue on Rosh Hashonah. The rabbi of the town, Teacher of Justice Reb Zalman Segal, with his deeply grey beard and his patriarchal posture. He straightens out, adjusts his Kittel and approaches the Bimah where he is to blow the Shofar, according to his custom and privilege as of old, with the psalm, 'To the Choirmaster with the Melodies,' followed by the congregation with enthusiasm.

"I saw all these men in Kittlen facing East, with the aged Reb Moishe Shmerl who tells such remarkable tales, such other men like Reb Baruch the Melamed, Reb Elijah the Moscovite, Reb Abraham Henech, stooped with age, with his deeply marked features, a great scholar still remembered by virtue of his great grandfather, Reb Isaiah Lipole Sack of blessed memory, the old Reb Chaim who is so deeply versed

in Talmud that he repeats and studies it by heart as he walks the streets.

"Near them, Reb Elazar the shochet, whose dining room table is heaped with thick Gemarot, also with copies of Hamelitz and with Hatzefirot all of which he is constantly turning; next to old Reb Chaim, constantly repeating the words of the Midrashim and Talmudim.

"I recall, among our neighbours Mendel Klitzkin who used to compose petitions for the villagers and who welcomed Maskilim to his home to read Hebrew and Russian papers, and the scholarly Meir Yosse Meyerovitz, and Long Leib who bore the community on his shoulders.

"I recall the tragedy of the fire that wiped out the village of Abele. It began on Friday afternoon when we heard screams from the end of the village, near the bathhouse. The smoke covered more houses, then the flames spread. The men of Abele long remembered that, although the fire broke out near them, the synagogue and the Beth Medresh were spared, miraculously. But the flames descended onto the church. I remember everybody's panic as they sought to save what they could. My mother and my sister held me by my hand as we ran to the lake.

"The homes which were deserted by their inhabitants were later found cleared out, because the Lithuanians had come and taken everything. They even tore the pictures which had no interest or value to them from the walls. They were happy to be able to take from Jewish homes whatever pleased them.

"By late in the day, Berchuk-from-under-the-bridge, a man of rare warm Jewish heart distantly related to us, sent a wagon for us from his home. Many of the other sufferers who had lost all they owned in the flames were already in his home when we arrived. He extended warm hospitality to them. He opened his food supplies for them that they might eat. That Friday night they slept on his floors; my sister and I among them. I remember my mother crying because we had lost everything we had had.

"My brother was then in Volozhin. When he learned about the fire through the Hatzefirah he came to see what he could do."

DISADVANTAGED

As Sack recorded in his autobiographical note, "The day I was born was the most awful, unfortunate one for me. Nature made a terrible mistake or blunder for, from my childhood, with muscular distrophy I could move my body only with great difficulty." He bore this handicap throughout his life like the cloak of the universal humanist Order of Pain. "Nature punished me with one hand and blessed me with the other. I have been cruelly afflicted with muscular distrophy, but I have been blessed in that, from childhood, as I remember, I was accorded with a phenomenal memory and a rare intensity for learning; both have proven very useful.

"When I was five and a half years of age, my parents took me to a cheder. However, owing to my physical condition, I could not attend regularly, missing sometimes many weeks or months. Nevertheless I was an outstanding pupil and at the age of thirteen, when I left my cheder, I was praised by my teachers."

Sack remembered that John Milton, who had become blind and unable to read, taught his daughters Greek, Italian, Spanish and Hebrew so that they could read to him, even though the girls could not understand a word of these languages; these in addition to English and French. "I find it no less extraordinary that I could learn several of the world's languages and to write as a young man, even though I never set foot in a modern school and never had a teacher.

"I have never attended any secular school in my life. I had a teacher for only five months when I was fourteen. It so happened that a teacher came to my town who taught privately. One day at the home of a school friend he noticed that my handwriting was very beautiful, and he enquired about me. Soon the teacher came to my home offering his services. My mother hired him for one hour to teach my sister. However, he offered to teach me free of charge.

"My parents were poor. My father was in Canada by then. I took these lessons for five months. As soon as the winter was over, my teacher left our town.

"However, in those five months I did wonders. I mastered Russian and German. I began to read any book I could lay my hands on; I read the classics of both languages and the famous critics of the world's literature such as Brandes. I began to study mathematics and French and English by myself.

"I do not remember when I began writing. I was always with pen in hand. While a cheder-boy I used to write the addresses in English for the women in the village whose husbands were in the United

States. When my teacher found this out in the cheder by chance, he stroked my cheek.

"But when another teacher two years later found a poem I had written he twisted my ear painfully. He was a mean man, and had been solitary, hermit-like before he became a teacher. He would beat his wife virtually in our presence, and the children were very upset. But seeing my poem seems to have influenced him, for he ceased to beat her."

All his life he remembered the deprivation of playmates, but from childhood he had appreciated his success in reading. This learning revealed to him a perspective of equality.

In later years, recalling Sack's sad childhood years, J. Zipper wrote, "His wan smile became sadder, but there was no bitterness in his voice. He came to appreciate that the joy of learning and the triumphs of teaching far surpassed his sadness. There was underlying pride in his words."

Saul Hayes has paid tribute "not only to Sack's contribution to the study of his subject but also to the secret heroism of his life and work under conditions of particular difficulty.

"For his generation the hunger for systematic learning and for the culture which the western world had accumulated was a compelling force, an ideology which almost substituted for religion. Auto-didacticism was the core of living, so that even before he joined his father in Montreal in 1905 he had already learned German and Russian.

"The idealism of his generation was remarkable. As they reached this land of golden promise - a promise which the land and the people kept generously over the decades - thousands of these newcomers bore centrally in the conduct of their lives, in their private ethos and in their philosophy the responsibility for the public weal, for the better direction of society and for the resolution of Jewry's problems. They were not drowned in the currents of problems of the new continent, of adjustment or in the dazzling opportunities for advancement and for riches. They found additional energies for community work, for ideology, for the creation of a unique society in which they lived here." This appreciation by Canadian-born Hayes was also a tribute to Hayes himself.

Sack recalled, "When I reached the age of fifteen years, I became the assistant of the Civil Rabbi of my town, writing briefs and birth certificates for the city hall and for the court.

"My brother was a scholar, a student in Talmudic colleges, and head teacher there. After coming to Canada, he was assigned as a teacher in the Baron de Hirsch Institute in Montreal. Under his influence and guidance I began writing poetry in Hebrew and Jewish.

CANADIAN BEGINNING

Sack with his mother and siblings joined his father in Montreal in 1905. The invalid youth was cared for by his mother, and then by his sister until he married Ida Zwick who cared for him with loving attention and collaborated in his work.

Sack had recourse to kind neighbours who shared their knowledge with the sickly youth and placed their few books at his disposal.

"In 1905 I arrived in Canada and settled in Montreal. One year later I began my career as a journalist by publishing a letter in the Jewish New York Freiheit, which was signed under my pen name, B.G. Meshkov.

"After coming to Canada, I continued to improve my knowledge of six languages till I mastered them: Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, German, French and English.

"I shared my knowledge with my folk and readers overseas, and acquainted them with all the opportunities for those who desired to settle in this country.

"After we crossed the ocean my desire to write grew intensely, and when the Adler was about to appear I had a piece ready and it appeared in the first issue.

"When I saw it in print that Friday I was in seventh heaven. My enthusiasm was indescribable, limitless; as if a dream that had dozed within me had suddenly become real.

"In 1907 the Adler commenced publication in Montreal and I was engaged to work there." He continued with the Adler until 1967.

"As a young man, I remember, I was saved a beating in Viger Park because of my familiarity with French. I was reading in the park, and had copies of the Yiddish Forward and Varheit as well as Le Devoir and La Presse beside me. A gang approached me and asked if I was a Jew or French. I told the leader of the group that I was not French but was studying the language and am reading Chateaubriand's Atala. I recited several lines and asked his opinion about my pronunciation. They told me it was excellent. The leader shook my hand and wished me well."

Sack recalled one of the incidents that aroused his interest in the history of the Jews in Canada. It was connected with Elzear Boulay, the Quebecer who, shocked by the anti-Semitism of his fellow citizens, decided to warn the Jews of the dangers to which they were exposed. He communicated with the Adler whose editor, Ezekiel

Wortsman, could not speak French and therefore referred him to Sack.

Boulay visited the Sack home bringing with him a collection of Quebec newspaper clippings which included a number from the scholarly Bulletin of Historical Research edited by Georges-Pierre Roy, provincial archivist. The contents of the Bulletin fascinated Sack who followed the traces of this history and won the cooperation and respect of Roy. Upon his suggestion Sack communicated with Jean de Maupassant, the archivist of Bordeaux, France. The French scholar assisted the Montreal Yiddish journalist in his searches on the Jewish presence in French Canada.

De Maupassant, in turn, informed a member of the Gradis family of Sack's quest, and they placed very important documentation at his disposal.

After the death of G.-P Roy, Sack wrote a moving and appreciative essay on his archivist friend.

Sack was very familiar with the poetry and the drama of France and translated de Vigny, Battaille and other French artists, but his favourite in that language was Racine in whose Esther he found an intense Zionist longing for Eretz Israel and for Messianic restoration.

He recalled his first editor Michel Aronson. "I thought of him as a poor editor, for how can a man in this position publish my first seven or eight stories and not make a single correction; not a comma, not an error? Actually I never saw him or his first successor. Of the early editors I met only Brainin, who often found it necessary to come to visit me, accompanied by his son Joseph and by someone else from the editorial department. The intermediary had always been my late brother Mendel Leib, one of the founders of the Poale Zion, who had encouraged me to write.

"When I decided to use my pen as a source of livelihood, though I became the first in Canada to be a journalist in a Jewish daily paper, I was greatly disappointed that all my plans and ambitions as a novelist did not materialize owing to my poor health.

"The path of my life was set forth."

Apparently it was in 1910 that Wolofsky first thought of utilizing the handicapped young man for the Adler more fully. A.A. Roback, who was editing the Yiddish daily, was planning to leave for Harvard to continue his studies. Wolofsky undertook to send a cab every day to bring Sack to the office to assume Roback's duties. But Sack's parents were worried that their son would not be able to have his meals regularly.

An appreciation of the literary person of B.G. Sack must consider his physical agony and the conditions of the penning of his writings.

The sheer submission of his manuscript to the typesetter constituted a great challenge.

In a summary of his relations with Wolofsky during the decades, which he prepared in the mid-twenties, Sack records a reasonably long chronicle of mutual respect. Any misunderstandings that occurred were settled - at one point through the mediation of Rabbi J.L. Zlotnick. Issues in debate included salaries, the number of articles per week, the right to sign them and, in some cases, copyright on his historical researches.

"Publisher H. Wolofsky loved to chat late afternoons with his staff, narrating episodes and incidents from the history of the newspaper and its staff."

In his first five years with the Adler Sack was paid $1.25 per article, as a regular "outsider," while contributor Roback was receiving $1.75. When Brainin was named editor Sack petitioned for an increase to $1.75 for each of the five articles he would write weekly; he was paying for the newspapers which were the source of his information. (Jewish Public Library, Brainin Archives, Mar. 31, 1912)

Eighteen months later Sack was considering asking for an increase to $3 to be paid fortnightly, or at least monthly, and not when Wolofsky would think of it. "It is now nearly January, and I have not yet received my October cheque." Sack wrote this letter on Dec. 23, 1913 when Yampolsky was "sacked" for asking for a raise.

Sack became editorial writer and co-editor of the Adler before the war. He was editor in 1914-16 and 1922-28.

THE ADLER

Sack remembered that "the Adler was the school where I received my literary formation. I learned much here but I was my only teacher; I beat my literary path myself and shaped myself.

"After a while, as I became more acquainted with Canadian life and politics, I began to write about the life in our country and in that of our good neighbour, the United States. This I continued to do through the years.

"In my work as a journalist I endeavoured to touch upon many topics. I wrote about politics, social and cultural activities, and literary reviews. I wrote about the art of the pen, and did original research of Jewish statistics in Canada, and I also wrote on the history of the Jews in Canada."

His sixty years of Montreal journalism covered a vast range of themes, most consistently on Canadian and Canadian Jewish affairs; this most remarkably during decades when both the country and the community were young. (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 4, preliminary pages)

From the first day he turned his back upon the precious European past to examine closely, even if in pedestrian journalistic style, his new homeland, Canada; this at a time when the anglophone and francophone press were slow to learn the value that was inherent in the nine provinces. Decade after decade he hammered away at reports on various Canadian affairs.

Among the rarer notable literary treatments was his essay on "The Wondrous Charm of Sholom Aleichem's Yiddish," in the Adler of March 1, 1959.

To review his career - a lifetime of daily journalism - is to reprint the daily press of modern Jewish civilization - fascinating but impossible. Of course Sack followed major Jewish developments such as the complex emergence of the Canadian Jewish Congress. ("A Good and Important Beginning" on Nov. 17, "What Needs to be Done Now?" on Nov. 18, and "On To-day's Conference" on November 14, 1915)

In his article on "Jewish Cultural Values in Canada" Sack considered the overwhelming American influence upon the cultural life of the community. He singled out the work of creative Jewish men such as the painter William Raphael (immigrated into Canada from Germany in 1860) whose work hangs in the parliament. Sack also recalled the poetry of Isidore G. Ascher, notably his poem "Canada." (Nov. 16, 1915)

Sack wrote on "Nietsche on Anti-Semitism" on December 3, 1908.

From his first years in the dominion Sack also constantly wrote for the Jewish world - in China, Russia, the U.S.A. - on Hebraic doings in Montreal and Ottawa.

"I wrote quite often for the newspaper Der Freind (Feb., 1909) published in St. Petersburg, (Leningrad), the Russian three-monthly periodical Razsviet, a magazine of a very high standard. (Jan. 1909; Aug. 1910) and many more publications.

"I translated a work on the Trade Union Movement which appeared in the Folkszeitung published by Mr. Leon Chazanovitch. I translated a French novel, The Romance of a Teacher, and Pierre and Camille by Alfred de Musset; work by de Vigny, poetry by Hugo and others which appeared in the Adler. I published many essays under pen-names such as Ben Zakai, Esterson, Ben Zikunim, B. Goodman, and G. Lipes.

"In 1932, I, with a group of others, established the Jewish Writers' Association."

He was the Canadian correspondent of the N.Y. Tageblatt (June 21, 1912 and March 10, May 10, Aug. 25, Sept. 13,18,19, Oct. 21 and 27 and Nov. 16 and 30, 1910, July 12, Oct. 6, 1911, and June 21, 1912) and in the Palestine Hatzofeh of March, 1944.

He contributed to the Mexico Forois, the YIVO Blaeter, the New York Tzukunft, the Yiddisher Kemfer and the Winnipeg Der Yid.

Sack edited the first of the jubilee books of the Jewish Public Library.

Sack contributed to the Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia on Canada, on the Joseph family and on Quebec.

He is also the author of the article on "Kanada" in the German Encyclopaedia Judaica.

Characteristically, a Canadian article August 2, 1910, dealt with "Our Forgotten Duty, to Become Citizens and Sit in the Legislature". His topics regularly included:

"Canada's Natural Riches," July 21, 1910; "Trade and Commerce," August 16, 1910; "Canada a Melting Pot," August 21, 1910; "Spain and Canada," August 23, 1910; "Elections in Manitoba," August 12, 1915; "3107 Jewish Immigrants in Canada Last Year," August 23, 1915; "A Dispute in Kingston," August 29, 1915; "Aliens in Canada," October 5, 1915.

Sack's areas of journalistic interest included the place of the church in society, not least the 1910 Catholic Congress. (June 30 and August 23, 1910)

Early during the First War he spoke out on "Bloody Orgy" (Aug. 20, 1914) and on "Jews as a Neutral Nation" (Aug. 27, 1914). At this time Sack wrote on the relations between "Japan, Germany and Canada" (Aug. 30, 1914).

Back in 1910 Sack drew Canadian attention to "The Jewish National Library in Jerusalem," which became the foundation of the Hebrew University of the State of Israel. (Aug. 27, 1910)

To turn his pages of the First World War: "What We Expect of the War?" (Nov. 2, 1914); "The Tailors' Union" (Nov.5); "The War and the Jew" (Nov. 22); "Asia or Europe, Which is More Important?" (Nov. 22), "What Cannot be Corrected" (Nov. 22); "Education at the Tip of the Fork, The Quebec Education Budget" (Nov. 30); "A Public Library Project" (Dec. 5); "Chanukah Reflections" (Dec. 6); "Why One M.P. and Not Two?" (Dec. 8); "Law and Interests" (Dec. 9); "New Times and New Songs" (Dec. 12); "French Anti-Semitism and the Jews" (Dec. 16); "Citizens or Half" (Dec. 17); "Reform and Platforms" (Dec. 27); "The Reality of Human Culture" (Dec. 30, 1914)

As we glance over the titles of the articles he placed before his immigrant readers, in times of peace and war, it is easy to note their relevance. He wrote on "War and Literature" and "Socialism in Canada," July 6, 8, 12 and 14, 1915; "Civic Scandals, on the Betrayal of the Citizens of Montreal," July 11, 13, 15 and 26, 1915; "Germany Threatens Canada," July 16, 1915; "The New Expulsion of the Jews," July 19, 1915; "The New Theory of Peace," July 25, 1915; "Conscription in Canada," July 30, 1915; "After the First Year," August 3, 1915; "Between England and the U.S.," August 27, 1915; "The Price of Peace," September 7, 1915; "On the Eve of the New Year," September 8, 1915; "German Propaganda in the U.S.," September 20, 1915; "New Confusion on Top of Confusion," September 28, 1915; "Wilhelm and his Socialists," October 7, 1915; "What Diplomacy Missed," October 15, 1915; "What we Expect After the War," November 2, 1915; "With Jewish Refugees in Russia," November 11, 1915; on "Today's Conference" on a Jewish Congress, November 14, 1915; and "The Rights of Nations," December 21 and 22, 1915.

Sack, the chronicler of the events of the days and years, would be incomplete when the image is not supplemented by his passion. One of his early regular columns recalled "The Eternal Melody of Lamentations."

"Once again our ears sound out the tragedy and agony in the words in which Jeremiah bewailed the ruination of his people, two thousand years after the ruthless hand of fate put its dark seal upon the liberty and independence of the Jewish people and sentenced it to the horrible life of exile and wandering over the globe, in search of a

home he has not yet found. It has survived endless terrible epochs, the red thread of persecutions, without an end, without a shore, ever in more agonizing form.

"The land has been ruined, but the soul of the people has remained whole. The people have been scattered, and the nation fractured, but each portion has held firm. Today we have no land and the soul of our people is being destroyed; our hope is lost, our hope in our independence is shattered. The millenia of exile, in dark ghettoes of persecution, bereft of light and liberty has robbed us of soul, our sense of nationhood.

"'Since the Temple has been detroyed there is not a day without its curse.' An angry flood sweeps over the people, drives him from Russia, thence from Roumania, Galicia, and does not even spare him in America as the list of persecutions lengthens each day.

"Every year we bewail the destructions of old and each year there are added intonations, a new expression is added. We have become a nation of weeping, a nation of tears. Our history is only a continuation of the scroll of Lamentations which the prophet of old has initiated, a tragedy in many acts, each more tragic.

"'We bewail the ruin of our people, ill in spirit, beyond our cure, broken of life beyond our restoration."

There are stray moments of memory which are revealing in the history of society. One such survives in a paragraph by B.G. Sack,

"I met Caiserman in 1919 when he was ordering a suit from my brother-in-law Tuvyah Litman on St. Urbain St. He was pleased to hear that I was not associated with a leaflet that H. Hirsch, editor of the Adler, had published anonymously criticizing the Canadian Jewish Congress."

He called Caiserman, "aesthete and idealist, one of my closest and most devoted friends."

"At my first meeting I established a long friendship with Caiserman which was ever impressive. At our first contact he smiled broadly and warmly; his healthy constructive power emanated forcefully and joyfully. He explained with characteristic enthusiasm the two events that had now raised his festive mood.

"He was happy with the appearance of J.I. Segal's book, the first, Fun Mein Velt (From My World) which Caiserman had helped issue. Caiserman could not find sufficient words of praise for the young poet.

"The second cause of Caiserman's high spirits that day was the forthcoming gathering of the first Canadian Jewish Congress which was virtually his creation, as president Lyon Cohen stated at the

historic session, 'Without Caiserman there would have been no Canadian Jewish Congress.'" (Adler, Dec. 31, 1950)

"Years later, but a few weeks before his passing, I saw the same Caiserman as he told me of Jacob Glatstein's appreciation of Segal's last book Sefer Yiddish (The Book of Yiddish).

BELLES LETTRES

In fact Sack's talent was not limited to public affairs journalism. From time to time, but rarely, he ventured into belles lettres as a subject and as a genre.

At times he wrote mildly satiric essays, sometimes under noms de plume.

One of the noms de plume which Sack used is the French Bonhomme (in Latin letters) which appears in his article on "Jean Christophe" in July 1913. He translated poetry by Battaille and other work from the French. He also translated poems and stories from the French for eminent American Yiddish journals like the Kempfer.

His first contribution to the Adler, August 30, 1907, was "A "Bargain," a humourous sketch in the folkloric literary tradition which is very difficult to translate, possibly as "In the Scurry of a Fair."

In this setting of traders, Sack introduces the satire of the political community, the endless multiplicity of ideals, and programs of Russian futurist revolutionary parties.

He evoked the Jewish territorialist Israel Zangwill who is constantly chasing bargains; now in Galveston, then looking for opportunities in Africa or Australia where he could settle homeless Jews.

Then there is talk of purchasing Mars from the astronomers - a real bargain: a star, a large one, with natural resources, the most precious minerals one could think of between Saturn and Neptune, with markets for all kinds of produce from the fertile earth prepared for cultivation.

"All this is due to Zangwill's diplomatic talents, with his internationalist sense and his knowledge of the entire globe, constantly sounding out Africa to Australia all the way to Asia, and thence to America, impatiently watchful for Jewish philanthropists, imploring them, 'Use such a man.' It is no wonder he will prove to be a bargain. His diplomatic sense will know the weakness of the astronomers and will strike the real bargain. For what benefit will they have from stars that will remain waste? They will accept any offer.

"In short, bargains. What a rare word! Extraordinary, wonderful, yet so full of Jewish tragedy, the mirror of a corner of our exile.

"Jewish bargains, to irrigate Russian fields with Jewish blood and marrow, for a promise of the world to come in Slav land, freedom for

them at the price of 150 small pogroms. For that freedom there. Isn't that a bargain?

"Yes, exile with its bargains!" (From the first issue of the Adler, 1907,)

An early issue of the Adler, that of September 20, 1907, carried one of Sack's rare "fiction" stories, a sketch of a disturbed character in a Shtetl, "Beinush the Madman." The story fitted closely into the genre of tales of Shtetl life which was popular in the Yiddish press. They constitute an important element in the psychology and the memory of the immigrants, and an important social documentation of European Jewish society. Offered as it was to a reading public which could authenticate it, this archival corpus has great credibility.

It portrays "a tall thin man in his thirties, with eyes always shining, seeing strange things under his unsmooth forehead and long, heavy brows, cheeks sunken, melancholy and concerned.

"He spoke only when spoken to, with broken words; the letters "R" and "L" were pronounced "Y". He answered with a joke or a proverb, often in response to silly comments.

"Most people referred to him as crazy, but women called him disturbed.

"In his youth he was unusually committed to Talmud studies and was reputed a genius; parents prayed that children should emulate him and should also spend their days and nights with the sacred books in the synagogue study chambers. The old Rabbi Asher Shmaya remembered seeing him as the future sage of Israel, a genius for the entire world.

"Now he walked the village street, continuously crossing from one side to the other. He would stop on a pebble with his left and return to step on it with his right foot, or would stop to pick it up and throw it further along the road. He would stop at every house and rub his sleeve on the wall.

"He had no permanent home; sometimes he slept in the women's section of the synagogue, upstairs where he could see the street through the broken window - the synagogue lane, the old bathhouse downhill from the house of worship. On the other side he could see the women washing their laundry in the river, stooping, beating the clothes. He could stand for hours gazing at the unmoving waters, himself not moving a muscle.

"When he came into the study room the playful 'poverty boys' would have fun with him, stretching him over a bench or under the table, dressing him with his coat inside out, or jumping over him as he stood on all fours. Sometimes they cut his hair, his forelocks, to his ears. He never objected; indeed, he was smiling, friendly with the clownish gang, for they sometimes let him sleep in the room which

also served as their sleeping quarters. At times they gave him baked potatoes. He would neatly slice them into thin wafers which he would paste with his spittle on the door sill and then eat it; 'roasted' he called it.

"Housewives gave him day- or two- or three-day-old food which they could not serve at their tables, and which they otherwise saved for the cows. But he paid for it by chopping wood for them or bringing them water from the well. It was not in his nature to refuse.

"He would meet a woman on the street who would ask where and what he had eaten. She would ask him to come to her home and "split a little kindling" and bring him some water. "Your luck is playing like a harmonica," she would tell him, for she has a big piece of Cholent from the weekend; much too good to give to the cattle, a living Cholent.

"One cold autumn night the Shtetl was secreted in dark clouds and a sea of deep mud drowned its twisting lanes, its dampness a glaze over the whole. A strong wind carried the rain against the broken shutters, tore the straw from the roofs and carried it into the air with a triumphant piping woe.

"A man - or was it several figures? - was walking slowly and heavily across the mud, dragging long shadows behind him irregularly, sometimes reverting to each other, motioning grotesquely, changing directions, backward, with wild cries.

"Beinush the Troubled was carrying heavy pails of water on a yoke against the thick mud which was pulling on his boots through their holes. His elbows were stark from his torn sleeves; of his coat only the lining remained, heavy with storm.

"Two youths were pulling on him, pulling out, pushing on him, mimicking him, dumping mud into his pails. He would stop to lower the pails, screaming at them, waving his fists in anger, trembling, 'Help, Moydeyes. Leave me, Gewald!'

"The boys disappeared in a side lane, but he was unaware, and kept on screaming with his last strength, 'Leave me, Moydeyes.'" (Reprinted, Adler, Sept. 11, 1942)

JEWS AND FRENCH CANADA

Sack's watchful eye served to alert to various manifestations of anti-Jewish discrimination in the country.

He was indignant that the Jews were not permitted to defend their interests. The political system protected the French Canadian population with mathematical exactitude, to ensure that the proportion of their representation was untouched, whereas the parts of the city which were largely inhabited by Jews would be jerrymandered so that the proportion of Jewish voters would become insignificant in these areas.

B.G. Sack was the author of an editorial in the Adler of October 20, 1913 dealing with the partition of the city wards. In this question before the city council and eventually possibly the legislature, Alderman Blumenthal had proposed that the matter be placed before the citizens in a referendum; but this was rejected by the city council under the anti-Semitic leadership of corrupt Alderman Giroux who attacked Alderman Blumenthal and declared that in making the proposal Mr. Blumenthal was interested only in the welfare of the Jews who would lose their representative in the city council under the plan.

"The Jews of Montreal have only one recourse, the same as two years earlier. Now they can unite; the water tax is no longer an impediment to voting, and we must make certain that the list of Jewish voters is enlarged so as to show that our influence is not diminished and cannot easily be shattered." (Oct. 29, 1913)

Pierre Anctil notes, in his Le Devoir, les Juifs et l'immigration, de Bourassa à Laurendeau, that little formal representative Jewish pressure appeared before 1933. Jewish Montreal, in its preponderant majority was composed of immigrants recently snatched from Eastern Europe ignorant of the deep roots of francophone nationalism. (Québec, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1988, P. 24)

He recalls some of the challenges facing the immigrant Jews "as they discovered contempt and even visceral hostility while they sought to pierce the class barrier which confined the large majority of the immigrants. To choose from their own midst legitimate spokesmen and to develop strategies for their expectations was a gigantic task and forced their leaders to read and to interpret the social and ideological Quebec reality which had long remained remarkably opaque for them. How can one reject the attacks of anti-Semitism without understanding the context in which they appear nor its sources, or how to respond to its calumnies and insinuations when one does not even know the language in which they are implied?

"Facing these challenges the Jews began to sketch the first rough draft of their own new identity, fruit of a painful compromise which would enable them to turn their back to a certain European past and then to face all the elements of a new social environment, still timidly perceived, but which would nevertheless constitute the way of the future."

In this program the timid crippled Sack played a gigantic role, in which he was followed a score of years later by his successor in the Adler, Israel Rabinowitch.

In this light it is the more important to note the French expressions of such early responsible Jewish leaders as S.W. Jacobs, Louis Fitch, Leon Chazanovitch, and the editors of the Jewish Times and the Adler.

Their task was not simple since it was set at a time when there were no reciprocating signals from the ultramontane Catholic, French Canada, or indeed from the Christian world. Furthermore, in the complexities of Canadian politics, the entire Jewish community found itself committed to cultural anglophony and to anglophone political partisanship.

Probably Sack's familiarity with the French language led him to a strong position in regard to the rights of the French language in Canada.

From its first days the staff of the Adler was sensitive to the complexities of the French Canadian reality. They were frightened of the anti-Semitism rife in French Canada, disseminated by church and nationalism. They followed it and counterattacked fearlessly, almost desperately, confident only in the support of Canadian anglophony and its constitutional and political institutions.

Nevertheless they observed the social reality of French Canada, the injustices it suffered and the proud defence it put, particularly on the cultural and linguistic front; these Jewish journalists saw a parallel between the causes of French and Yiddish survival, if not between the two nationalisms.

A long article in the Adler of June 3, 1910 on "Vercheres and Dollard" is remarkable when we note the profound alienation between French Canadians and Jews at this period,

"Vercheres and Dollard are the names of two small streets in Montreal, names of heroes often mentioned in the history of Canada; a man and a woman whose heroism will never be forgotten and whose memory will ever be dear to residents and patriots of Canada. Yet how many hundreds pass through these little streets without knowing those whom they honour? But a people does not forget, and only a few days ago a festival observed the events of 250 years when Dollard saved our small town from the savage Iroquois bent on destroying its French Canadian inhabitants.

"Canadian history of the 17th century records how Madeleine de Vercheres inspired the few young men in the beleaguered fort to counter-attack the Iroquois so vigorously that the Indians came to desist from their attacks, and incidentally reaffirmed the role of women in the defence of the colony. Every war brings heroism and every battle its wounds. The sixteen men in Dollard's company are forever memorialized by the two lanes in Montreal."

Sack attempted to incorporate the legendry and the traditions of French Canada into the epic folklore of Canadian Jewry. It was a deliberate pioneering attempt to create a synthesis of a New World spirit and an intimacy of neighbourhood between the citizens of Quebec.

Sack was not the only observer on the staff of the Adler to admire the loyal traditions of French Canadians. J.L. Malamuth compared the family and children's customs of the Canadiens with the conflicts between the generations which were visible in the Jewish community.

"Their parents teach their children from their early youth to respect their elders and to cherish family customs and ancestry. Their schools imbue them with appreciation of their history and the spirit of Catholicism. What they teach in childhood remains for the rest of their lives. There is no contempt or mockery of their church or their history among the youth of either Catholics or Protestants." (Adler, Oct. 9, 1911)

A remarkable article on the language issue in Canada (May 28, 1911) notes that "in Quebec, the home of most French Canadians and of most Canadian Jews, French is almost absent from Jewish homes.

"Some Jewish peddlers speak the French dialect, or think they know some French, but in reality speak it woefully; a few merchants do speak some French - but most Jews keep far away from the language.

"Jewish children neglect the opportunity to study French in high school, and in university; but a very small proportion of the Jewish students speak French well.

"It is well known that Jewish relations with the English in Quebec are excellent; and that the French here are the worst enemies of the Jews. There are French papers which may seem to have been issued in Russia by the reactionaries there. It is therefore not surprising that Jews want to know nothing of French. This is natural, but it would be better for Jews to pay more attention to that language.

"There are Englishmen in Montreal who know not a word of French, and French Canadians who do not speak English. And all this in one city. But Jews cannot survive only with Yiddish and Hebrew. English cannot remain for them as the only official language; French must also be recognized by them as the official language.

"We suggest this not only on moral grounds; it is our view that it is healthier for Jews to pay more attention to French. The French are great patriots of their language, they are more dedicated to their language than are the English. In spite of their majority in Quebec and in Montreal, they feel that English is the dominant language in all of Canada. They must therefore cherish and preserve French. They see Canadians who do not know French as their enemies; and as for Jews, who did not bring English with them in their wanderings here, but learned it here, ignoring French - French Canadians see Jews particularly as their enemies.

"We are not suggesting that if every Jew in the province will learn French well, anti-Semitism would disappear. But this anti-Semitism would certainly not be as virulent. We notice that French Canadians become much friendlier when they converse with a Jew who speaks to them in French; they regard him as one who sympathizes with them in regard to language. On the contrary, they regard a Jew who has been living here for decades without learning the language as an active ally of the Englishman, their opponent. They will forgive the Englishman more readily.

"There is an economic element as well; a young Jew who is bilingual will be more likely to find a position than a unilingual person.

"And, of course, French is not only the language of the French Canadians. It is a world language, and its literature is among the richest in the world. It is well worth knowing."

His attitude towards French Canadian interests was quite sympathetic.

Sack noted "'The War of Languages' in Canada, where two great tongues of the world's civilization - English and French, both official media of the nation - are in conflict, often in the same province. Even in Quebec, where the majority of the population is French-speaking, English is a powerful force. But everywhere French is fighting a battle for status and for survival against the expansion of English and its assimilationist forces.

"The wondrous French resistance even in Montreal is exemplified by an incident in a school where a child was found suffering from diphtheria. The school authorities sent the child home with instructions in English regarding the care of the patient. The parents returned these instructions to the health department demanding the correspondence in French."

In one of its editorials on "Our Younger Generation" the Adler commented on the gap in the Jewish immigrant society between the parents and their progeny.

"How do French Canadians live so closely with their children; how do they ensure that traditions and customs are respected even when not followed?

"Simply; because the parents begin exerting their influence early, from infancy.

"French Canadians want their children to know their origins; they therefore send their children to Catholic schools to learn the French language, their history, and the pupils are raised in the Catholic spirit. All this remains in the memory for long, if not forever."

So it was therefore not surprising that Sack wrote an important article on Montreal French Canadians in the Adler of August 10, 1910, "We and They."

"Recently the local newspapers carried reports on a curious incident in city hall.

"A French Canadian by the name of Alphonse Jean asked for a building permit. He was asked to sign an application form in English which he refused to accept. He complained to his alderman who brought the matter before the Board of Control who immediately ordered several blanks printed in French.

"As I read this case I find it hard to determine my own strongest impression: am I surprised most by the fanaticism of Mr. Jean who fights for the maintenance of the French language and for the equality of which is its right? His awareness of his duty to fight for his nationality, his courage and pride?

"We observe the relations and the forms of life led by French Canadians here and we note that Mr. Jean is not the only man to resist and to do battle for their uniqueness in all its forms. Among the many nationalities who together compose the population of this British colony, French Canadians are the only group to fight so courageously against the influence of the English language and its life style, who resist most energetically all assimilationist trends and reject alien influences of whatever type. We must admit that in this sense they are far superior to us, and we have much to learn from them.

"We are no followers of the Yiddish jargon, nor do I believe that Jews here should fight for its retention and the equality of its rights or demonstrate a dislike of English which is very influential among us, as do the French Canadians. The competition of English against Yiddish is increasingly so marked and is so overwhelming that no mechanical device is applicable. We can only compare ourselves to French Canadians and remark on the contrast.

"Whereas we seldom meet French Canadian children who were born here - and whose parents and ancestors were born here - speaking English with their peers rather than French, it is always true of Jewish children whose parents were born here. Such children speak English everywhere and may often know no Yiddish. But even children of immigrants who hear Yiddish from their parents speak English at home and in the street. Children who have but recently

come to Canada, in whose ears Yiddish still resounds as they heard it in Russia, Rumania and Austria whence they came, begin to speak English instead of Yiddish, as English becomes their current language and replaces Yiddish.

"This is true of adults who often cannot change language as easily as children can in a new environment. They imitate their children, at first slowly; English becomes their language of usage. Soon it becomes unusual to hear these adults speak Yiddish in their homes; not, as with children for whom it becomes instinctive and automatic. For the adults it becomes deliberate.

"It would be nonsense to urge Jews not to learn English as the language of the country or not converse in English among themselves. But why should Jews, even those who are no longer 'green' newcomers, be ashamed to use their own language? Why should Jewish meetings, Jewish conversations in Jewish society not be conducted in Yiddish, as discussions among Frenchmen are conducted in French? Why do not Jews appreciate their language which is one of the major forms of their national identity and the firmest element of their national bond?"

Sack's articles often constituted a parallel to the editorial column, when Sack was not himself writing these official declarations emanating from the publisher's desk. So Sack's "The Jewish Aspect of the School Question" demands "the Protestant Board recognize that the schools are as much the Jews' as the Protestants'; our children attend there, our taxes pay for them; we deserve Jewish teachers of general subjects on the staff, Jewish commissioners, exemption from New Testament studies. We need to make these demands energetically to the widest general public. Two members of the legislature owe their seats to Jewish voters and must defend Jewish interests. Those Protestants who threaten to shut their schools to Jewish children are invoking a blessing on them" (Adler, Oct. 9, 1912)

But Sack was concerned that the country has three diverse school systems, not to speak of two linguistic cultures. (Ibid., Nov. 29, 1911)

Sack wrote in support of the Montreal Herald which wrote about a type of Canadian citizen, the product of the national school system, out of "the great variety of ethnic immigrants from the entire world, the best of each nation in growing numbers; the best because they are rich in dreams to fulfill, to improve their lot beyond the hopes of their ancestors."

Before Hitler transformed the word "race" into an unutterable obscenity it was possible for Sack to examine Canadian and French Canadian problems in terms of race. In reference to the language issues in Ontario education, Sack noted it as "the eternally complex question which disturbs the minds of those responsible for the political and social interests of the nation.

"Canada still speaks in primitive forms, being young and fresh with the peacefulness of a country with a brief history behind it; uneventful, but with rich promise awaiting it for generations with confidence and faith. Nevertheless, it is a Canadian fact that the nation's cultural, social and political life brings forth many grave problems which are beyond its power to resolve, problems from which it cannot withdraw or ignore, problems which the future will address. The most severe of these is the race question.

"Englishmen of the ancient islands, Frenchmen from before the revolution, Anglo-Americans who bear the deep stamp of the new time and immigrants of varying cultures and religions constitute the major unassimilable elements of the population.

"The French remain unassimilable, with the same barrier in the face of the English as existed 150 years ago, even as the Americans seek to add their own hue to all that is English and the English surrender to them voluntarily. There may be mutual respect to a large measure, but no one speaks of love; and the religious differentiation does not simplify matters. Regardless of the religious label the conflict is national, political and linguistic.

"Assimilation of the variety of migrants is proceeding very slowly for lack of a model which would direct integration. Neither Anglo-Canadians nor French-Canadians, with their conflicting ideologies, tendencies and objectives, can serve Canadianization.

"An additional element in the Canadian prognosis is developing in the west which is cosmopolitan in appearance and will slowly shape a new image of the new world with its own ideologies and conceptions.

"These are bound to bring losses to French Canada. Their leaders are quite aware of these tendencies, and they are bound to react energetically on all levels of Canadian life."

Sack wrote an article, "Half Men and Whole Men," deeply critical of Quebec Jews for their lack of interest in language when compared to other Europeans and even the Americans. He signed it B. Bonhomme (Adler, July 3, 1912)

Sack recognized that the continental congress of the French language was a remarkable event with political, moral and philosophical implications, particularly for the relations in the two dominant groups in Canada.

Sack welcomed with a trace of jealousy the convening in 1912 of the Société de parler français au Canada at Laval University. "The assembly will concern itself with the improvement of French language usage and its wider dissemination in its rivalry across Canada with English.

He noted positively the identification, established during the July 1912 congress, of the language and the Catholic faith. This was the

more significant for the Canadian people, as the church is not a national institution and has concerns beyond a single language.

"Characteristically, the clerical participation in the congress was its major achievement. French has been maintained in Canada largely with the aid of their religious leaders. Although the church is an international institution, the Canadian church is the pillar of the French language in the country. Faith and language are the major slogans of the Quebec people. French was the language in which the church was implanted in Quebec. By the same token the church feels that its foundation in the people rests on the pervasiveness of the language," Sack noted. (Adler, July 7 and 11, 1912)

"French Canadians have come to sense a threat to the language from the arrival of increasing numbers of immigrants. In the face of this condition they are mustering greater courage and energy even bordering on fanaticism.

"All elements of French Canadian society agree in the program for the defence of the language, a condition that differs from the Jewish. We have reason to be jealous of this notion as it prepares for its own Chernowitz language congress. Among the Canadiens there is unity among the radicals and reactionaries, workers and bourgeois and capitalists.

"As Canadian citizens we may have reason to regret this project of our French neighbours as tending to strengthen the linguistic diversity of our nation, but as sons of a people which has a similar language struggle on its agenda we can sympathize with them fully." (Ibid., Oct. 9, 1911)

In 1948 Sack observed the centenary of Canadian recognition of French on August 14 as "the language of the nation's largest minority as an official language of the country, the peer of English. The tongue of Racine, which was spoken here before the English arrived, attained the status of Canada's official language.

"It was an attainment of the highest importance for the French Canadians who number 30% of the nation's population, for it was a step towards the recognition of rights which they consider natural and fundamental, a recognition they won gradually and which assured them their complete political, economic and cultural rights.

"In the process they often had to struggle to compromise with their fate and accept conditions offered them. But even in moments of failure they could not suppress the natural instincts which ever called them to further efforts.

"With the attainment in 1848 of the equality of French with English began a new epoch in the nation. The law to which Lord Elgin assented affected future events, for it laid the basis for our present society. It grew out of the Quebec Act of 1774 and the Constitutional Act of 1791, the Rebellion of 1837 and the Act of Union of 1840.

"Lord Elgin, the son-in-law of Lord Durham, considered that his father-in-law was impractical in seeking French Canadian assimilation with the English. 'The French residents of this province will never anglicize.' A few months later the parliament of United Canada accorded the French language the official status.

"Those who fought for the language and for its full rights fought hard for it in a battle that is continuing. There are still portions of Canada where French is ignored, even though it is used by a third of the population.

"But what French Canada won a century ago was a victory for all Canada, the nation rooted in the two richest of European cultures, the spiritual sources which feed our young Canadian culture. Few young nations are thus endowed.

"The principle of bilingualism thus established in Canada can be interpreted broadly, as it introduces linguistic plurality for all, even if not on the official level, as it does for French. It creates space for citizens of various races, tongues and cultures to become rooted in this land while they maintain their identity and their personal uniqueness.

"This is particularly important for us Jews who have certainly become deeply involved in the essence of Canada during two centuries. Our community remains attached to Yiddish and to Hebrew even while it masters both English and French more effectively than any other ethnic group, as the Canadian census demonstrates.

"We are meeting this challenge in our schools and institutions. Indeed the cultural vigour this evoked has led our development into a centre all its own, with Jewries from coast to coast which express the spiritual essence of Judaism. It confirms our confidence that our Jewishness in Canada today and in the future will develop in the same positive direction." (Ibid., March 7 and May 2, 1948)

In a remarkable article during the First World War on Henri Bourassa and Armand Lavergne, Sack expressed admiration for French Canada even while differing strongly from them.

In 1915 the St. James Literary Society had invited Bourassa to lecture before the cultural group, but soon after decided to withdraw the invitation because of his anti-British and anti-war statements. Similarly Lavergne entered into a conflict with the minister of the militia on these important issues.

In January, 1912, B.G. Sack commented slightingly that "Bourassa has long repented his anti-Semitism and that he may soon be awarded a certificate of Semitophily."

Sack supported the government strongly on the war issue, and referred to the dissidents as demagogues. "Clearly the anti-British demonstrations of the Bourassas and Lavergnes aim at deepening that

spiritual abyss between the French Canadians and the English in Canada. Nevertheless, we must admire the courage, the fearlessness and the pride of those who act with self-respect, who do not bend before anyone under any circumstances.

"It may be that only extreme demagogues can take such positions - and this is true of both Lavergne and Bourassa - but this holds true only in a people brought up on its own soil, in a healthy environment, living a normal life, which thinks normally and feels normally; only under these conditions can such firm, proud personnages arise." ("Demagogues with Proud Courage," in Adler, Nov. 10, 1915)

Several years later Sack noted an Ottawa incident which he held forth editorially as "A Good Example for our Jewish Women" to follow.

In Ottawa French Canadian mothers actually invaded a public school where their children were registered, brought in teachers of French for those classrooms and picketed to prevent the regular teachers named by the authorities from entering. "We need to bend our heads in shame when we compare the national conscience of our Jewish mothers with that of these Ottawa French Canadian women," the Adler wrote on January 7, 1916.

"We know of Jewish mothers who are indifferent even when their children are taught Christianity in the public schools. They do not even trouble to send a note to the principal asking for exemption from such instruction for their sons and daughters.

"On the street or in their homes we constantly hear our people who have acquired a measure of English speak in that language instead of Yiddish, even though the latter tongue sounds much more familiar and authentic. Apparently all this is to avoid drawing attention, but why are we ashamed when others are proud of their language? Why does that which is sacred to others seem a profanation to our ears?"

"In this regard we have something to learn from French Canadians."

Sack was deeply interested in the positive post-war French Canadian attitude towards the Jews on which he commented in his "French Canadian Intellectuals and the Jews" (Leon Trepanier, in Le Devoir, Oct. 29, 1950)

Years later he described a moment from the formal dedication of the Jewish Public Library in 1953 at the corner of Esplanade and Mount Royal (later purchased by Prof. Gui Frégault for the Aegide Fauteux succursale of the Bibliothèque nationale).

"I was particularly impressed - as were so many others. We could feel almost concretely how the environing culture with which we came in contact is beginning to influence us not only naturally but very desirably. Was this the first time, of all the public orations delivered

in our community, in English and Hebrew and Yiddish, that we have also spoken out in French?

"We were moved, but it was not hard to imagine the feelings of the French Canadians who were with us. Particularly those of us who are aware of the sensibilities of our neighbours who do not cease from demanding respect for the language of their ancestors, to which they cling on every occasion. They still need to fight for it, obstinately, constantly, with dignity. There is but one measure which our French Canadian intellectuals apply to their attitude towards the various minorities in our land: their interest and respect to Canada's second official language.

"It is not surprising that the French language press noted with pleasure our recognition of French on this formal, intimately cultural occasion.

"This accords with the establishment five years ago by the Canadian Jewish Congress of the Cercle juif de la langue française, on the same cultural initiative that motivated the French language oration before the library. This Congress effort has already attained results that could not otherwise have been reached. It has already helped create a totally different climate in our old French Canadian province from that in which we had been living, a climate cleaner of these prejudices which had infected the intelligentzia.

"That unfriendly attitude which had surrounded us and had caused us pain has virtually disappeared. Quebec feels that Jews are not the dangerous element which they had feared. Jews have realized that, unlike the United States, Canada has two major cultures, and the Jews who have been residing here for two centuries take a constantly greater interest in French.

"We recognize that this very bi-culturalism at base is what will prevent this country from merging with the culture of our larger neighbour to the south. It is rooted in the languages and cultures of Europe, spiritual roots with which we, our youth and our future, are blessed." (Adler, October, 1953)

HISTORIAN

Early in Sack's career with the Adler he recognized his mission as the historian of the Canadian community and since then dedicated a large portion of his career to that theme. For a score of years he devoted endless hours to this function with a purposefulness and even an aggressiveness that were rare.

The preface written forty years later, for the English version of the History of the Jews in Canada in the Canadian Jewish Congress edition, might easily date from his arrival in Canada in 1905.

"The national pride of French Canada has found expression in the work of prolific historians who, beginning with Francoix-X. Garneau, have with love and earnest care put together the monument of their recorded national history. No people has shown greater sincerity or painstaking vigor in bringing to light the story of its past.

"There remains much that we can learn from our French Canadian neighbours in this respect. From the rich storehouse of information concerning our people in this country we can draw much to familiarize ourselves with, and make us conscious of our past. We should know who we are and what our role has been in Canada from the time that our earliest pioneers first landed on its shores. We should and must know - and let others know as well.

"'Je ne me rappelle rien concernant les Juifs au Canada durant le régime français,'" the late French Canadian historian, Benjamin Sulte, once stated in a letter to the author, adding that he had consulted some of his colleagues on this point to no avail.

"But even so competent a historian as Benjamin Sulte might have overlooked, not necessarily with any ulterior motive, the unique relations between the Jews and New France - relations not unknown to Camille Jullian and other French historians. These relations constituted the beginning of Jewish history in this country and paved the way for the time when, with the transfer of power from France to Britain, Jewish life began to assume a distinctive and native hue.

"Since that time development has been continuous. It manifests itself in the events of varying magnitude, in the deeds and accomplishments of the most diversified nature which marked the lives of our forebears in this country.

"And as the tempo of this process grows ever more intense and feverish, the overall picture of Jewish achievement that emerges becomes richer, fuller and charged with meaning. For from modest, scattered beginnings through the ever-changing panorama of history there slowly evolved a distinguishable Jewish body and ultimately the community that we know today.

"This community presents a distinctive appearance, with its own specific traits, and has long enjoyed full recognition in the Jewish world as well as in Canada. Its flourishing local branches, scattered over the length and breadth of the Dominion, have begun to attract considerable interest.

"In this country of diverse origins Canadian Jews occupy ninth place in numbers alone - according to the 1941 census. But it must be emphasized that their many-sided contribution to Canadian life is out of all proportion to their numerical relation to the rest of the population."

Sack rooted his commitment to Canadian Jewish history deeply in Quebec in an article entitled "Our Unwritten Canadian Book" by referring to a passage from Lord Durham which had seared into French Canadian awareness as a profound offence.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the English diplomat who had come to Canada after the rebellions of 1837-38 had dismissed the population of Lower Canada as devoid of a history. The leaders of Quebec have never forgiven him for the insult, and its scholars have set to correcting this humiliating condition, notably in the loving work of Marcel Bibeau and Garneau who began the parade of weighty French Canadian historians and archivists. "With all seriousness they set brick on brick to create a monumental literature of their epic and annals.

"This leads us to consider whether such an achievement is possible only to a native people living in their own territory in a natural normalcy which calls for such a history and verily writes it as it lives it on documents of day by day national fate.

"Our Jewish experience is different for having lived so long in so widely scattered a geography, with its source disseminated in the archives and libraries of so many countries. Like our nation itself, our history has no home, sheltered in alien corners; its legitimacy justified by the criteria of foreign histories and ideologies.

"The task becomes more manageable for the Jewish historian of a single country. But even he faces discouraging conditions, for the sources even of a single Jewish community such as the Canadian are located in at least four countries.

"The task is dramatic as we search the traces of the first Jews over the continents, in the scattered geography, the grafitti of half obliterated names on walls, in the echoes of Jews in distant forests long ago. We are past the first stages; we should long ago have become familiar with the first pioneers of our own local history, with what they and other precursors have experienced in the various phases of Canadian Jewish development." (Adler, April 18, 1924)

Within less than five years he had sketched in considerable detail the major historic trends and most details in the map of the Jewish half

continent. To this end he secured the remarkable generous cooperation of the provincial and federal archivists, largely by impressing them with his seriousness and the exactitude of his inquiries. In particular they went out of their way to introduce him to sources and specialists throughout Canada and in France.

In consequence the first chapters of his classic volume, on the Jews during the French régime, have not been equalled during the four score years since their preparation. Sack was successful in invoking the freemasonry in learning in an age of high barriers between the Jewish and francophone cultures; the more readily as his facility in French was so marked and rare. His recollections of the bookseller Ducharme are touching.

"My beginning in this research was largely a matter of luck. I remember that I needed to locate the rare volumes of the Histoire de la Seigneurie de Lauzon, not available in any Montreal collection.

"It was suggested to me that the legendary Ducharme, bookseller and bibliophile, might be helpful. I dared to inquire of him. Probably believing that the inquiry was coming from a priest or French Canadian historian, he sent me by his son the first volume of a rare set of French books.

"When the young Ducharme opened my door he stopped in wonder at my desk piled with Yiddish papers. He looked at my bookcases and found works in Jewish, English and French. He saw a Mezuzah on the door which my mother had put up. Clearly I was no priest. After I paid him he left.

"A few days later I needed the second volume. Again the young man delivered it to me, but he remained longer to look at my papers and books and at the Mezuzah, puzzled as to why this Jew needs these French books.

"When I needed the third volume it was old Mr. Ducharme who came to see what strange person called upon his volumes. He came right to the point. 'You are a Jew, a Jewish writer, I suppose?'

"'Yes'"

"'So, what do you need these books for? They deal with French Canadian history only.'

"'I know, but I am trying to trace the history of the Jews in Canada.'

"'Oh, the Jews in Canada? You know, Benjamin Sulte wrote a lot on the Jews in Canada.'

"'I know that. I was in correspondence with Benjamin Sulte.'

He was surprised. 'You mean to say that you were corresponding with Benjamin Sulte?'

"'Yes. Here is one of my last letters from him.'

"Mr. Ducharme had published Sulte's Historical Writings, and he recognized Sulte's handwriting.

"Consequently he would sell me no more books, but I could borrow any of his books without charge."

Sack published an article "Le Juif durant le Régime français" in the trilingual Jewish Book Annual. The provincial archivist G.-P. Roy assisted the Yiddish journalist and provided him useful photostats and other copies of documents. (Adler, Oct. 29, 1950)

"What Happened to old Canadian Jewish Families?" narrates the disappearance from the Jewish scene of Ezekiel Solomon, Samuel Jacobs and the Judahs. Sack recalls a Judah girl who was educated in a nunnery and refused to play with a neighbouring girl, Esther, because Esther was Jewish and had killed Christ. (Apr. 28, 1948)

Sack knew of Jewish settlers west of Winnipeg early in the nineteenth century, notably Jacob Franks, who was associated with the Hudson's Bay Co. on the site of Fort Gibraltar and Old Fort Garry.

He also reported on the Jewish community in Victoria in 1858 which, before the early 1880's surpassed Toronto in population; until Winnipeg's 645 Jews sponsored by the London Mansion House Committee established the earliest large scale migration on the prairies. (June 23, 1911)

Sack looked very carefully at the early development of Quebec Jewry.

But Dr. E. Wortsman, the editor of the Adler objected to the length of Sack's articles which ran to a page and a half on the paper. As a result Sack stopped writing for the Adler and confined his historical work to the Winnipeg Canader Yid.

Wolofsky very courteously requested Sack to bring these articles back to the Adler, and in 1911 Wolofsky assigned Sack to write a series of articles on Canadian Jewish history.

Of course Sack won the appreciation and friendship of his eminent colleagues such as A.A. Roback, Reuben Brainin, Leon Chazanovitch and his Labour Zionist colleagues who were led by Sack's brother, L.M. Sack. Soon Professor Jacob Rader Marcus joined the group of his admirers, but the attention of the anglophone mainstream of the community came much later, with Michael Garber and Saul Hayes.

When Brainin sent him a copy of P. Wiernick's History of the Jews in America to review in 1912, Sack long appreciated the senior editor's

compliment. This stimulated Sack to devote himself more fervently henceforth to Canadian Jewish historical research.

It was Brainin who first suggested the publication of Sack's sketches on the history of the Jewish community in Canada. "Being interested in this subject, I suggest that a special committee be set up for this purpose along the lines of the Jewish Historical Society in the U.S." (Jewish Public Library, Brainin Archives, Dec. 15, 1912)

In a remarkable "Retrospect and Perspective" on the Jews of Canada Sack reviewed the early Sephardi phase of the group history. Before the 1870's Canadian Jewish life was frozen and ossified. There was no movement until the mass immigration; it was limited to its own small circle, poor in great or important acts except for the founding of societies in Montreal, Toronto and Victoria, he noted.

"The wanderers from Russia, Austria and Poland slowly inherited control of the community from the long established Sephardi. By century's beginning Jewish society was led entirely by these newcomers, the half-or quarter-Canadianized. As Jewish life was democratized, the broad layers of the masses set the tone in the country.

"The Jewish group grew materially. Its collective development became phenomenal. If the total population had grown at the same rate Canada would have more than twice the population of the United States.

"At the same time the social and political influence of the community grew not at all; only economic development is apparent. In Quebec in particular, where Canadian Jews concentrate, their political presence is strikingly absent.

"But the reality of Canadian Jewry is before us, not in our past. We are about to enter a third phase when we will set a course all our own, create directions of our own, not confined to the economic plane. It is already beginning before our eyes to assume a form which reveals a certain content, broadened activities, a firmer foundation for a secure existence for Jewish life in this land.

"This may come to fruition in the course of the nation's development which is now being awaited as the centre of the British Empire may shift. Such relationships may tranform Canada into a major force in deciding the fate of the Jewish people. Canada may become, following the United States, the second Jewish community in the world. Men of vision already foresee this. The stream of Jewish migration, which had run solely to the United States, can divert to Canada sooner or later in the light of the social and economic realities of this land of promise."

Sack's passion for Canadian Jewish history was again reflected in his article in the Folkszeitung in which he criticized the Canadian

community for having ignored the eightieth anniversary of the 1832 Lower Canada enactment of full political rights for its Jews.

He spoke of the Montreal community as "apathetic, neglectful, lacking initiative and unity, stagnant for failing even a smile on this sacred jubilee. These bearers of our future have no sense of our present or any firm commitments for our future," he wrote.

A correspondent Rambam responded,

"Imagine such an article in La Libre Parole or in La Croix," his Quebec correspondent notes. "Sack digs up some historical fact from I know not where and makes a great fuss about it.

"He is either a greenhorn or is ignorant of the truth all around us. When we consider that Jewish immigration had just begun to grow a decade ago we can appreciate the fine role they play in trade, in labour, in education, in charity and in politics. Is there an element in the other immigrant ethnic groups who can point to such progress?

"Inquire of the lecturers who visit us whether there is another American city where they are welcomed as enthusiastically. It seems that all the synagogues and Minyanim and Talmud Torahs, lawyers, doctors, and a socialist newspaper, a hospital for consumptives, a shelter for the needy and for the elderly, a Hebrew Free Loan Society, a YMHA, insurance societies, mutual benefit groups, Workmen's Circles, socialist unions, Zionist groups - and endless other evidence that Jews here are generous and in no sense behind other communities - are of no account.

"So we ask how dare anyone so malign a people?

"Why did Mr. Sack rush? Why did he not wait twenty years for the centenary, when he would have a series of articles and an indication of which occasions may be observed?"

Much has been written during the past seventy-five years on Canadian Jewry, but even Sack's early work remains an unmatched classic within the polyglot literature of the Canadian people.

From the day of his arrival in Canada he sharpened his interest in the young history of Canadian Jewry.

The first issues of the Adler carried a learned article on the first Jewish pioneers in Canada. By 1911, when the Adler was but four years old, he had completed his first draft of what was to become, after several versions, his classic of Canadian Jewish history.

On the eighth anniversary of the Adler the newspaper published a special issue, on August 6, 1915, containing a good deal of historical material on Canadian Jewry, most - if not all of it - prepared by B.G. Sack. Clearly by this time this pioneer journalist had assembled a mass of data on the framework of the community annals,

including an extensive chronology, the biographies of the first generations of the pioneers, the history of the Baron de Hirsch and a very extensive and informative directory of Jewish institutions in the community.

Among his numerous articles on Canadian Jewish history: "Honours in Ottawa," October 12, 1915; "On Canadian and American Pioneers," November 1, 1915.

In his series of five articles on "How Many Jews are there in Canada?" in the Adler October 19-27, 1915; and on "Canadian Society and the Jews," on November 8, 1915, Sack noted that the federal government delegated statesman Meighen from the west to greet the first national conference of Canadian Jewry in Montreal. It considered the situation too delicate for a prudent French Canadian Montreal cabinet minister or even for an anglophone minister. Nor did Montreal Mayor Médéric Martin deem it worth his time to greet the delegates of Canadian Jewry assembled from coast to coast.

The mayor also ignored the invitation to the fiftieth anniversary of the Baron de Hirsch Institute. "Too much friendship towards the Jews," Sack noted.

On the other hand, Winnipeg Jews organized a meeting where the local delegate to the Montreal conference, M.J. Finkelstein, reported on the proceedings. The mayor, the controller and other prominent Christians attended. Sack wrote that the premier of Manitoba would also have attended but for the intervention of some Jews who were antagonistic to the organization.

Sack recalled his satisfaction when several French Canadian writers attended an early meeting of the Montreal Jewish Historical Society in the 1930's where Caiserman read excerpts from Sack's history. Léon Trepanier, former chairman of the city council and head of La Société St-Jean Baptiste, was impressed. "I am amazed," he said. "I doubt if 5% of French Canadian historians know these facts."

"Since then," Sack wrote, "the provincial archivist has published a work on Gradis, but I have known of these documents for a quarter of a century. I had been privileged to correspond with a descendant of Abraham Gradis, the possessor of this great Jewish archives.

Editor Israel Rabinowitch told newcomer Jacob Zipper in 1926 about Sack, "now publishing his first chapters of his history here, an extraordinary man well worth knowing. In this thin body with weak muscles, dating from a sickness of his childhood days there is a spiritual strength not to be understood by reason. It is a wonder of wonders that he conquered all and became one of our best here."

Among the Canadian Jewish studies were two articles on Moses Hart's work on a modern religion (Mar. 31, and Apr. 16, 1950) and comment on Trepanier's article on Moses Judah Hays, for eight years Montreal's chief of police, in La Patrie of Apr. 2, 1950. (Adler,

Apr. 30, 1950) Trepanier had told the Hays story over radio station CKAC two years earlier. Hays was the landlord of Montreal's city council and of the Canadian parliament in turn and head of Montreal aqueduct organization.

PASSION FOR ARCHIVES

Sack constantly reiterated the essential value of the communities' archives, as in his articles of November 20, 1950 ("In Regard to a Central Jewish Archives"), and December 1, 1950 ("On a Neglected Issue").

A remarkably well defined appeal "In Regard to the History of the Jewish Settlement in Canada" was issued by Reuben Brainin at this time, soon after his arrival in Montreal.

"As far as the naked eye can see the signs of the time, the Judaism of the immigrants is destined to play a distinctive role in this country.

"It is therefore desirable that material for the history of the community in Canada be collected now. In the first phase we need to record the biographies of its first pioneers. If our present generation does not do this, later generations will not be able to write their first chapter.

"This beginning will be of importance not only for us but for the external world. In the future all Canada will need to know the Jewish contributions to the nation as they were founding their own security.

"We can still collect and control their written and oral stories, distinguish the authentic from the fictional, the facts from the legends. Details can prove significant for later historians. The elders of the generations who settled in various Canadian communities must be faithfully listed, Pincassim (official community histories) must be preserved and copied; statutes, constitutions of institutions and societies, proclamations, posters must be preserved. The origins of Talmud Torahs, congregations and charity organizations, the names of early rabbis and gabbayim, Jewish farmers, the first college students, doctors and lawyers need to be established. Photographs of philanthropists, clippings from old English and French newspapers, notices and statistical tables in regard to immigration and legislation are an important part of the record.

"We need to collect now the oral tales of the remarkable personalities among the first Jewish migrants, their philanthropists, communal workers and talented men and women. Tombstones must be copied. The names and the biographies of women, no less than of men from our past belong to the record.

"When sufficient will have been assembled it will be possible to compare, classify, systematize and work on them critically." (Adler, Dec. 11, 1912)

Sack noted a report in the Montreal press about a member of the Becancour family residing in New York who had in her possession historical records of the Hart family including personal memoirs of political interest dated early in the nineteenth century.

She had offered to make them available to the dominion archivist, but archivist Doughty required the approval of the governor-general, according to the report, to acquire them. This high official examined the papers, but refused his consent without explaining his reasons. The American holder of the documents believed that a number of unflattering references in the letters had made them unwelcome to Canada. She therefore placed them with the New York Historical Society.

Sack commented, "These documents have a significant connection with the history of Canadian Jewry. These and other Jewish historical material of our concern should be collected and analyzed systematically so as to be of use for the future Jewish historian in Canada." He recalled that he had himself written on the early Harts in the Winnipeg Canader Yid some years earlier; these articles were reprinted in the Adler after several years in June and July 1913. (Adler, Jan. 21, 23, 1916)

Sack was constantly supported in his archival concerns by such other colleagues as H.M. Caiserman and by the remarkable figure of H. Hershman. A series of articles later appeared in the Toronto Daily Hebrew Journal and in the Israelite Press of Winnipeg as well as in the Adler.

"Canadians often need to resort to authorities with their claims or demands which must be based on facts relating to the achievements of their groups or of their individual citizens. Where is the documentary proof regarding our Jewish citizenry, documentation regarding our economic and cultural achievements?

"These are essential for our own functioning. Who is collecting and safeguarding them for the researcher of the morrow? What of their sense of selection?

"In point of fact, neither our pioneers nor the active men of our own time are preserving our historic records. What remains are the materials which have been incidentally preserved in the books which governments such as the French and the English have maintained here. It is regrettable that the early pioneers failed to note the events of their own days.

"We do not even have much material about the nineteenth century, about the less famous men of the early centuries and their progeny. Where are the traces of the first Jewish peddlers who wandered in the widely scattered settlements among habitants and among the natives? Did they assimilate?

"This certainly happened, for to this day we find among French Canadians in the more distant comtés many whose family names indicate thir Jewish origin. There had been no force or ill will involved, nor conversion; but simply because of the absence of a Jewish environment, of the influence of a Jewish authority that Jewish identity faded away quite unwittingly. Was it a material or spiritual hunger?...

"Each congregation instituted minute books where much that is of interest is noted. But how many have been lost, or are rotting in basements, in attics or among the papers of 'ex-secretaries'? Only in the files of surviving Jewish newspapers are there references to important activities.

"Our settlers from Eastern Europe had brought with them many Jewish memorabilia from the old home which they preserved during the lifetime of their first generations - old Seforim, books, family documents, various objects related to worship: candlesticks, candelabra, etrog boxes, decorations for Sifre Torah, scarves which our grandmothers wore a century ago; some may be preserved in their daughters' homes but within years they will be thrown out. Why are they less worthy of preservation than the slippers which a lady wore at a ball which are preserved at the Chateau du Ramesay?

"And why not the old sewing machine on which an immigrant toiled fifty years ago. Are his rusted scissors less worthy than the rusted hammer of a French Canadian carpenter or blacksmith of the same period?

"It is our responsibility to rescue the information that can still be assembled in one central spot where it can be systematically preserved and classified for the researchers of the morrow. This is the proper task of a society or committee formed solely for this purpose. Such an institution needs to be formed to collect all types of material regarding Jewish life in all its historic phases, so that it can always be available to all."

In 1941 "the extent of the holocaust was becoming apparent and thinking Jews were coming to sense the different world in which those who survive will live, a world without European Jewry, a world dependent upon its own ancestral, emotional and intellectual resources. Jewish history will follow new paths, reconstructing itself from within. Canada will need to accept its quota of wanderers who will become a treasure for the present community and, with help, transform it into a meaningful centre in North America, a succession community to the ancient Jewish centres which are now falling. The existing institutions will become all the more vital on a world scale for with their acceptance of the new immigrants and the new structures they will build together.

"One such current activity which is failing to attain adequate interest are the archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Within recent years it has become a treasure of Anglo-Judaism. At a moment when

we are uncertain of the fate of such infinitely valuable European collections as the YIVO of Vilno, we appreciate the archives assembled by the Congress.

"In the glaring light of the destruction of Jewish persons, institutions and communities overseas, Canadian Jews must cease to destroy their own ancient and current documentation, but must build the temple of their own treasures of papers and of art in the interests of their emerging significance in the framework of their immediate future, a future in which our present and past will be reflected.

"Future generations exploring Judaism will be grateful to H.M. Caiserman and his colleagues in the Congress for the materials being assembled for them." ("The Archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress," Adler, Apr. 11, 1941)

Sack was profoundly aware of the special, if not unique, character of the Canadian community "both in quality and quantity mature enough to consider itself as a national element risen on Canadian soil, living its own life, yet indubitably an integral part of the entire land. We live in a land where no ethnic group, large or small, is dictated to by the environing society, and each may involve itself in interests and problems all its own.

"These circumstances have permitted the Jewish community to develop in directions all its own, where all that is Canadian goes hand in hand with all that is Jewish in the broadest sense. Our national public and cultural concerns fit excellently into Canadian life. Thus a Jewish reality has crystallized here with a healthy foundation underfoot, a reality concerned through the instrumentality of various widespread sound and educational activities and institutions, to ground itself more deeply into the nation.

"Among these structures the Canadian Jewish Congress occupies a place all its own in its uniqueness as well as in its program. It is unique as a community, assembling as it does all Canadian Jews to deal with the issues of the Jews of the world.

"Since the convening of the Congress much energy has been devoted to it and grave hopes have been imposed upon it by generations who appreciated and assembled - sometimes rescued and salvaged - the memorabilia of the community.

"In this regard Canadian Jews may well imitate our French-speaking neighbours who faithfully preserve every document related to their history.

"Trois-Rivières is the home where the Jewish Hart documentation is meticulously and jealously preserved.

"It is appropriate and timely that those concerned with the community and the Congress should deal with the valuable treasures it has

assembled, as seriously as with other aspects of concern, and place them on the level they deserve," he wrote. (Adler, Dec. 10, 1950)

Sack strongly opposed the alienation of Canadian Jewish documents by placing them in "central archival institutions" in the U.S. or elsewhere, as was then proposed by the Yiddish Scientific Institute. (Ibid., Nov. 20, 1950)

"During the months of holocaust, as world catastrophe rages under the wheels of war and millions of Jewish heads bend under hurricanes, and our communities are turned to heaps of ashes and clouds of dust - it is most urgent that we ask what will be expected of the Jews here when the fires will cease from consumining.

"We stand before a time so changed that it challenges our imagination; this has happened after lesser catastrophes, after the pogroms of the 1880's, after the Russian persecutions following the October revolution, after the First World War. Canada's Jews will have to accept the challenge of immigration and will have to become a significant Jewish centre in North America.

"Even as our attention is centred on events in Europe, we must muster hope and confidence in our future. Our 200-year-old community girds itself with vitality and energy, as ancient Jewish centres crash without leaving remains.

"Therefore the praiseworthy effort to strengthen the archives of the community acquires all the greater significance for the future in the lurid light of the destructive present...

"Those who in the future will have recourse to the archives of the Congress will be grateful to such as H.M. Caiserman who virtually alone are establishing the national archives of the community." ("The Archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress," April 11, 1941; "In the Light of Smoke and of Holocaust" and "On a Neglected Matter," Ibid., Dec. 10, 1950)

HIS CLASSIC TEXT

In 1926 D.A. Hart issued The Jew in Canada (Toronto, Jewish Publications Ltd.) with a lengthy preliminary history of the Jews in Canada by B.G. Sack, in the translation of Harry Schneiderman of New York. Sack was also reponsible for the very scholarly text of many of the biographies of community figures in the volume.

In 1945 the Canadian Jewish Congress issued Sack's history in the revised translation of H. Novek, which was published by Harvest House in 1965.

The original Yiddish version was issued in book form at the same time.

Canada's Yiddish poet Segal spoke of Sack's History of the Jews in Canada at the launching of the 1945 Yiddish volume, even while the blood of the Holocaust was still seething and the wailing of the cries of the million children victims was still reechoing.

It was natural for the poet, J.I. Segal, much of whose writing was lyrical prose on the streams of world events, to identify Sack's good journalism with elevated poetry.

"We are not noting only a new book. We are celebrating the wonderful fact that wherever we pitch our tent, in our historical home, we are accompanied by the man who will not permit the sign of our existence to be lost: our historian.

"This time it is B.G. Sack, one of the most Jewishly cultured persons produced by Canadian Jewry. He is one of those who collects the scattered papers of our life and attaches them to the great single book entitled Jewish history, the biography of our people. There were and there are many Sidras to this scroll - Sidra Europe, Sidra Asia, Sidra Australia, Sidra America; to these is now added Parsha Canada. Sack has presented the first tablets upon which several generations are engraved.

"All of us belong to the historians' guild, the week-day publicists and the men of the Sabbath poems, the sayers of the word and the singers of the word; we all write the annals of the people, of their past, of their time, their epoch and their humanity... Not only the artists who find their themes in historical sources may be called artist-historians. Even the purely individualist poets who never conclude the endless miles of the 'four-by-four' spaces of their I-universe are also not free of the historical impress. For the durable that is artistically fixed and recreated out of the immediate also becomes a source whence the historian can draw much, and its depths often become the most profound of the treasures of which the most objective may not even know.

"Sack is a publicist and a historian; he can therefore find the materials for binding firmer bridges between the day and the morrow. He knows the causes of today's events for he knows whence they come. Indeed, the historian knows no barrier between epochs. If the non-historian sees gaps, it is up to the historian to trace the vague web that unites them; for he is the searcher of the souls of time, the psychologist of time who enters its hidden chambers and brings to light its deeper sense; to show how time develops ideas and ideals.

"The historian is the time-psychologist, the soul-searcher of epochs who brings to light of day their subtlest intentions, shows us how time thinks, develops and creates ideas and dissolves them. As we read the more profound historians we can feel its pulse, in its varying tempos. It arises before us and we experience it like a living being; we share its descents and its ascents, its illnesses and strengths, its lights and its shades, its dawn and its night.

"So the journalistic hand is an adjunct to the historian in the work of B.G. Sack. In his journalism we feel the weight of the responsible historian who lets no passing event of the day pass without consideration from many angles and without a glimpse at the symptoms and symbols it carries. The journalist in Sack strives to melt the hardening mass of current events as he explains the daily theme with a stability and solidity that is not over-impressed by the day's sensation. His historical memory recalls all too vividly the parallels from the past. He knows the repetitions of history; as history learns from the past - and forgets, relapses into infamy just when we had thought that it is about to open the heavenly secrets for us to raise us to those heights of which we dream.

"The historian feels a sort of responsibility to accompany the current generation and to find with them the footsteps of generations past, to preserve the heritage and to keep the account of current condition.

"This applies the more to the Jewish historian concerned as he is with a people in more constant mobility over the paths of the earth. Every Jewish group seeks to affirm itself in its own degrees to become, at least psychologically, somewhat adjusted to the coast where the ship had cast him. Over the continents shards of Jewish life are scattered, uprooted from some spots, replanted in others, torn pieces of Judaism borne by the winds of space, brought together to a new shore, to create something new, a new fate.

"Sack is working on the Canadian experience where none had striven before him. None had preceded him; no one with his seriousness, with a truly Jewish measure. His historical works are the more interesting for what he finds from time to time, under thick layers of dust; the first distinct evidence of the first seeds, or the torn threads of a great chapter, as of ancient Spain, become a new beginning on a desolate strand on the earth.

"Inevitably as he busies himself in such materials a romantic renaissance takes over the heart and mind of the objective chronicler and dominates his chapters. He is swallowed by wonder as he follows the footsteps of the first 'alien' Jews as they found a home on this soil, in this soil and in this people - yet retained their own uniqueness. Here a house, there a passerby anyone like him, becoming community.

"It is, in truth, too early to trace Jewish history on the continent, but Sack can assemble traces. He finds broken threads in Canadian dust that remind us of the tapestries of ancient Spain, the beginning of a creative chapter here. This nascent romanticism cannot but dominate the objective chronicler and stamp the successive chapters of his history as he traces the isolated and lone alien Jewish settlers who integrate and implant in their unique loneliness. A store opened up, a passing peddler sleeping the night in strangers' beds, cuddling to languages he had not heard, building threshholds for other newcomers, passageways for coming waves of immigrants.

"The dust on documents and artifacts is the cement for the building of upper storeys of great Jewish and Canadian structures; more than a geographer, Sack is a creator in novel dimensions: a specific Canadian aroma and a unique Quebec pallette emerges from his sensitive assembly of Jewish detail.

"We must always remember that we are celebrating a man; the festivity not of a work but the influence of a particular personality which must and will bear upon the road of our existence."

"Here we first find in the honest Jewish hand, the marks of our first steps in a new land. Here we find the dreams of men who first wished to invest themselves in a new reality. Here pious Jewish mouths first said, 'How goodly are your tents, Jacob, on a new earth.'

"Their innermost faith was that the oldest of peoples was blessed and cursed with eternal crosssing new frontiers. 'And I crossed this Jordan with this cane' has such a lyrical, naked truth. 'I wandered with my cane and also with my loneliness and sadness, with my own self and with the support of my wandering.'

"Our congratulations are mutual. Sack presents us with a book and says,

"'Jews of Canada, Judaism in Canada, here is a gift for you. Here is your own history.'"

FIERY CHAZANOVITCH

One of the Jewish personalities of the nineteenth century, Leon Chazanovitch, spent nearly a year in Montreal and marked the period here with fiery impress for many years.

S. Belkin described the Chazanovitch period. He emphasized "the historic importance of the storm and strain in Jewry at this time, events which shook the foundations of Jewry in Eastern Europe and subsequently of the Judaism being established in the New World. It is a drama of hurricanes of change, of wars, of the parties and philosophies in the seething ocean of Jewish and universal ideas." (Adler, Aug. 23, 1961)

A. Revutzky, his biographer, recalled him in 1906, early in the history of Labour Zionism, when he appeared at a meeting in Odessa of the Central Committee of the Southern Russian Region, under the nom de guerre of Kasriel, "a hunk of a man some six feet tall, strong as an oak, fearless, pacing from village to town. The tale was told that, having missed the ferry (or without the five kopecks for the goy), he undressed, tied his clothing into a bundle and swam the river. As a debater he crushes his Bundist and Seimist (Russian Revolutionary Party) opponents to dust. His comrades love him, the second Borochov, a rising star in our movement."

A native of Lithuania he fled the Yeshivah. He became an "agitator" for the Poale Zion soon after the formation of the international party in 1908 in Galicia and edited its Yiddisher Arbeiter in Cracow and in Lemberg.

He left for America in 1908 where he adopted the name of Chazanovitch, but was soon invited by Argentina to lead the Poale Zionist party. (Yiddisher Kempfer, Dec. 13, 1935. P.6)

Chazanovitch wrote a special report on "The Jews of Galicia" for the Adler as early as Feb. 7, 1909.

In Argentina he edited Broit un Ehre (Bread and Honour) as he fought the bureaucrats of the Jewish Colonization Association. His battle with the philanthropic institution continued for many years. He became the intense revolutionary ideologist of Labour Zionism and one of the founders of the world federation of the Poale Zion.

This smiling, vigorous, young man had become the fearless, intense, revolutionary theoretician of Zionism and anti-bourgeois extremism, combatting class injustice wherever he met it. He became a living myth of the international revolution. The Russian government labelled him its enemy. The executives of the Jewish Colonization Association in the Argentine resented his defence of the Jewish

farmers so intensely that they had the local government deport him to Europe in chains as a dangerous anarchist.

Like heroes in the fiction of his time, he was rescued by an energetic English lady who heard of the prisoner on board, interceded on his behalf with the captain, and had him released at Gibraltar. A less dramatic version of his rescue has it that it came about after the intervention of the Second International. This brutal experience at Jewish hands who were engaged by Jewish philanthropists acting in the interests of the Jewish people, dedicated to religious and moral ideals, burned deeply into his consciousness and determined him to ensure that the Jewish state, of whose imminence he was certain, would be free from such immorality.

B.G. Sack recalled lengthy conversations with Leon Chazanovitch about his experiences in Argentina where he had agitated among the Jewish farmers because of conditions in the farm communities.

The Montreal Jewish labour movement at this time was considering establishing a workers' newspaper, and had formed a Folkszeitung Association.

Most of the committee were social democrats and anarchists, who met in the home of M. Shmuelson to plan a Yiddish radical periodical.

Shmuelson arrived in Canada in 1909. He had already entered the family of American Yiddish writers; the dean of this literature David Pinsky, had published Shmuelson's first story in the Ovent Blatt which Pinsky was editing in 1901.

During the following years Shmuelson contributed to the Freie Arbeiter Shtimme, the Yiddisher Kemfer, the Ovent Zeitung, Zeitgeist, Freie Geselschaft and Freind.

He was a true proletarian who considered labour as the most honourable concern of man. The record tells how hard he worked to develop a newspaper route; he rose very early and spent long hours in this labour. Nevertheless, he found time to read literary manuscripts from writers across the country and ensured that the best be printed somewhere. He was deeply devoted to Yiddish writers, especially when they showed some talent.

Shmuelson's literary contributions were largely in the form of short stories of old Podolya and of immigrant life. The sections of his Veltn un Tzeiten (Worlds and Times) - The Old Home, Pioneers, Love and Family, and Children and Childhood - issued in New York in 1918, the wartime years of destruction, tell of his concerns.

Shmuelson also sent a series of Segal's poems to S. Yanovsky of the Freye Arbeiter Shtimme. "I recall them well: they were published under the heading 'Oisgelibt.'" (A.B. Bennett)

"His years in Montreal as a contributor to Leon Chazanovitch's Folkzeitung, the New York Tzukunft and the Freie Arbeiter Shtimme were a time of warmth for the men of the pen in the community." (Toronto Daily Hebrew Journal, May 30, 1947)

The outstanding poet and critic Jacob Glatstein records short story writer Shmuelson among the pioneers of the young Yiddish literary rebels who appeared during the first decade of the century. Indeed, the second, 1908 issue of their Yugent journal featured a contribution by the Montreal writer. ("First Steps - Fifty Years Ago," in Yiddisher Kemfer, Passover 1956 issue. P.7)

Shmuelson figures in one of the comic episodes out of the populist history of Yiddish culture in Canada.

During Syrkin's visit to Canada in 1908 he stopped at a street meeting where the orators were agitating for Kashruth observance. An excited anti-religious participant seized Syrkin's beard rather wildly to demonstrate his disgust with the hirsute orthodox. The visiting agnostic scholar barely escaped the enthusiastic atheist.

During Syrkin's lecture the same evening the same wild man appeared in the audience and challenged the speaker's familiarity with the work of anarchist Kropotkin. Syrkin responded by narrating his misadventure that afternoon, and added, "If this attacker of random beards had read Shmuelson's story 'The Wooden Young Man' in the Freie Arbeiter Shtimme he would have recognized himself there."

From the audience a tall young man called out,

"Dr., I am the author Shmuelson. I must commend you. I had this person in mind when I wrote the story." (Baruch Zukerman. "American Yiddish Episodes," in Yiddisher Kemfer, Sept. 20, 1968. P.19)

Shmuelson's story "My Friend" portrays an incident in the day of a Bronx newsvendor whose son was hurt falling into his cellar. (Adler, Jan. 9, 1910)

Shmuelson was a mainstay of the literary staff of the Adler during the years of the First World War. He portrayed very vividly the migration to Canada and the first years of these new Canadians.

The organizing committee which established the Folkszeitung at first proposed to exclude nationalists. But on the insistence of Shmuelson, aided by the anarchists, the nomination of Poale Zionist Chazanovitch, who was known as the Vienna correspondent of the Freie Arbeiter Shtimme, was accepted. (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 10, Pp. 115, 132) He was also known to the readers of the Adler as their correspondent from the continent in its earliest days.

The socialists strongly opposed them, but the anarchists were in favour. It was their initiative to invite Leon Chazanovitch to edit the Montreal paper. Poet Moshe Leib Halpern came to assist him."

In Canada as elsewhere Chazanovitch left lasting impressions on his fellow citizens. His flight over Jewish centres and countries altered the biographies of community leaders.

The life of H.M. Caiserman bears the impress of Leon Chazanovitch. Caiserman had long been an anarchist and even an anti-Zionist until the arrival of the journalist in Montreal. Because the revolutionary was so assuredly extremist, it became possible for the immigrant from Roumania to combine Zionism and socialism. By the same token the editor of the Folkszeitung respected the talent of M. Shmuelson which confirmed Caiserman's dedication to Yiddish literature and to the modern Jewish educational institution.

Many years later H.M. Caiserman recalled the institutional life of the immigrant labour community of the time.

"I came from Roumania where Jewish periodicals were scarce, and here I found the Yiddish Journal, the Canader Adler, the Forverts, the Freie Arbiter Shtimme, and even monthlies in Yiddish.

"Elstein's bookstore at 10 Ontario Street was more than a store. Elstein was an enthusiastic socialist and a fiery agitator for broader social justice. His store was virtually a club where anyone who read books would meet to argue politics and orientations.

"At this time I was introduced to the unforgettable gatherings at Shmuelson's in the northern end of the city. We used to come there to hear his critical comments on books.

"I was active in the tailors union and was able to contact the shy poet, Jacob Isaac Segal, who was then working in the trade.

"One evening we brought the young poet to Shmuelson's. The evening was spent listening to Segal read his work. The face of our host shone like a father's. He praised the poems very warmly, and it was readily decided that a collection be issued. That is how Fun Mein Velt came to appear."

FOUNDING OF FOLKSZEITUNG

The launching of the Folkszeitung took place in the Auditorium Hall in the presence of 2000 men and women on the rainy evening of April 30, 1912 in the presence of the Young Socialist Club, the members of the Pantsmakers Union with red ribbons, the workers of the largest Jewish union of the men's clothing trade, the drivers union, the capmakers, the two branches of the Workmen's Circle with their gold-lettered banners, the cloakmakers and others. Greetings were received from the Hungarian Hebrew Sick Benefit Association, the Independent Citizens League and the Jewish National Workers Alliance. Speakers included M. Shmuelson and Mr. Ages.

Chazanovitch reminded his audience that "every people and every class gets the press it deserves, for the papers are a reflection of the spiritual life of the group. With the best will in the world, unless the mass of its readers is prepared for clean periodicals on a high level, it will sink sooner or later. A people's paper is best controlled by its thinking readers." The first issues were auctioned to unions and friends.

The Canadian Jewish Times announced the forthcoming appearance of Chazanovitch's Folkszeitung. "He is from Europe and his knowledge of the workingman will surely help him make a success." (Mar. 8, 1912)

In mid-summer 1912 Poale Zionist L. Meltzer assumed the management of the Folkszeitung.

The quarters of the Folkszeitung served as the meeting place of Local 2 of the Socialist Party which worked with the Workmen's Circle. Branch 151 of the Circle raised funds for Russian imprisoned Social Democrats, strikers in the T. Eaton stores and in the bakeries in Montreal. Branch 204 came to the aid of one of its members who suffered from tuberculosis; the socialists raised $2 for his relief.

Leon Chazanovitch lived at the home of Shloimeh Bercovitch, Poale Zion leader.

Chazanovitch quickly learned to appreciate B.G, Sack as a valuable colleague in Jewish idealism and in scholarship on common themes - not least on Yiddish and Canadiana.

Sack first met Leon Chazanovitch when the revolutionary activist was in Montreal on the invitation of Jewish labour leaders to edit a militant Yiddish weekly.

"I recall a cold end of January day in 1912 when Shlomeh Schneour, one of the most energetic Poale Zionists of the city, visited me to tell me of the coming of Leon Chazanovitch. Two weeks later he came

with Chazanovitch and introduced the editor of the weekly he was to publish here."

Their conversations on the many topics of common interest remained in Sack's memory for decades as the cosmopolitan scholar avidly learned details of Canadian life, Montreal Jewish life, social problems, labour questions and syndicalism from Sack.

The Montreal journalist and the international revolutionary had a passion in common: Jewish history and Canadian Jewish history. Admittedly Chazanovitch learned much from Sack's expertise on Canada, and Sack was able to develop his insights on the Jewish community in the pages of the Folkszeitung.

"As a stranger in Canada who required more information on national and Jewish affairs he had frequent occasions to meet with me; he was deeply concerned that the Canadian coloration should not be absent from our community and labour activities. He was deeply interested."

Chazanovitch accepted the mild and ailing Sack from the Adler as a colleague and collaborator for his weekly in spite of his principle never to engage any "collaborator" from a bourgeois periodical.

"Chazanovitch desired my cooperation with his Folkszeitung but he had a dilemma: rooted in the traditions of strictest socialist class warfare, he was bitterly uncompromising in regard to anything reminiscent of the Jewish bourgeoisie which he hated. He felt that the collaboration of any journalist from a non-socialist periodical in a journal under his direction was a stain upon his socialism. And I was not only writing in the bourgeois press but even in the orthodox Yiddishe Tageblatt."

Sack long remembered their frequent meetings and even their epistolary exchanges - in the same city.

Sack, who borrowed the nom de plume Goodman (Gutelius, in effect his middle name) for the Folkszeitung, and for the Canadian Jewish Times, reciprocated with intense admiration for the internationalist rebel.

"During Chazanovitch's months in Montreal he became an effective force in the life of the Jewish socialist workers. He carried with him the full impact and the fire of the fearless and tireless Poale Zionist activist. He brought this impact into the labour circles of the immigrant community with his call for Jewish class struggle," Sack wrote.

When Leon Chazanovitch began to publish the Folkszeitung in Montreal his friend Sack joined him in a vigorous campaign to make Canadian Jews aware of their history.

Strangely, the editor and his contributor in the same city were in epistolary contact; the courier of their sixty messages was the young modernist Moishe Leib Halpern. Sack recalled that "these missives would reveal to the graphologist evidence of Chazanovitch's temperament, even indefatigable energy."

Sack remembered a young "message boy" from Chazanovitch's office who was also an "editorial hand," with reddish, lengthy face, sharp, bold features and wise, evaluating, piercing, blue eyes. His employer clearly had faith in the literary abilities of the young man who, within years, won recognition as M.L. Halpern, one of the innovators of modern Yiddish poetry.

FROM THE PAGES OF THE FOLKSZEITUNG

As the profound and active intellectual of Canadian Jewry at this time Chazanovitch participated in the pre-history of the Jewish Public Library. He shared in the shaping of the institution as a profound - almost prophetic - influence in the perpetuation of the culture of the Jewish people. Chazanovitch, together with Schneour, were the speakers at its first literary evening on April 1, 1912; he also appeared at its second function, a concert and educational evening on May 12, again at Coronation Hall, together with R. Brainin and M. Shmuelson.

The first issue of the Folkszeitung, dated April 19, 1912, reported on the strife in the bakery industry where the Jewish bakers had stopped working and stores did not sell Jewish bread.

"The bakers suddenly raised prices and a five-cent loaf came to cost six cents...

"There is no hunger, God forbid, for Christian bakers are at work as usual. There is no need to fast. But Jews have a taste of their own, and even those who do not observe the religious law of 'Chalah' still feel that the other bread is 'somehow not it.' Jewish homes were sad for the absence of that beloved guest, 'Jewish bread.' The stomach has its caprices and traditions, and there is no avoiding them.

"The deliverymen who distributed Kosher bread baked by scabs met strikers, and somehow kerosene covered the scabs' loads. The employers appealed for additional police, but the chief argued that he had no more men. The district had all the men at his disposal on duty and Jewish housewives learned to buy the bread of the Christians."

The strike lasted more than three months during which the bakers set up two cooperative bakeries. Thus the consumers had union loaves versus scab bread to choose from.

On May 3, 1912 Chazanovitch dealt with the forthcoming provincial elections which were particularly quiet; the competing posters offering no significant choice of programs. "The Jewish scene is even less interesting. A citizens' meeting nominated a certain or uncertain lawyer, Marcus Sperber for the St. Louis division and Mr. Bloomfield is favouring us by running in St. Lawrence division.

"The Jewish candidates are entering the campaign with Jewishness as their strongest weapon. This does not mean anything in the way of Jewish principles or any Jewish program, but only that it was Jewish mothers who gave them birth; which ought to suffice them in favour

of Jewish electors. It must have been difficult to be born Jewish, for they expect to receive a special reward for it.

"Every nation seeks to have its own representatives on the legislative bodies. It is justified and easily understood. But it does not entitle everyone with God in his heart to consider himself the representative of the entire Jewish community regardless of class. Nor can everyone undertake to represent labour. Clearly not everyone can become enthusiastic for candidates whose birth certificates speak for them rather than their personalities and convictions."

He followed provincial politics during the 1912 elections when Langlois and Phiney were elected in the Jewish St. Louis ward. Sperber was defeated, trailing Langlois.

"The new vote indicates that the Quebec people, or those claiming to represent the people, have no desire to change one crutch for another."

One of Chazanovitch's contributors was Elzéar Boulay who associated himself with the freemasonic movement by attending the Coté funeral, a public demonstration of the craft. Several years earlier he had visited the Adler to warn the Jewish community of the extensive anti-Semitic propaganda appearing in the province.

Writing on "The Influence of Clericalism" in the Folkszeitung, Boulay said, "The French of the province are backward. Even though they are the majority, their importance is declining steadily while other nations, who cannot match them in numbers, grow in influence and wealth.

"It is easy to connect the clericalism which dominates them and their backwardness. The twentieth century finds them in the Middle Ages. They remain constantly under the tyranny of the church. They are not less intelligent than others, but are weak in initiative, they live in fearful ignorance, incapable of trade. That is the sad truth of our French reality. Business is in the hands of the English, Americans and Jews. We maintain our miserable existence from the crumbs that fall from their tables.

"The English districts are airy; the streets broad; the houses well-built; life is comfortable. The French streets are not. To express their convictions and to speak the language of healthy reason they are forced to leave the country or die of starvation within sight of rich, wasteful churches.

"Is the Canadian race inferior, less intelligent, weaker? Certainly not. Whoever knows us is aware of our love of work, our imagination. But all this is deadened by the dark force of our clergy. Our fine qualities are largely destroyed by the rule of the priests over our population through the strict fanaticism which deadens our spiritual tendencies.

"Their greatest success is in the countryside where the rate of illiteracy is fearful. No wonder we are defeated economically. In our loneliness we console our Gehenna on this earth with the paradise to come as we despair of a better life, for we may not raise the weakest protest against worldly or religious forces which are attributed to God.

"The priest remains absolute ruler. With poor pennies which the workers spare from their mouths the lords of the church maintain their extravagant lives and build luxurious churches. They rule municipalities and parliaments and even enter the homes of the women.

"I am not maligning my people but tell of my love of them. I would wish to interest liberationist Jews in the freedom struggle of the French, for we too move against our clerical enemies and our efforts strengthen in spite of their excommunications and curses."

SNATCHES FROM LABOUR HISTORY

Chazanovitch assembled whatever data he could about the beginnings of the Jewish labour movement in Canada, already some twenty years old when he arrived on the Montreal scene.

The American 1897 recollections of veteran Montreal activist H. Hershman's first days in the needle trade shed a light on early Jewish social history.

His first published episode was written on the night of Rosh Hashanah, 1897. It relates the labour story to the literary history of the labour society.

"In the old home I had known that all Jews in America were tailors, and that these tailors lived better than the district administrator here in Stawzhinetz.

"We also knew that it did not take a learned tailor from home to reach this success. In America you learn to be a tailor as quickly as you say 'Shma Israel,' especially for us Jews with our Talmudic heads; one, two and you are a tailor and you sweep up gold in the golden land.

"So when I found myself on my voyage to America (at 18, in 1897) I had made my plans! No sooner was I off the ship than I would become a tailor. With my first wages I would buy a watch and a golden chain, would have my photograph taken with my hands in my trouser pockets, and would send the picture to Stawzhinetz, to show them what had happened to Itzik Hersch!

"So I phantasized for all the twenty-one days aboard the Prussia from Hamburg to New York. But the first day after being expelled from Castle Garden and told to find other quarters I learned that one does not become a tailor with one Shma Israel in America. To learn the trade you need to have a friendly landsman to bring you inside the shop, and you need $10 to pay the manager for the space you occupy while you learn; you need to work without pay while you learn tailoring, and since you cannot live on fasts while you learn, you need some expense money - and I had not a sign of this.

"In the course of the months in New York I became 'a full-fledged knee-pantsmaker;' I could produce ten dozen of them a day, with tape and straps (a day meant from six in the morning to ten at night); I had my steady place in the shop, at a window, 'a household machine' with 'a Sharer Patent stand' for which I paid fifty cents a week in rent, my own scissors and three dozen buttons. In a word, I was an operator just like all other operators.

"But I had not worked myself up to lodgings of my own because my earnings did not cover my debts accumulated while training. On payday, when the foreman brought me the envelope with the four dollars, the boss came with him and took away a dollar for the training and fifty cents for the rent of the machine, and the shop peddler asked for some $2 for what he had given me during the week, and I was left with some copper coins. So I was never able to pile up the $2.50 to pay a month's rent. I was, therefore, grateful to my boss for letting me sleep in the shop. I had the double benefit of saving rent and being early, the first in the shop, and selecting a bundle, to prepare bobbins for the day's work, 'turn the pockets,' etc.

"On the eve of Rosh Hashanah we came down from the shop at four in the afternoon. Everybody went home to prepare for the festival. I, too, wanted to get out of the shop to see daylight and its festive Jews, but I could not do that; first because I had nowhere to go, and, secondly because I had 'nothing to go in.'

"I remained alone in the factory and realized that I had nothing to do for two whole days. I had not descended to the point in apostasy of working on the Rosh Hashanah. I could not go to the synagogue because I could not buy a ticket, nor did I have a garment to put on, to show my face on the street when all about me were dressed in their best. My 'green' clothing which I was still wearing was humiliating enough every day. So I had no choice but to be a voluntary prisoner.

"Strange thoughts came to me during these two days, about the injustice of the world order, about workers and employers, about some people having large homes with many rooms and others without a corner of their own. Some have clothing to wear and to change each season and others without anything to cover their bodies, who cannot show themselves on the street.

"With this on my mind I sat down to put such and other thoughts on paper; not to get them in print but simply to get them off my mind. I do not recall what I wrote, nor the name of the sketch, but only that I wrote all of the two days; copied, erased and rewrote. When it was all over it occurred to me to send it to the Ovent Blatt - not to be printed (I may have had the possibility in my mind, but I had little faith in my abilities) but simply out of a strong desire that someone read it, and certainly, I felt, the editor of the Ovent Blatt will read it.

"For two weeks I followed the paper's mailbag for a reply, but found no reaction. I quite despaired of hearing the editor's reactions to my 'strange thoughts.' But sometime later in the evening when our machines were racing noisily, when all the operators 'let go with their legs,' and I too buried my head on the machine pushing leg after leg, the foreman came up to me with the Ovent Blatt in hand, and asked me, 'Did you write this?'

"I looked at it, read it, and did not believe my eyes. Yes, there it was in pica type, 'Sketch by H. Hershman.'

"I did not sleep in the shop that night. I could not sleep at all. I went out, pacing the noisy streets of the Bowery, the East Side, Grand Street and Broadway, walked around the building of the Ovent Blatt on 9 Rutgers St. weaving one fine dream after another. I stopped at lampost after lampost to read the part of the sketch in that issue for the hundredth time and noted the last line again, 'To be continued tomorrow.'"

Several years later Hershman settled in Montreal where he established a Jewish bookstore.

To serve his browsers better, he set aside an upstairs room on Hermine St. near Craig St. where socialists and anarchists read the books in his stock; it became the precursor of the Jewish Public Library.

When Wolofsky organized the Adler Hershman proved a talented and fresh journalist for its columns.

Hershman became a prolific journalist, one of the pioneers of the J.L. Peretz School, militant in such events as the 1912 tailors strike, and Canadian delegate, with Leo Meltzer, to the 1919 International Jewish Convention on Assistance to Jewish Post-war Sufferers. Together with his labour associate L. Zuker, he served on the board of the Associated War Relief Societies of Canada.

He continued his remarkable initiative in the community as an intellectual labour leader and journalist. He inspired the formation of the Canadian Jewish Congress and served as press secretary of its 1919 session. In 1934 he was as active in the reorganization of the Congress and helped to organize its national archives of Canadian Jewry.

After the First World War he proceeded to Europe with Dr. Joseph Leavitt on a mission initiated by Mrs. Lillian Freiman to rescue war orphans and place them in Canadian homes, including his own.

The first issue of the Adler, August 30, 1907, reported that the several-weeks-old tailors' strike in Montreal revealed the long hours - dawn to darkness - in airless cellars without light, and the irregular payment of wages. The strike led by the United Garment Workers Union, including tailors local 134, the pressers, waist makers local 116, a ladies union had also been organized by Mr. Miller.

"The Montreal Waterproof Company, Vineberg, Kellert and the contractors at Friedman Co. have settled, but H. Golub, Feldstein, Levinson, and Standard Clothing Co. are still holding out."

WINNIPEG RECOLLECTIONS

Winnipeg was not behind the larger Canadian industrial centres in Jewish unionism. Harry Gale reported that "the first Jewish arrivals were made up of an element that sought to establish itself as a merchant class because they were the most suited to this pursuit. These were families like the Frankfurters, the Browns and the Coblentz who opened places of business in the centre of town in the Logan and Main district.

"They even tried to keep their religious traditions and worship in the same building - on the second floor. Their main aim was to integrate and become a solid part of the establishment of that day.

"The second group, which began to arrive in 1882, was made up of East European Jews who came because of economic hardship, religious discrimination and pogroms. Some of them were already imbued with Zionist ideals. They became workers who helped build the railways; they peopled the city and became peddlers who later established themselves as small storekeepers in the city and in the smaller towns. Among them were also the first Jews who tried to become farmers in the West.

"The third group consisted of elements of Jewish young people who had already experienced the first revolutionary upheavals in Russia. They came primarily from artisan families and had already worked in small Jewish factories for Jewish employers and knew something about the workers' struggle. Coming here in the years between 1905 and 1914 they were were a creative and energetic element. They immediately began to develop their political groupings; to further their self-education in evening classes; to organize cultural societies and dramatic groups.

"Some had escaped from military service. They did not want to be soldiers in the Czar's army for 25 years. Others came to escape the pogroms and economic hardships which followed the defeat of Czarist Russia in the Russo-Japanese war, and the failure of the 1905 revolution.

"In 1905-1907-1908 this brought a fresh reserve of Jewish young people to Canada - young men and women who had graduated from the revolutionary groups of Czarist Russia. They were inspired with the dream of a new pathway in life, a new life in a free atmosphere. They wanted to develop and to enjoy building something new for their children and, most importantly, to live as free people and to build a new society. Many of them thought that this would come about by settling on the land, founding Jewish colonies and by building Jewish communal life.

"The first organized activity in Winnipeg in which a large proportion of Jewish workers were involved, took place in the years 1907 and 1908 at the factory of the Miller Brothers who were Frenchmen. The firm was called 'Scotland Woollen Mills.' According to Bertha Plotkin she and her brother Israel Prasov worked there - the foreman was a Jew named Freeman. Mrs. Kasovsky's sister also worked there.

"The strike lasted six weeks. It was lost and the firm went bankrupt and was liquidated.

"In 1907, among the Winnipeg printers, there was a Jewish typesetter Mr. Firestock. In 1908 the first Jewish newspaper appeared, called the Jewish Courier under the editorship of Mr. Zussman, a Socialist. It had articles and propaganda about the municipal elections. This newspaper came out for four months.

"In the clothing industry a prominent place was held by the Jacob firm, later Jacob & Crawley, who produced men's clothing. This was in the year 1906-7. Among the workers there were many Jewish tailors. The union was a part of the American Federation of Labour. The union demanded better working conditions and union recognition. The company declared a lockout. The struggle was a bitter one, and the workers lost their fight in 1909.

"Between 1908 and 1915 there were many Jewish workers in the Kemp Mfg. Co. who specialized in making ovens and other appliances for the farming communities. The factory was not unionized and the people did piece work. Almost every Jewish immigrant worked there. I worked there myself for a few months. My impressions of that time and the work that I did then later stood me in good stead working in Jewish-owned sheet metal factories.

"In the beginning of my experience with the Jewish labour movement in 1907, there were also a significant number of Jewish women working in candy factories - like Galpern's factory on Disraeli Street. This factory is now located on McDermot and Lily; the workers are almost all non-Jews. In those same years, in 1907-8, there were also a significant number of Jewish women workers in the overall and knitting industries. The Monarch Overall was established during that period, with Harry Steinberg, owner. Mr. Steinberg was known as the Sholom Aleichem Yid, the father of Abe Steinberg, now the Chairman of the Western Division of Canadian Jewish Congress.

"There were also many Jewish workers in the meat industry, like Swift's, Gallagher, Gordon, Ironside and afterwards, Canada Packers. Many of the Jewish workers in the meat industry later became caterers and meat provisioners to the restaurants and butcher shops.

"The C.P.R. workers in the West went on strike in 1908 - because of a disagreement with management. The Eastern workers of the C.P.R. went out on a sympathy strike and there were many Jewish workers among them; a number of leaders of the strike were Jews.

"Actually, however, the organization of the Jewish Labour Movement did not move into high gear until after the war of 1914-1918. At this time many Jewish immigrants came here from Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Roumania and other European lands. When the war ended a great wave of Jewish immigration came to our land following the 1917 Russian revolution and the overthrow of the Czar. The fight between the Bolsheviks and other revolutionary parties, the Civil War, and the taking over of the power in 1918 by the Bolsheviks, increased the flow of immigrants. This opened up a new chapter in the history of the Jewish workers' movement in Winnipeg. Until that time and prior to the Winnipeg general strike there were practically no Jewish workers' unions. There were socialist groups like the Social Democratic Party, the Socialist Party and the Anarchist group. The Workmen's Circle had three branches with a great number of members: Branches 169, 564 and 506.

"According to Simon Belkin, the Labour Zionists had difficulty in establishing stable groups for their organization. He writes that S. Levadee, who was doing the organizational work for the Labour Zionists, used to complain to the leaders of the groups which were more popular, namely the Social Democrats and the Workmen's Circle. They had acquired great influence among the young people because the ideals of freedom, internationalism, brotherhood and working class unity had captured everyone's imagination.

"The socialist ideal had a very deep influence and the effects of the honeymoon period of the Russian revolution extended far beyond the borders of that country. I will never forget the day when the news arrived that all of Russia was caught up in revolt. Workers and soldiers had joined together and, with an iron resolve, had overthrown the monarchy. The red flag, symbol of freedom and the colour of blood, was flying and proclaimed the overthrow of the tyrants. Everyone believed that a new page in the history of man was beginning -- that there would be an end to exploitation and that all nations would become free. Max Tessler told me about those years and I listened to him closely. He was a man who made a great contribution himself in those years. He was a Social Democrat and a revolutionary fighter who took part in all the struggles. He recited for me the roll of the people -- Jews and non-Jews - who influenced the Jewish community in those years. The young Jewish socialists included in their ranks Rose Victor, and other young people. Their influence was extensive in the Jewish community.

"In 1914 they acquired another important member in the person of S. Almazov who was an outstanding organizer and an excellent speaker in Yiddish. Another of their members was R. Saltzman.

"Max Tessler arrived in Winnipeg in 1904. He was one of five brothers who were all tailors in men's clothing. In 1913 Max Tessler began his political activities. It was in the same year that the Social Democratic Party was founded here and it soon acquired 200 members, which was a very large number for those days and perhaps even for today.

"In 1913 a professional organizer, M. Baum, arrived in Winnipeg from New York. He had acquired his training as a revolutionary in his home town of Gomel.

"The Social Democratic Party had its headquarters in the Fisher Hall on Main Street near Selkirk. These headquarters were too small and the Jewish section moved to a new location at Magnus and Main. The first Jewish library was located there and it was also the location of study groups and lecture programs. It became the planning headquarters for the organizing of Jewish workers into unions to which M. Baum devoted himself.

"I was involved in metal work and it was natural that I began to help Baum to organize the Jewish metal workers of whom there were quite a number. I was the secretary of the Union. We undertook to organize some 30 workers who were employed in a number of small shops of which the largest was the Winnipeg Metal Co. We went out on strike but the strike was lost and the union fell apart, having existed for only about 9 months.

"In 1919 Baum left Winnipeg.

"During the same year the radical nationalist group was also active. This group devoted itself mainly to education. In 1914 it founded the Jewish Radical School, which later became the I.L. Peretz School. The Radical Nationalists also established a cultural organization and a drama group. Those who were active in the cultural work included the Cherniacks, Alter and Fanny; Ben Sheps; B. Miller, and later they added to their number Bertha Plotkin, the Kellers and others. Their concern was mainly in the education of their children in the Yiddish language." ("The Jewish Labour Movement in Winnipeg," in Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada. Selection of Papers Presented in 1868-69. 1970)

THE MONTREAL BACKGROUND

Early labour history was a disconnected history of endless toil, exploitation, sporadic efforts at the joinder of helpless, unselfish, often heroic individuals and groups across the continent into easily fractured unions, of organizations without continuity.

Radicals sought to organize to fight their employer class, but without success. Their appeals were abstract and political and, as they approached the workers in the parks and squares during their Sabbath repose, they met nothing but disinterest. The workers' relations with their bosses were close, even familial. They prayed in the same synagogues, worked together, often as landsleit from the same townlet.

By the 1890's New York conditions spilled over into Canada with the development of sweat shop methods, the growth of the industry, depersonalization of the factories, with incipient labour resistance and even the coming of craft experts from New York.

Medres relates this to the clearer definitions of the socialist and anarchist elements in New York and the founding of the socialist Arbeiter Zeitung and of the anarchist Freie Arbeiter Shtimme there. The Arbeiter Zeitung being one of the few socialist publications in the New World; the few socialists who were not Jewish also participated in the distribution of this paper among the Jews of Toronto and Montreal.

The evils of exploitation and of poverty came to the attention of Quebec society and government. Medres notes that the provincial Department of Public Works publicly condemned the conditions in the needle trade, noting the unsanitary conditions in the tailor shops and bakeries, even though some improvements had been made in earlier months.

In their quest for an anarchist society, the Montreal devotees established a cooperative blouse factory intended as a seed for the ideal society of the future and as a demonstration of the validity of their social ideal.

In 1902 Clarence I. de Sola, president of the Federation of Zionist Societies in Canada, reported that representatives of the workingmen's union had waited upon him to obtain the sanction of the Zionist Federation for the formation of this new Zionist society. He had granted them a charter most willingly, for the fact that they desired to devote their energies to the aims of Zionism proved that the Hebrew manufacturing classes and workingmen of Montreal had a soul for other and higher things beside the earning of their daily livelihood. (Jewish Times, Dec. 5, 1902)

The same issue noted that Mr. P. Levy, president of the Garment Workers and Manufacturers Union spoke strongly in sympathy with the Zionist movement.

The 1908 world-wide movement to bring substantial assistance to Sholom Aleichem also had a section in Toronto. There the Zionist Council, the International Workers of the World, the Socialist Territorialists, the Cloakmakers and the Poale Zionists organized for this effort. (Adler, Oct. 22, 1908)

The Adler wrote editorially on October 6, 1908, on "Winter and the Jewish Unions." The editor stated that "the Montreal Jewish unions habitually melt away in the spring sun; when they do not disappear they certainly weaken like the plant in the Book of Jonah. At best of times the Jewish labour movement is weak; the labour population is small and capable organizers are few.

"Last winter there was a substantial number of active unions; some 1,000 men's tailors attended meetings and prepared for a general strike. With the coming of summer the union disintegrated.

"Hundreds of girls working at ladies' garments carried on effective agitation. Their union still meets from time to time, but at present when a dozen members turn up, it is considered a success.

"The fate of the pressers' union, pantsmakers and others follow the same pattern, so what can be expected of the younger weaker syndicates? Only the Jewish carpenters' union remains solid.

"It is expected that with the cooler weather and the longer nights, union meetings, societies, lectures and mass meetings will revive." (Oct. 6, 1908)

In Montreal the poverty conditions and the high price of bread led to the attempt to organize a workers cooperative association which would also operate a bakery. (Ibid., Nov. 3, 1908)

Jewish and Polish applicants for work were bloodied in December 1908 at the Dominion Car Foundry by French Canadians who claimed that these foreigners worked for lower wages.

Chazanovitch closely observed the Canadian Socialist Party which he found too doctrinaire. "Socialism in Canada is abstract and floats in the skies. It remains alienated from the world and lacks power. It seems a flaw of youthfulness from which it will liberate itself soon." (Folkszeitung, Sept. 11, 1912)

He noted that the splinter group, the Social Democratic Party, had Jewish locals in Toronto and in Winnipeg with many Jewish members scattered in English locals. Its H. Martin "felt that these workers ought to organize to spread party literature among their own people." Chazanovitch remarked that "the party regrets that its Jewish

members are separating from their own people." (Ibid., Aug. 31, 1912; S. Belkin. The Poale Zion Movement in Canada 1904-1920, Pp.4-5)

The factional and ideological strife among the early unions led to weakened organization and to continuous schisms. The first decade of the new century also felt the depression of 1907 which further lowered the living standards of the needle workers. Soup kitchens marked the Montreal and Toronto scene. Characteristically, Benjamin Gutl Sack, who was to become the prime historian of Canadian Jewry, wrote a Yiddish drama, The Worker, which was produced for the benefit of the Jewish unemployed of Montreal.

The Toronto Folkszeitung correspondent Rosenbloom noted that before the turn of the century the smaller Toronto community was not industrialized; the immigrant Jews there were desperately seeking a living by petty bourgeois means.

However the large stream of migrants was sustaining an intensive labour sector. By 1897 a union of cloakmakers was formed by the International Workers of the World which lasted till 1899, until a strike at Eaton's broke it up.

The workers in the men's tailoring industry were organized in Montreal and in Toronto as early as 1904 and 1905. Montreal was more of a centre of the industry than was Toronto.

The locals which were organized in 1904 and 1905 soon broke up, but a local of the United was reorganized in 1906. But this local too fell apart and the employers reinstituted a 55-hour week. That was the official work week, but in fact the workers were on the job for many more hours than that.

Not until 1906 did the International Garment Workers Union reestablish a Toronto local. Through a misunderstanding between the local and the international the two separated for a number of years.

The men's tailors organized later than the ladies' garment workers. Yet there is a record of a short lived union in 1902.

Capmakers organized in 1908, but by 1912 they were still not very effective, which was also true of the furriers.

Apparently Chazanovitch interviewed Sack and other personal sources on work conditions. In 1890 tailors would carry the sewing machine "heads" as they sought sweating employment in the "pig market;" they paid for their own needles, thread and candles as they worked endless hours, as late as 1904. Some of these oppressed workers were successful and, in turn, became the employers in Chazanovitch's days.

In 1904 the United Garment Workers succeeded in organizing the first needle union on the initiative of a Mr. Rose. It abolished the custom of worker-owned machines. But the Yiddish newspaper records that Rose proved dishonest and the anarchist members displaced him from leadership. The union became very conservative. In 1905 the group disbanded. At this stage sub-contracting was introduced, a system that endured for many years.

At the end of the following year the United Garment Workers reorganized in Montreal, and an eloquent Mr. Miller from New York assumed leadership. The union grew in its four locals: pressers, coatmakers, pantsmakers and a ladies dressmakers local. Its 1300 members operated a labour bureau. But Miller also proved dishonest and even betrayed a striker. In consequence its 1907 general strike failed. Nevertheless they succeeded in introducing the 55-hour week!

The independent Ladies Tailors Union attempted to organize in 1908, but after eight months the effort was abandoned.

The same year another organizational effort on behalf of an international tailors union, by Elstein, Kaufman and Zahler failed. This attempt was followed by H.M. Caiserman and Freierman. What remained was a Trade Union League which grew into the mighty tailors union of 1912.

S. Belkin explains the labour structure of the ladies wear industries in Canada at the beginning of the century,

"The largest number of workers in the ladies garment industry were the cloakmakers. The makers of ladies' waists (blouses) played a much smaller role at the beginning.

"The dress industry began to develop only after the First World War when fewer women began to wear suits and more of them wore dresses. It required a skilled workman to make up a suit, and the Jewish immigrants who had never worked in the trade in their homelands had difficulty finding work. It was only in the T. Eaton Co. in Toronto, where at an early date mass production methods were introduced, that unqualified workers were able to learn the skills quickly and find work even at cloaks and suits.

"This is one of the reasons why very few members of the Poale Zion and Jewish National Workers Alliance in Montreal were at work at cloaks and suits, while in Toronto their number was substantial. It might also be true that a number of Toronto members of the Jewish society had been skilled in the trade in the countries whence they came. Because of this higher skill possessed by these workers in cloaks and suits they earned more than the workers in the men's wear trade.

"In 1906 the ladies garment workers International attempted to establish a local of cloakmakers in Toronto, but the unit was weak

and quickly fell apart. At that time the International Workers of the World were very active among the cloakmakers in Montreal and in Toronto. They sent their organizers into these cities and established two Jewish locals. The Montreal local was the more effective one. Leib Zuker, later one of the great leaders of Canadian Jewry, was chairman of the Montreal local for a year or two. The Toronto local was composed of garment workers, woodworkers, etc.

"In 1907 the International sent its organizers to Montreal and Toronto to establish their own locals. In Toronto there was sharp conflict between these international ladies garment workers, people in the support of the IWW.

"In 1909 some workers established an independent union in Toronto which existed for two years. In 1911 this independent union became affiliated with the International."

A local under the name of the United Brotherhood of Tailors was also weakened when the IWW attempted to establish a men's tailors union. (L. Meltzer, in Adler, May 1, 1919)

In 1907 an attempt was made to reorganize the United Garment Workers Union in Montreal. Many of the Poale Zion members and the Zionist Territorialists were active in this effort. S. Merlin was one of the leading propagandists for this union. (S. Merlin, in Yiddisher Kemfer, Sept. 6, 1907) By the end of 1907 J. Pruzhansky, Israel Cheifetz, W. Chaitman, J. Marcus and J. Sklover were among the Poale Zionists who were leading the union. As J. Marcus reports, "There was an understanding between Pruzhansky of the Poale Zion and the socialists and anarchists, that each of the groups would have equal share in the important positions in the union. So Pruzhansky was chairman for several six-month terms and this also applied to Jacob Sklover who was then a Zionist-socialist." (S. Belkin. P.91)

Among those who conducted the campaign against the IWW and favoured the independence of the union was Sklover and Israel Cheifetz, who was finance secretary for a long time. Jacob Marcus was treasurer for two years, from 1909 to 1911. The union soon liberated itself of the influence of the IWW and joined the United. The union became stronger during the years ahead. In fact, when the union collected funds for the striking cloakmakers in New York, money was transmitted to the Yiddisher Kemfer, the New York official publication of the Poale Zion organization of America. (Adler, Sept. 4, 1910)

Strikes in the industry were frequent. In 1911 the strike at Kellert Bros. in Montreal resulted in the concession that the workers were permitted to use the elevator and did not need to climb the staircase to their fifth floor work. A number of Poale Zionists joined the union at this time: Moses Caiserman, Hershel Noveck, Solomon Bercovitch, Max Blechman, Morris Rabinovitch, Noah Cheifetz, Velvel Sirota and B. Kurman.

The international union also gave rise in September 1909 to the pantsmakers union which became a mighty force in Montreal labour, and to the equally durable pressers union.

Towards the end of 1909 the men's pressers union, an independent local, had 30 members. (Adler, Nov. 25, 1909)

The Labour column of La Presse of March 2, 1910 dealt with the garment workers' strike and noted that "the principal issue is unionism, the right to belong to a union, to unite as do all sections of society nowadays whenever they feel they need to do so.

"We nevertheless find in our society at this time a number of employers who boldly refuse the right of their employees to organize. Some dozen employers in the garment industry, we are told, united to combat the union. They pledged to each other to refuse all workers who have joined a union and to favour by all means at their disposal workers who do not join the union.

"Such procedures are not likely to create a rapprochement between capital and labour and should not be tolerated in a country like ours which needs all liberty of action of its citizens for its development. Such an attitude is more likely to lead to a boycott of the firms which have made such an engagement, and is likely to further embitter the workers concerned to combat all capitalism."

In its edition of March 2nd La Presse notes that "the struggle is continuing; all indications are that the strikers are determined to hold out against the few companies resisting their demands, certainly to retain all ground gained. Thirty-one companies have already signed the contract with the union but there are still about ten who propose to continue the battle. They have pledged to turn their factories into open shops. This effort so far has not succeeded and, as of this morning, they seem to be more closed than ever."

One summary of the history of Montreal labour records the background of the 1912 famous garment workers strike.

"There was at that time, in Montreal, no other trade union in the industry. Tailors were working 60 hours a week in old and unsanitary buildings. In order to get a job, tailors had to go to Dorchester Park. Contractors or foremen who were looking for workers came there. When a worker was offered a job, he had to give his ring, or something of value, as a deposit to ensure that he would report for work.

"At that time, pantsmakers were the 'avant-guard' of the tailors. When we organized our independent pantsmakers union, many tailors joined us. Among the leading members, at that time, were Joseph Schubert, Saul Magid, Max Orenstein, and others who were very active in the movement.

"In New York, the tailors were organized under the United Garment Workers Union. After we organized our pantsmakers union, the UGWA sent organizers to Montreal in order to organize the tailors. They succeeded, and we also joined the United Garment Workers."

It is estimated that there were approximately 20 important factories operating in Montreal at that time, employing some 5,000 workers of whom 90 or 95% were Jewish. (A. Welicovitch in Jubilee issue of Adler, Jan. 30, 1928, P.47)

Logan, historian of Canadian trade unionism, notes that the United Garment Workers Union reached its peak in Canada in 1912 to 1915 when they had 3000 enrolled members, largely in Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton.

A campaign to unionize the men's clothing trade was proceeding in Toronto as well as in Montreal. There, a general strike in the industry was called at the end of February 1912. It lasted for some 10 weeks. (Editorial in Adler, Apr. 24, 1912) The Toronto union succeeded in winning better conditions even earlier than did their Montreal colleagues. Among the members active in the Toronto campaign for the United were S. Braude, S.S. Shapiro, M. Silverberg, Matitiyahu Kramer, J. Birnbaum and M. Soretsky.

Belkin supports the view of Logan that the unification movement in Toronto was much easier than in Montreal because the leadership of the Toronto union was of Lithuanian Jewish origin, as was Sydney Hillman (Logan, Pp.214-215). Kramer, who had been the first secretary of the pantsmakers local, became vice-president of the Amalgamated Local and Judah Gertler became recording secretary. S. Braude was business agent and Birnbaum was chairman of the vestmakers local for a time. He was also a member of the Toronto Joint Board. Other activists were Samuel Heller, recording secretary of Local 219, M. Silverberg, secretary of Local 211, M. Soretsky, member of the Joint Board, L. Frechter, member of the executive of Local 211 and S.S. Shapiro and Abe White.

H. Barsky, president of District Council no. 15 of his union, described "A Promenade Amid the Jewish Trade Unions in Montreal."

"It was the best year we ever had in labour organization. A number of strong unions were created, among them the cloakmakers. Such groups as the bakers and pressers strengthened.

"The unions became the centres of Montreal Jewish life. They are spoken of everywhere.

"The Garment Workers local 209 was founded in 1911. In spite of the intolerable heat members filled the halls to register. In unprecedented amity they raised membership to 2,0000. Without conflict with the employers the union attained factual recognition, even if only unofficially. Never was a union official rejected when he came to discuss conditions.

"Another achievement was the abolition of 'trying' a job, a crippling of human dignity which lowered the ego of the worker. There was also the mark of shame on the Jewish tailor who had to attend the 'pig market,' a sort of Asiatic slave bazaar where the workers stood in rows waiting to be bought. This was attained by systematic education, awakening the pride and self-respect of the worker and of the man. Today it is known that the only place to secure work is in the union labour bureau.

"We have established control of labour rates; we have abolished cut prices and excessive overtime, the union not only organizes the member economically, but no less morally and spiritually, and is able to participate in dealing with society's problems. Towards this end debates are arranged on Friday evenings on political and scientific matters. We hope that the union will develop a fine educational system for our tailors.

"Pressers Union local 67 can be considered an 'old' union; it is several years old; old among Jewish unions which are particularly evanescent. It is almost identical with the tailors union as they work in the same trade shops and under the same work conditions. Their 400 members constitute 90% of the trade, veteran soldiers, excellently trained in their union duties.

"They are preparing, together with the tailors, to fight for weekly wages instead of piece work. They have a substantial fund; every workers has contributed a day's work.

"The assistant cutters (zu-schneider) include Jews, English and French. They have recently attained 85% membership in the trade.

"The pantsmakers (local 377) is among the oldest of Montreal's unions, with a checkered record. It stood firm in the field at a time when not a unionman was admitted into a plant. For three years they remained unaffiliated, even though they generously supported all unions who appealed for strike support. Now they joined the United Garment Workers Union. It has attained a number of concessions from the employers without conflict.

"There is much that is hampering labour organization because of national differentiation. This is particularly true of French Canadian women who are numerous in the pantsmakers union; their organizational tradition is weak. It will be necessary to engage organizers who speak their language, as well as for the Italian members.

"Among the objectives of unionism in the coming months are the abolition of sub-contracting and the 'notice tradition' whereby employers retain a week's salary in lieu of notice.

"The pantsmakers in Montreal won victory over the Semi-Ready factory in 1912. When a dozen union members asked for an increase in wages, they were summarily dismissed. The company proposed to

introduce the 'section system,' replacing skilled workers with French Canadian girls alien to the spirit of labour solidarity. They named a specialist Barnett Bernstein to reorganize the work system. The union struck the department where they worked. Some fifty workers walked out from the department, French and Italians among them.

"The company surrendered; it recognized the union, restored the earlier system and promised to abolish piece work."

Although not a tailor himself, H.M. Caiserman became very active on behalf of the union immediately upon his arrival in Canada in 1910. His devotion, his oratorical ability and his educational efforts in various fields of interest won the recognition of the tailors. At first they were somewhat skeptical about his syndicalist ideas, but he began to retire from them slowly and approached the socialist-nationalistic element.

In 1912 the union had won the confidence of the tailors to such a degree that they chose Caiserman as chairman of the union, a position he held for two years, except for the short duration of the general strike in the industry. (Belkin, Pp. 91-92)

As late as 1912 the workers in the Toronto tailoring industry only had a Jewish minority. When the Toronto Journeymen Tailors Union went on strike in October 1912, the Jewish workers were relatively few among them. There were a number of appeals issued to these Jewish workers to maintain their labour solidarity and to remember that, although this is a strike of non-Jewish workers, the Jewish members must not hamper or injure the cause of their non-Jewish colleagues. It was not until 1936 that the Journeymen Tailors Union, which was constantly declining, was merged with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

The cloakmakers union in Toronto began to grow in spite of the failure of the strike at the T. Eaton Co. in 1912. Among the Labour Zionist activists in that strike which involved 2,000 clothing workers, A.Z. Silverman and L. Bograd. Local 38 had been expelled from the international as being too radical but in 1912 the International accepted this local again, an action which was hailed by Leon Chazanovitch. (editorial in Folkszeitung, June 14, 1912)

The union continued to gain in strength and in May 1912 they presented two major demands to their employers: a nine hour working day and a 10% increase in wages.

The union moved into Coronation Hall. (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 10, Pp. 107-10) The opening of that local was an occasion of great joy and a concert and a ball marked the occasion. Leon Chazanovitch was one of the major speakers, promising the tailors that the ball would continue until 5 in the morning. (Adler, May 24, 1912)

H.D. Rosenbloom, labour organizer for Canada, noted that conditions in Montreal in the trade were the worst in the country; distinctly worse than in Toronto.

The Quebec metropolis was the centre of the industry and the manufacturers were able to impose harsher work conditions. Organizers began to be more effective with the opening of the decade. The Jewish employers were harsher than the others, he wrote in the Folkszeitung.

The Journeymen Tailors Union was the first of the needle trade syndicates. "The second union in point of time," Logan wrote in his Trade Unions in Canada, "was the United Garment Workers of America, an international which likewise had its greatest expansion in the period 1912-1915. In Canada, as in the United States, it neglected to incorporate the new immigrants and lowly French Canadian homeworkers or to serve them through the industry, especially in Montreal, its largest centre. It likewise shrank with the growth of the Amalgamated." (Pp. 209-10)

One of these organizers recalled a year later in the Folkszeitung, "Exactly a year ago, in May 1911, I came to Montreal from New York to address a mass meeting of the tailors in Montreal. When the committee which met me at the depot showed me the circular advertising the meeting I could sense the insignificance of this labour movement.

"This impression was confirmed when I visited the labour ghetto, with its low, dark homes, with the half naked children of these worker families."

UNION SPIRITUALITY

The developments in labour during this decade had profound and far-reaching consequences on Judaism and on the Jewish religion.

The mass of Jewish labour in Montreal, and on the entire continent, in its syndicalist and activist phase seemed not to have had an orthodox element. This is remarkable because we know that there were many observant Jews in the community who populated many congregations and that they included many at work in the industry. Yet they seem to be absent from the unions. There were also rabbis in the community, ministering to the working class, yet we do not hear the voice of their conscience.

On the contrary the wealthier employer class of philanthropists spoke in the name of charity and religion, even as they proposed loudly to starve the strikers into submission. So Schweitzer spoke of the false patriotism of the manufacturers and of their Judaism and philanthropy. "We have witnessed the unmasking of the law as represented by the police and of the justice of the judges, but also the lie about the Judaism and the philanthropy of the employers who speak all year long of beautifying Judaism with hospitals and homes for the aged, and now openly propose to starve some 5,000 workers or, more correctly, 15,000 souls."

At the same time Jewish nationalists were conducting an intense campaign within the international labour movement to introduce Jewish national values, including religion, into cosmopolitan assimilationist socialism.

So H.M. Caiserman spelled out labour strategy and related it to the extended welfare program and its idealism. ("How We Can Assure the Existence of Our Unions," in the Folkszeitung)

He noted the fragility of Jewish unions and ascribed it to their concentration on immediate simple bread and butter issues. "We have failed to supply them with spiritual aspirations which might raise them above quotidien life. But an organization cannot live without festivity. Certainly Jewish institutions cannot survive without Sabbaths. Our souls, fed upon wandering, are restless. Our spirit is revolutionary and therefore cannot be related to movements whose sole ideal is the stomach.

"The other cause is our failure to provide benefit funds for its members. German unions have provided their members with a future, with strike benefit in times of struggle, of sickness, of decease.

"Montreal unions must develop plans to increase members' contributions to render such programs posible, along German patterns.

This can be supplemented further by educational and inspirational programs which would add spiritual strength to their material power."

During the second decade of the century the ideological conflicts between the socialists and the anarchists faded, and were replaced by the struggle for Jewish loyalism in the labour world, against the cosmopolitanism which envisaged the fading of all national and religious divisions in the universal class war and in the coming of a classless and homogeneous world. The socialists among the Zionists waged this campaign in which Chazanovitch and his Folkszeitung were prominent.

At this time of decline of ideologies the Jewish labour movement assumed a particular form which characterized it for many decades. In addition to engaging in fundamental confrontations with the employers, it began to campaign for the improvement of living conditions in society and in their homes and, at worst, through such assistance for the needy as soup kitchens during the depressions of 1907-1908.

The cloakmakers union joined other community institutions in the immigrant society of Montreal including the carpenters' group (led by Gilletz, Hendelman, Kaplan and Braunstein), the Workmen's Circle Branch 151, the Mohilever Benefit Society and the Poale Zion.

This philanthropic activity by the poor for the poor drew the admiration of the rich, articulated by the Jewish Times.

"It has fallen alone to the lot of a number of Jewish young workingmen, above all the other elements of our Montreal population, to come forward to the immediate relief of the army of the workless who are suffering great hardships during these winter months, more than in previous seasons. We refer to the People's Kitchen (Volkskueche) that has opened at No.10 Ontario Street East, where poor men and women may obtain a solid, comforting meal for five cents, or for nothing at all, when they have nothing.

"The place owes its existence exclusively to the energetic exertions of our workingmen brethren, almost without exception of the class known as the Social Progressive Party. They are still unconsciously part of us. The Jew cannot get away from himself.

"We rejoice at being able to place the entire credit of that praiseworthy institution to Jews, and it does our heart good to see with what readiness and eagerness they are daily giving themselves to that noble work. It is not only what they are doing, what they are giving away, but it is that genuine fellow feeling.

"It might also be remarked that the food is Kosher." (Mar. 7, 1908; Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 38, 1987, Pp. 55-56)

It was a humanitarian partnership of philanthropy where love of man focussed on love of kinsman. The Jewish soup kitchen counted among

its clientele 90% who were not Jewish. Its sponsors "were out of sympathy with Jewish traditions and beliefs; they described themselves as Jews by the merest accident of birth, for whom Judaism was an empty letter, without a past, without a future." But it was a Jewish soup kitchen, Kosher!

This created the respectful partnership of community even with the men of the Baron de Hirsch Institute. A link was formed with them in spite of those assimilationist leaders of labour who held that the class struggle severed working Jews from their brethren by history and by blood.

Jewish labour society of this quarter century witnessed an internal conflict between cosmopolitans, universalists, assimilationists and Jewish nationalists, Zionists, and Bundists themselves were bitterly split.

In these days of young Lenin, when many in the Bund were clarifying their position in the Marxist internationals, this internal labour conflict in regard to Jewish interests such as Zionism, Hebrew, Yiddish, charity and to other causes was historic.

In retrospect this labour philanthropy assumed vast forms sush as the Denver Sanatorium for the consumptive victims of labour conditions. As important, labour formed its own aid structure for Israel and contributed to Zionism becoming Labour Israel with Ben Gurion at its prophetic head, and shaped the international Jewish relief program which created the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the People's Relief Committee.

STRIKE

The Chazanovitch years in Montreal were marked by the great general strike of 5,000 men's clothing workers to which he dedicated himself with his entire fire and idealism.

"A major event occurred on June 7, 1912, when the first general strike in the men's tailoring industry in Montreal was declared. It was one of the finest chapters in the history of labour in Montreal. Some of the meetings of the strikers closed with the singing of the "Ode." the anthem of the Poale Zionist movement. (S. Belkin, Adler, July 22, 1912)

That evening the workers left their shops to meet in Coronation Hall.

"The emptiness of the desert and the silence of the grave must reign in the factories of the trade." Four thousand men laid down needles, scissors and press irons and 1,000 cutters joined them.

As the four locals of the United Garment Workers declared the strike, each of the speakers - general organizer Altman, Italian Moresa, H.M. Caiserman, H. Barsky, Orenstein, Elstein and Aiges - as well as Chazanovitch and St. Martin "spoke with the blood of his heart, as a hammer on steel. Each word fell into the large Coronation Hall; all the hearts of the workers became one for the holy cause of humanism. All together they became one protesting giant, ready to pounce upon the enemy with all its force."

A. Welicovitch estimated that twenty important factories operated in Montreal, employing 5,000 workers, of whom 90-95% were Jewish. (in Jubilee issue of Adler, Jan. 30, 1928. P.47)

A McGill researcher noted that the protracted and extremely bitter struggle involved on both sides some of the leading members of the Montreal Jewish community. The employers included such prominent Jews as Solomon Levinson, Harris Kellert, Noah Friedman, Lyon Cohen, Harris Vineberg, Jacob Elkin, and Samuel Hart. Most of these were related to each other by marriage or business ties going back to the 1860's and 1870's in the Lancaster area. Wealthy, established, and powerful men, they were almost all self-made immigrants who had known the anguish of poverty in "di alte heim" and the uncertainty of peddling needles, thread and cloth on the Canadian frontier. They had made the slow transition to manufacturers on the fringes of the industry, and with diligence had emerged as successful industrialists. They employed hundreds in their large shops in the garment district along lower St. Lawrence Boulevard and the surrounding streets. Members of either the venerable Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue or the newer Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, these manufacturers were "uptown" Jews who

lived in the fashionable suburbs of the west, supported Jewish charities and took a keen interest in local Jewish affairs.

The most prominent and active of these was Lyon Cohen who was born in 1863 in Poland but grew up in Moberly, Ontario. He joined his father, Lazarus, in a Montreal coal and dredging business, established a brass foundry and in 1906 took over the Freedman Company which became one of the largest and successful men's clothing firms in Montreal. Wealthy, prominent, energetic and articulate, Lyon Cohen was a charitable Jew who looked with deep compassion on the sufferings of his brothers. He went down from his Westmount home to meet immigrants at the docks, labored long hours in numerous causes. His charity probably arose out of an understanding that, long before, he himself had arrived from the same world as the figures coming off the immigrant ships in Montreal harbour.

Yet all of this compassion and understanding went just so far. They were not willing to sacrifice their vital economic interests which were involved in the recognition of a trade union in their shops. Thus they supported Gardner's denunciation of "professional agitators who have created all the trouble" and his refusal to "permit irresponsible demagogues to dictate the terms upon which we will deal with those we employ."

Facing the manufacturers in the summer of 1912 was a joint executive board of forty local U.G.W. members headed by A. Gordon, a union official from Baltimore, and Victor Altman. At issue was union recognition, piece-work (which the union was seeking to abolish), and the contracting of work by large manufacturers to non-union outside shops. The union also sought to reduce the work week from fifty-five hours to fifty-two.

In early July, four firms announced that they would move their plants, Hart to Sorel, J.E. Elkin and Co. to Joliette, Crown Pants to Cornwall and Union Clothing Co., to St. John.

Among those who stirred the workers to loyalty during those difficult days were the members of the Poale Zion: L. Chazanovitch, A. Komarov, N. Cheifetz, S. Schneour, L. Zuker, H. Noveck, E. Korenberger, L. Meltzer, H.M. Caiserman and A. Welicovitch. Most of the members of the party at the time were themselves tailors who participated in the strike.

The Gazette described vividly the opening days of the strike on June 11, 1922,

"The first official day of the clothing strike at Coronation Hall yesterday was made the occasion for dancing and music by close on a thousand of the strikers, men and women, who crowded into the hall, bent on making the most of what is to many of them as yet only a chance for a holiday. Asked how long they thought they could stand it, they would show the strike cards issued yesterday, on which were

dates for four months ahead, and say, 'Four months.' The leaders of the strike claimed yesterday that through their offices and pickets they had issued four thousand of these cards, and each striker was expected to report three or four times a day at one of seven halls taken at Coronation Hall, the Labour Temple and elsewhere, in order to get each date punched three times. When a man fails to appear, the strike leaders send out to find out why, and if he shows symptoms of wandering from the fold, he is persuaded to change his mind.

"Mr. Victor Altman, who has been organizing the strike, said yesterday that no force was used, and that every man on the picket was specially instructed to keep the peace and, in interviewing non-strikers, to use only persuasion. 'It is ridiculous to talk of dynamite,' said he. 'The garment workers of America have never worked that way, and we do not intend to now. We have been working for four weeks, and have given ample notice to the employers to make terms without a strike if they wanted to. We are not calling a strike at all on many of them, as we are satisfied with the conditions that we found there, and with others who agreed to our terms the men were not called out. Some are saying that we cannot fight very long. I want to tell you that I was in New York the other day to see our general executive officials and they are ready to stand behind the fight to a finish. I and some others are going down some time today to see Chief Campeau and assure him that there is not the slightest foundation for the reports that we intend to use violence.'

"Among the firms whose employees have not been called out is the John W. Peck & Co. Mr. E.H. Smeed, manager, speaking yesterday, said: 'There seems to be no likelihood of any difficulty here. If there were any, it would be only because some of the men might be in sympathy with others who are out. These are good working conditions here, and a strike in our place would have very little sympathy from the great majority of our help. There is no one out here whatever.'

"Mr. G.P. Butters, of the Campbell Clothing Company, also had the same experience to relate. 'We are not affected by the strike. We have no agreement or anything of the sort with the workers. The leaders, or a deputation sent by them, came up here, looked around, and went away, saying they were perfectly satisfied with what they found. We have always been paying a time and a half overtime, and given them most of the things demanded by the strikers.'

"The Fit Reform Wardrobe Company reported also that they had had no trouble. 'We received the notices, and so on, but everybody is satisfied,' said Mr. O'Neil, manager of the uptown store. 'The Government man came up from Quebec to see what he could do to help settle the strike. He called on us and found that there was nothing here to settle.'

"The Male Attire Limited, are also not affected, while others reported the same experience.

"Those who have been affected by the strike are as follows, the number of strikers from each place being supplied by the strike leaders, and denied by some of the manufacturers: E. Levinson Clothing Co., 300; B. Gardner & Co., 350; H. Kellert & Sons, 400; H. Vineberg & Co., 500; S. Hart & Co., 300; Friedman Bros., 300; Freedman & Co., 300; J. Elkin Co., 200; Union Clothing Co., 200; Semi-Ready Co., 75, and a dozen smaller firms.

"This last figure is denied by Mr. A. Wood, of the Semi-Ready Company, who said that less than a hundred had left, and that a number of these were expected back. He claimed that within the next ten days they could replace the men who had gone on strike. 'Nearly one-third of our customers are merchant tailors,' said he, 'and we have assurances from all over Canada that all the men we want will be sent in.' Seven or eight policemen have been detailed to guard the Semi-Ready premises, and the company has engaged pickets of their own to offset those of the strikers.

"The strike is now in the hands of a joint executive board composed of forty people. Five of these are the leaders. Mr. A. Gordon, of Baltimore, another member of the international executive is in charge with Mr. Altman. The president and financial secretary will also be here shortly.

"Speaking of the wages of cutters, Mr. Altman issued this challenge: 'We are willing to allow any impartial committee of citizens to examine the books of any manufacturer in the city on whom we have called a strike, and find out if there are any of their cutters who are earning from $1,000 to $1,200 a year. If they can we are willing to give $100 to any charitable institution, but we do not include the foremen or designers, only the regular cutters. We claim that the average wage of most of them for the whole year around is $12 a week.'

"Mr. B. Gardner, president of the Clothing Manufacturers Association, at a meeting of the Association yesterday afternoon, was authorized to issue a statement of their position for the information of the public. This statement declares that owing to the increase in population in Canada there has been a great increase in the volume of business, and that the increased prosperity has been shared with the workers, so much so that men from other trades requiring a longer training and more skill have been attracted. The statement claims that professional agitators have created all the trouble, hampering the full development of the industry and inducing the workers to be dissatisfied with good times and good wages.

"The manufacturers state they believed most of the men and women to be satisfied even at this time. They claim to be glad of the strike as it gives an opportunity to establish their right to manage their own affairs.

"'Whether it takes one month or many, we will not permit irresponsible demagogues to dictate the terms upon which we will deal with those we employ.' says the statement.

"They declare for the 'open shop,' and promise to take back those who have stopped through intimidation, and to give them sufficient police protection. If the strike is prolonged, they say that competent instructors will be employed to train new workers in every branch, who will be attracted by the excellent conditions and high wages. The minute division of labour, they claim, would not make this teaching process a long one.

"Two of the strikers accused of beating Mr. Cohen, a worker for Gardner & Co. who did not go on strike, have been arrested. Sam Turner, 400 St. Dominique Street, a lad 16 years of age, has been arrested for intimidation." (June 11, 1912)

It so happens that the strike committee convened a public meeting on the same day that the Folkszeitung called upon its readers to meet for the same purpose. The two conferences merged and a Poale Zionist was chosen secretary of the united conference. (Folkszeitung, July 12, 1912)

Every member of the party was taxed one day's wages on behalf of the strike.

The issues of the Folkszeitung were in effect a series of agitational appeals calling for the unity of the strikers in defence of decent livelihood, their personal honour and the honour of their group.

Chazanovitch exhorted his readers, "We do not wish to be slaves of slaves, of triple-storey exploitation. We do not want our brothers to serve as the tools of the bosses to oppress us. Subcontracting is a relic of the darkest times, a shame upon our age, a shame upon our trade.

"Brethren, now you can see that we approached the employers courteously; they responded brutally. We came humanely; they raised the iron fist against us. We spoke of humanity and justice; they threatened police and prison. When they speak of law they mean lawlessness, violence and brutality, of policemen's clubs and soldier's bullets. They have declared war. We fight for the 49-hour week, the 9-hour day, to reduce the work day by an hour, for the present schedule robs us of the hour of freedom for refreshment, with our families, with the world, with nature, with life."

Chazanovitch drew very large perspectives for the strike. "If the tailoring bosses succeed in shattering this union, it would constitute a triumph for the capitalists of all trades without exception. Bestial capitalism should not be permitted shamelessly to raise its head, or tread on the bodies of labouring people.

"The entire working district of the city must become a battlefield, with the populace from all quarters supplying material for the great war, at a time when the individual rises to identify himself with total society.

"These Jewish bosses are the most bitter enemies of labour. If it is not they who initiated the anti-Jewish provocations, they are certainly pleased with it and use it in their economic interests.

"How does it happen that Christian firms are more nearly ready to settle with the union? The Jewish employers are satisfied with the racism being spread; ready to do golden business - an eternal shame upon their heads, an incurable plague upon them.

"Behind their mask their cowardice and weakness are hidden."

One of the first strike issues of the Folkszeitung carried a remarkable sketch "In a Factory" portraying a working couple, as fine a page of proletarian literature in Yiddish as may be found. Similarly the short stories of M. Shmuelson, such as his "An Inner Struggle" on the same theme, are as distinctive labour literature as anything that ever appeared. Not to speak of M.L. Halpern's short story "Aletz" and his poems.

Months after the strike, which lasted seven weeks, the Folkszeitung summarized, "It was more important than its results. The mass of labour appeared with such moral strength that the employers will not again so lightly challenge them to conflict."

BITTER STRIFE

As the active intellectual of Canadian Jewry at this time, Chazanovitch participated in the pre-history of the Jewish Public Library. He shared in the shaping of the institution as a profound - almost prophetic - influence in the perpetuation of the culture of the Jewish people. Chazanovitch, together with S. Schneour, were the speakers at its first literary evening on April 1, 1912; he also appeared at its second evening on May 12, again at Coronation Hall, together with R. Brainin and M. Shmuelson.

Sack wrote that "Labour leaders recognized Chazanovitch's talent in inspiring the rank and file on the picket line, even though many of them were radicals close to assimilatory groups, and distant from his Jewish concerns such as Zionism.

"During his months in Montreal he became an effective force in the life of the Jewish socialist workers. He carried with him the full impact and the fire of the fearless and tireless Poale Zionist activist. He brought this impact into the labour circles of the immigrant community with his call for Jewish class struggle.

"Chazanovitch was their introduction to Jewish nationalism and tradition. He was in a sense labour legitimization of the Poale Zion and the creator of the synthesis between Jewish culture and the current economic philosophies inspiring the militant working class.

"He thus opened the door more widely for the Poale Zion to enter the homes and shops to Palestinian inspirations as incorporated into the programs of Jewish activists and of community workers of various types.

"With the strike Chazanovitch initiated a new chapter in the Jewish community in Canada, injecting impulsive and directed awareness in group life... The 1912 strike which he led was stamped with his fire and his idealistic self-sacrifice which was so characteristic of him.

"The 'bosses association' regarded him as a danger; if they had known of his Argentine experience as 'a dangerous man.' they might have attempted the same trick here.

"Halpern told me that Chazanovitch was threatened with arrest but he remained fearless, and his sharp pen and flaming words continued to stir the enthusiasm of the workers. The radicals among them welcomed his force, his oratory and his journalistic dynamic. He was particularly close to the Poale Zion whose program was nearest to his heart. Dr. Birnbaum, Ber Borochov and Nachman Syrkin appeared in his Folkszeitung. The party benefitted from the heritage he bequeathed to the Jewish immigrant society and set the tone for its progressive circles where so much needed to be done to combat the

ignorance and the assimilation threatening Jewish society from the right and from the left." (MS in National Archives, Canadian Jewish Congress)

The high barrier between labour and religion was taken for granted from the first day. Even when on any given day the conflict was not being exacerbated by some incident or by some sharp word - such as the proposal to affix a Mezuzah on the door of a Jewish cultural institution or the executive meeting convened on Rosh Hashanah - this hostility was silent but turbulent.

It is therefore easy to imagine any of Chazanovitch's embittered or hungry strikers reading the Canadian Jewish Times' concern with the strikers, a concern not with the "payday" that will be missed or the constant insult by the foreman or employer on the job, but with their desecration of the Saturday.

"Recently in Montreal we have witnessed open defiances thrown at the Jewish religion by bodies composed for the most part of Jews. The garment strikers, when they wished to parade the streets for the purpose of enlisting the sympathy of the public, could find no better day on which to march than the Jewish Sabbath.

"Old men with long grey beards were bustling about on Main Street trying to gain the goodwill of their fellow Jews on a day which most of the men whose support they were seeking consider as holy. Again when the strikers decided to have a tag-day they chose a Saturday as the day of their operations.

"It was bad policy from a business point of view, because Jewish strikers could count on but little sympathy and assistance from their Gentile neighbours, and the only people whom they could expect to come to their aid - the Jews - they openly offended by their profanation of the sacred day. But aside from the financial loss which the strikers suffered as a result of their selection of a Saturday as the time to sound a call for help, they sustained a still severer loss, and that is the loss of the respect and regard of the Jewish community.

"We are not so bigoted as to be unable to tolerate the opinions of individuals with regard to religion. We are not in the habit of stopping people in the streets and telling them what they should or should not do on Saturday or on a holiday. Indeed, even the most pious Jews have become accustomed to seeing members of their race disregarding and violating laws enjoined by the Jewish religion. In America the principle of the freedom of opinion and thought is supreme.

"But what is resented and is considered unpardonable is the action of Jewish bodies in countenancing and encouraging irreligiousness. The Toronto Freie Schule is not a philosophic organization created to dispute the veracity of the doctrines of religion.

"Societies can claim no justification for going out of their way to assume hostility towards religion, when their proper business is to deal with scales of wages and coats and vests and trousers. When a body of pantsmakers, out of spite or carelessness, challenges the beliefs of the people among whom they live, and whom they wish to count as friends, they certainly act wrongly and deserve not only reproach, but condemnation." (Aug. 16, 1912)

Chazanovitch was sarcastic. "The press of the employers is not concerned with the workers losing 'the pay-day' or the constant humiliation and insults on the job. What concerns them is the workers' desecration of the Sabbath."

Characteristically Brainin criticized the Toronto radical Yiddish school for its disregard of Sabbath custom even as he disapproved of the vulgarity of the striking garment workers.

This at a time when the Baron de Hirsch Institute and its labour bureau acted as an employment agency to send scabs to factories on strike. The Davner case that appeared in court was that of a tuberculous worker who had been sent for two months' rest cure by the Hebrew Consumptive Aid Association, and whom Dr. Kaufman had declared unfit for work. But the Institute doctor declared him ready to work in Kellert's strike-bound plant.

The unionists highlighted the sensational case of a leading establishment family which rose from rag peddling to factory ownership; "the operators of his three machines were paid for their uncounted hours of labour every two months. By Brainin's time he had pleaded bankruptcy twice, employed 350 men, was officer in the Baron de Hirsch Institute, was a member of the two oldest synagogues and guided arriving refugees for employment, often as scabs; he helped finance the sanatorium for the tuberculous which his factory regularly supplied with patients," to cite H.M. Caiserman.

"The philanthropist was host to a family celebration. For the occasion he invited his employees to join the festivities. The following payday he deducted two hours of work from the pay of the workers who attended.

"Before the High Holy Days he decided to cut the wages of his 200 men and 150 women; 15 per cent from the more highly paid; 10 per cent from the others; head operators, including workers who had been with him since 1896, to $19 a week.

"He had been paying young girls as finishers who should be at school, $3-$4 per week; older girls $6-$8; pressers $10-$15 weekly, although the prevailing rate was $18-$22.

"During the strike that ensued he had "Italian tramps beat his Jewish workers. A regiment of his detectives and professional gangsters drove in and arrested picketers and searched them for hidden

weapons. One striker who picketed with her four children was arrested four time in one day."

"After sixteen weeks of intense conflict which attracted attention all over the continent the manufacturer gave his consent to arbitrate the dispute, with Brainin as chairman of the committee. His own arbitrators were Rabbi Nathan Gordon and Wolofsky's banker Carl Rosenberg. The committee spent a week seeking a resolution, devoting a day to a discussion with the employer. Eventually they agreed that the strike had come about through a misunderstanding. A settlement was reached and signed.

"The following morning the English papers carried the manufacturer's denial of the entire proceeding.

"He explained that he paid no attention to Jewish public opinion; only Italian and French count." (H.M. Caiserman, Jan. 7, 1914)

The Folkszeitung reported the employers' failure to secure scabs from out of town. The several men whom the Freedman Co. imported from New York were deported by the Canadian immigration officials and were faced with court proceedings. Mr. Gardner had a transport of scabs on the way, but they disappeared.

But the large Toronto group of hungry scabs who were met by the Kellerts, Gardners, Vinebergs with great enthusiasm quickly marched over to the strikers after removing their scab masks.

The calendar of the Folkszeitung constitutes a directory of the Jewish labour movement of the Montreal immigrant society.

The tailors union met every Thursday evening at Coronation Hall.

The cloakmakers met Monday evenings at 573A Main St.

The raincoat makers local 102 met the second and third Wednesday evening each month at 573A Main St.

The cutters local met the second and fourth Friday evening.

The painters met Wednesday evening in St. Joseph's Hall, at the corner of St. Catherine and St. Elizabeth St.

The pantsmakers met Saturday evenings in the Labour Temple.

The bakers met at the cloakmakers' headquarters, 573A Main St. on Friday evenings.

The capmakers met Saturday evenings at St. Lawrence Market Place after May 1.

The Freiheit group met Friday evenings at the Folkszeitung hall at 45 Dorchester West.

The Workmen's Circle Branch 151 met the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the same address, as did the Workmen's Circle Branch 204 on the first and third Tuesday of the month.

The Socialist Party, local 2, met Friday evenings on the fourth floor of a Craig St. building.

THE LITERARY REFLECTION

One of Canada's leading Yiddish authors, Isaac Yampolsky, and his younger brother Moshe Leib, were distantly related to Sholom Aleichem, and to Reuben Brainin through Mrs. Isaac Yampolsky.

Isaac Yampolsky was an active revolutionary (Zionist Socialist) and had to flee Russia to Galicia whence he came to Canada in 1904, at first in the farm settlements of the Jewish Colonization Association; then he settled in Saskatoon as teacher of Hebrew and then in Winnipeg before coming to Montreal to teach in the Talmud Torah Arshei Sefard in 1908 and to write in the Adler on the Wohliner invitation.

In the fall of 1908 we find the first Canadian Yiddish literary creation from the pen of I. Yampolsky, member of the Zionist Territorialist group. He wrote a sketch on the occasion of the Holy Days which appeared on October 9, "The Naanuim" (The bendings and the bowings associated with the Lulav service), the story of Yoneleh who has come to be accepted as a leading citizen of the synagogue. On the 16th he published a sketch, "My Wife."

For a decade he wrote several novels, essays, and translations in the Yiddish press of Winnipeg. (Canader Yid, Canader Mazik and Der Birger) and in the European press.

The readers first heard of "The Family Tragedy" in the news columns of June 21, 1910 when Yampolsky reported about a citizen whose wife deserted him and took his young son with her; the newspaper promised to continue the further developments in the case. These fictional "reports" followed in sequences during the month as sequences in the novel.

This treatment of a novel was innovative in Yiddish journalism.

Yampolsky wrote a review of a performance by Yiddish actress Mme. Liptzin in the Adler of June 19, 1910.

Characteristic of the romantic tradition in the old country reminiscences of this generation of Yiddish writers was Yampolsky's sketch, "Nehemiah who Blew the Shoffar". It recalls Nehemiah who dared to practise the sacred art out in the fields, in spite of those who mocked him. But he became a more skillful master of the Shoffar, and on one occasion he returned home with a goat. (Adler, Sept. 29, 1908)

Almost prophetically Yampolsky wrote on "The Troubles of Klal Israel" on June 25, 1914.

When the First World War broke out Yampolsky wrote on the implications of the hostilities, "God and Magog" (Adler, Aug. 4, 1914), together with A.M. Mandelbaum on "Strategic Errors"

Later he and his brother Moses were teaching in Lipton, Sask. by mid-October 1914 and became the first Canadian Jews to raise funds there for Jewish war sufferers. (S. Belkin. Di Poale Zion Bavegung in Canada, 1904-20. Montreal, Labour Zionist Movement, 1956. Pp. 30-31, 136)

In 1918 he and his brother left for New York to dedicate themselves to business, not without success.

Isaac Yampolsky published an essay on the Montreal strike, "Four Thousand Against Eight" in the Adler of July 8, 1912.

"The four thousand souls who marched last Saturday over the main streets of Montreal constituted one long exclamation mark, a mark of protest.

"Against whom?

"Against eight. Four thousand souls against eight.

"It was a quiet, silent march. But out of its silence there welled the stony world woe, the frozen sigh of life that pressed against the heart. There were smiles on faces, but behind them was the smell of powder, a protest against the world order, of Abel against Cain, 'Help, do not stifle me, death. Let me breathe God's free air.

"Bands accompanied the marchers, at the head of the parade, and at its end, with songs of comfort, songs which let a tear run out instead of a smile of triumph. Something escaped these triumphal songs, tones which must also have been heard as the Titanic sank. But with a difference. There the four thousand grasped the hands of the eight, in that final moment of struggle with death as the music played 'We are near to thee.'

"But in this struggle for life the eight were rocking on satin rocking chairs in their comfortable living rooms, while the four thousand were melting under God's hot sun as the music played 'Why, God, are we far from you?'

"The goddess of justice with her sad shawl over her pale face swept over the marchers and granted a kiss to each loving smile, even as the clown Mamon with his sharp claws and blood-flecked face danced with Mephistophelean laugh straight in the face of the goddess, taunting her with a golden coin. His devilish taunting drowned them all out as he sought out the pure goddess to his desires.

"'Shudder, you desolate lump. Your end is near,' the four thousand boomed.

"'Not at all so near,' the goddess of justice sighed.

"O, that endless sad music of the eternal conflict between justice and power.

"The cursed mouth that uttered, 'Lord and master; paralyzed be the hand that first smelted a coin and turned the prince of creation into a human beast.

"Four thousand human beings march and demand from whom?

"From eight men equal to them demand an additional hour of sleep and dream of life, for when they are awake they do not live; they are only hands, machines. But the eight reply, 'We care not for your lives and dreams. We need only your hands. Work or starve,' commanded the eight iron hands.

"The goddess responds, 'Four thousand needles are stronger than eight iron hands.'

"The dreams drown out the sighs. A dust rises from the marching feet and the full battle rages."

KONRAD BERCOVICI

The outstanding short story writer Konrad Bercovici recorded his "First Impressions of Montreal" as he descended from the New York train "into a mob entering the city and leaving the city, friendly and smiling. I had kept from smiling in the groaning, serious New York crowd. No pushing here, in the midst of French; a poor French, but gentle, satiny.

"In the street, tall trees with wide branches which make me feel young. I breathe deeply. The streets are broad and clean, a fountain at the first corner, with benches around it, and flowers. Children racing about on bicycles. I wish I were one of them.

"It is not possible to be satisfied in New York, in that city of the hunt and of murder, where everyone anxious to be the wolf and not the lamb, and all lambs become wolves, with all wolves eating each other.

"A sixteen-year-old girl stops me. She is wearing a ribbon with red letters, 'Help the strikers.' Her skin is dry; her eyes dead; she looks at me proudly, not pleading but demanding help, 'You are my brother,' as she hands me a newspaper. Other girls with white ribbons and red letters are standing nearby.

"I am happy. I had forgotten the wolves. Why did you children come to face me so sadly? I had seen laughing children, playing, happy. Trees had greeted me. Now you pursue me. Your serious faces pull me.

"I cannot read the signs from my street car, the letters dance. A cheerful girl, laughing, awakens me to a long green park, with thick trees on the hill, both to the left and to the right, endlessly. On a veranda between the trees a girl in white with a litte red hat is playing. I think of other small children and want to cry, the hundreds of children on the dirty streets of New York, in the narrow crowded rooms, children who had never seen trees, soon to be lambs aspiring to be wolves. 'Help the Strikers.'

"It is long since I had seen my friends. A warm hand was pressing mine. A sweet voice greeted me, at home. Within ten words I felt the warm rays surround me, in spite of the cloud over the sun. The daughter came in for the first time, but I recognized by her large black eyes, her lips saying, 'I like life' since before she was born. We are old friends. I am glad I did not know her in the rushing murderous city.

"The strange city of Montreal! Whomever I met, workers or tradesmen, all thought of themselves as here temporarily, as if all were

living here in a village; the capital of Canada is New York. Everything there is worthy of respect.

"But this is not true. Most Jews here had lived in New York where the 50-storey buildings had hypnotized them. Those endless streets had captured them between the dark gray buildings. Now they can see the skies and the mountains and the fog, and they cannot break the attraction.

"But these are the first Jews here. Until 1850 there had been no Jews in Montreal. The second generation will not suffer from the disease of New York, and a new type will take shape, the Canadian Jew.

"In the morning the editorial office is beseiged. Small, skinny children, sunken eyes, pale lips. What is this?"

The Adler wrote,

"Twenty-seven children, chosen by the Jewish Fresh Aid Fund Society, gathered at the offices of the Adler, on August 8, 1912 before being sent to Genser's Hotel at Joliette for several weeks.

"They keep on coming, six-, eight-, ten-year-olds are pouring in. The door does not rest. I ask one of them, 'How many are there at home?'

"'Six,' he bends his head.

"'Are you the youngest?'

"'I am the oldest.' he says proudly.

"'What did you have for breakfast?'

"'Tea and bread.'

"'And last night for supper?'

"'Tea and bread.'

"'And for lunch yesterday?'

"'Tea and bread.'

"'What is your father doing?'

"'He is not working now.'

"'What is his work?'

"'He is a tailor.'

"Red letters on a white ribbon dance before me. 'Help the strikers.'

"I look around, my lambs! My little lambs!" (Adler, Aug. 5, 1912)

His article a few months later, on the New York "Tailors Strike" is reflective of the attitude of the immigrant society of the period towards labour relations.

He noted that 100,000 workers went on strike in the American metropolis.

"Those who do not know the condition of the workers and those who are not interested in improving their lot regard them with hate and contempt. But those who know their state and those who want it to improve see with respect and admiration the hundred thousand - and the additional five hundred thousand of their wives and children - who will soon suffer need, cold and hunger.

"The striking tailors knew all this, yet they went on strike. Does not this prove the desperation of labour conditions? In the present circumstances of living in a large city, where daily needs are so great and costly, where the loss of one day's labour endangers life, such an act is daring. The fact that the workers have resorted to it after cool deliberation speaks eloquently of the daily suffering of half a million.

"Those who need the production are also the producers. When they risk their labour to achieve their ends, the time must have come to find the means of avoiding this.

"When a fertile garden becomes unfruitful, when the gardener sees that his earth does not bear the fruit it did, it is time to think of enriching the soil, to fatten it, warm it. He needs to let the earth rest fallow, briefly, every few years. For he knows that otherwise this earth will give him nothing. He determines how much fertilizer and how much repose the land requires.

"It is true that the earth feeds on the fruit it grows, but does not meet its full needs. Do not the workers deserve their full needs as does the earth; the full energy, the force and life they expend in tilling it?

"When a hundred thousand cease from labour or cannot produce in existing conditions, has not the time arrived for the gardeners to determine the increase in fertilizer and in warmth? Is it not time to let one part of the earth repose and to till another? Or else the second portion will become as the first, and the thorns, wild roses on the fatigued field will overgrow and destroy all about them.

"The earth desires to produce, but needs to be dealt with foresight. It is in the interests of the employers that the employees be healthy and satisfied. It is not in the interests of the nation that its inhabitants be a band of sick and groaning who look forward to their

last evening. The workers strive instinctively for the welfare of mankind.

"We owe gratitude to them and to the earth. The best gardener cannot till the air. He needs good, fat, warm earth. The best industrialist needs workers. Bridges, railroads, palaces, houses, ports, clothing and fortification grow in the garden of labour.

"But those who accept it and use it must ensure the energy that is expended in the making and replenishing of it.

"I know that hunger can often be used to force workers to return to the service of those who exploit. But this is not the end. Nothing is settled this way. It provokes the workers the more, for it only demonstrates the conflicting interests.

"The workers' interests are more human than those of the industrialists. There would be no strikes in a well-ordered society. But the world being what it is, the workers need to resort to strikes for a better existence. When a man who works long hours cannot exist from his labour he is forced to ask final questions.

"He deserves more than his subsistence. He deserves superfluity, for he produces more than he consumes." (Jan. 3, 1913)

POET WINCHEWSKY

The Folkszeitung hailed the appearance of poet Morris Winchewsky at the Baron de Hirsch Institute at the end of June, 1912 as "a true festival of the radical and socialist sector of the Jewish population. No personality on the East Side of New York or among the Jews of North America has won as noble a name as this creator and this grandfather of Jewish socialism in the land of the dollar." (Folkszeitung, June 24, 1912)

The Poale Zion had invited poet Morris Winchewsky to Montreal to lecture, the income of the affair to go to the strike fund. (Folkszeitung, July 12, 1912) Poale Zionist branches in American cities also contributed to the Montreal strike fund.

"The grandfather of Yiddish poetry" was received at a mass meeting of strikers with fifteen minutes of applause.

"I agitated to your parents and I am proud that my efforts were not in vain, for you represent the ideas and thoughts which I preached to your parents."

The occasion provided Winchewsky with an opportunity to discuss the ideologies of Zionism and socialism. Although he had no faith in the feasibility of realizing Zionism, he stated that he found no conflict between the Jewish Nationalist movement and socialism.

The visit of Winchewsky shared the headlines with the men's garment workers strike in June, 1912. The presence of the poet in the city made for a festive atmosphere in radical socialist circles as they remembered his stirring verse and his imagery since the earliest days of the labour movement.

It says much for the community spirit that even as Chazanovitch was pointing a finger at the exploiters of Jewish workers, he was inviting the strikers to the Winchewsky festivities at their Baron de Hirsch Institute to hear the poet lecture on "Socialism and the Jewish Problem" and "Realizing Socialism" under Poale Zionist auspices.

The Adler voiced the union's complaint against the daily English-language newspapers for ignoring all strikers' reports and featuring the releases of the manufacturers under screaming headlines.

Cotton's Weekly, a socialist periodical, delegated its editor to Montreal and the paper issued an entire number devoted to the Jewish strike. (Adler, July 21, 1912) Two hundred girls from strikers' families distributed the paper which headlined, "The Truth About the Garment Workers' Strike." One of the girls told a passerby, "Of course, we need the money, but above all we need the sympathy of the English-speaking people who are told only lies about this strike." Another

girl reported from St. Catherine and Main streets, "I have more quarters than nickels."

The Folkszeitung fixed "the days of the men's tailors strike of June 1912 into the history of the Jewish quarters of this city with letters of gold and into the annals of the Montreal proletariat. It was filled with moving scenes, inspired moments when clearly the hearts of tens of thousands beat in uniform, when the noble solidarity of the strikers might move stones. In a sense it was a test of the strikers, a test that was more brilliant than expected...

"How little the manufacturers know the workers. For years they have been working at their side; yet they have no notion of what was stirring in the depth of their souls.

"The parade to mark the second week of the strike was noble as 5,000 demonstrators marched along the narrow streets where the police diverted them, even as the 'prostituted' Gazette forecast some 500 strikers. Forever to be remembered, the forty-minute march headed by the strike leaders, the workers wives, the strikers' children..." (June 28, 1912)

The Trades and Labour Council supported the tailors' strike. The plasterers' union was the first to respond.

"The entire quarter in Montreal is converted into one great battlefield and supplies must flow into it from all sides. It is wartime in Montreal when obligations to sacrifice must be greater than ever; a time when the individual must grow and must melt into the generality of society, sensing his interests as part of totality."

One of the employers told the English-language newspapers that he would starve the workers until their tongues were dry from hunger and thirst.

The Gazette quoted another manufacturer that the Jewish strikers aim to expel the non-Jewish workers from the trade.

The Montreal employers threatened to invoke the immigration regulations against the union leaders, agitators and strikers. It was no empty threat but a tactic that had been used against Chazanovitch by "patriots" in the Argentine, and may have been used against Brainin in Canada in 1915 and later against others in Winnipeg.

One of the 1912 strikers responded. "They cannot frighten us. We are not greenhorns. Some of us are born here or in the United States. Some of us have been here more than 30 years, as long as some of the manufacturers." (Adler, July 21, 1912)

As the struggle grew in violence the employers accused the workers of being foreigners and the unions of being under American and "international" inspiration (a durable Canadian tradition).

Chazanovitch responded with an article on "Patriotism and the Money Bags" recalling that alien influences and even foreign controls are not new in Canada. "Patriotism once meant the defence of the fatherland against foreign enemies. Today it means the maintenance of class control and the oppression of the working masses under the mask of common national interests."

He exploded the employers' accusation that the 1912 strike was the less justified for being conducted by an international union and therefore the less patriotic. "As if the capitalists would have been a whit milder had the struggle been carried on by a purely Canadian organization.

"This call to patriotism is of course the purest hypocrisy and the nationalist tears derive from crocodiles. The capitalist class is patriotic only as long as the sacks of gold remain untouched. All ideals are transformed into milch cows in the capitalist world. There was a time when patriotism meant the defence of the fatherland against alien enemies. Today it means the maintenance of class rule and the oppression of the working masses under the mask of common national interests. All is considered in the best order.

"The capitalists are furious at the Americans. If an organizer or an agitator comes from there it is assumed that he is in the service of Washington, here only to seize Canada for the United States or to destroy the country. This is the more evident since the defeat of Reciprocity and the rise of the Conservatives to power. They are now frightening us as children are scared into remaining home by tales of a bear on the street. Could one believe that our patriots fear American labour leaders and that English leaders are near and dear to them?

"Is everything that is profound in origin alien to the tastes of capitalist preachers and to the capitalists? We shall see.

"Catholicism is the dominating creed in Quebec, an international structure for spreading darkness among human peoples. Priests accept instructions from Rome without regard to the laws of the land, and no one objects. But when an American organizer or agitator comes to Canada, he is attacked as a Washington agent.

"Our relations with Britain are excellent. Our governor-general is derived from there; we will build them ships. But a labour agitator who comes from there will evoke the familiar patriotic comments.

"Nowhere is this patriotism a farce as it is in Canada where all capital is international. All branches of industry are fed with foreign capital. Even as the poison mixers demand that American labour leaders be denied entry, American capital streams endlessly into Canada.

"No, it is no question of patriotism.

"Our Montreal manufacturers who plead patriotism want only peaceable workers who do not demand but plead, who bend their backs as members of local unions. They constitute ideal organizations without ideals, they engage strike breakers who will stab workers in the back even as they stand in battle together, whose unions exist on paper - ideal organizations of model children of the church.

"The strikers recognized the strike from the first week as a bitter struggle between the 5,000 workers - Jews, English, French, Italians - against employers prepared to use the lowest, most shameful, most disgusting means, brutal force, class justice, prison, swindles and bluff, treacherous libel and provocation. Before the conflict began the employers declared to the daily press that 'foreign' agitators were aiming at ridding the trade of its non-Jewish workers and at destroying the Canadian industry in the interest of the Americans.

"These are shameless, contradictory lies destined to enflame wild anti-Semitism and race hatred, to antagonize workers against workers, to shatter their amity and to destroy them in the separate parts.

"The horror of the anti-Semitic agitation becomes the more shameful when we recall that these first-line manufacturers are Jewish capitalists fighting Jewish workers.

"The demonstration marking the third week of the general strike of men's clothing workers was magnificent and elevating, a truly historic day to enter in golden letters in the history of the Jewish quarter of the city and in the proletarian annals of Montreal. Moving scenes and inspiring moments marked the beating of thousands of hearts in unison, dominated by one sentiment and one thought, a noble solidarity that could move stone. The day was a test of the workers' determination in the sacred struggle to the end.

"They passed it more gloriously than was expected, an encouragement for their leaders and a disappointment for the bosses, the alleged philanthropists and their association. Again the workers showed how little the employers knew their men and the changes that are taking place in everybody's thinking. The 5,000 marching men and women surprised even the newspapermen who had anticipated several hundred strikers. The police had diverted them into narrow streets; consequently, it took 40 minutes for the parade of marchers to pass a given point - the strike leaders, the workers, their women, children, bands and an unforgettable memorial of determination.

"As Schweitzer of New York, general organizer of the United Garment Workers, was delivering his address the crowd broke into the "Oath" hymn as they swore to remain true to labour's cause regardless of suffering and sacrifice, dealing a death blow to all doubters and to all the hopes of the bosses." (Folkszeitung, June 28, 1912)

Constant mass meetings of strikers and committees raised the enthusiasm and the confidence of the labour community.

Strike leader B. Schweitzer was applauded for long minutes as he condemned the stubbornness of the bosses,

"I have witnessed many strikes, I have met stiff-necked employers, and hard-hearted, but this is the most remarkable. This battle cannot be lost, for when men are so insistent in the face of such moderate demands as ours, they demonstrate how they would act when they win full power." (Adler, July 4, 1912)

During its fifth week Schweitzer noted, "I feel as much intensity as we had at the beginning; indeed a new life, new courage. With men like these, we can continue. The bosses hope to starve us, but they will not succeed. Such courageous men do not fall on the battlefields of hunger." (Ibid., July 7, 1912)

The strike continued its own life with constant meetings, pronouncements and sufferings in the midst of enthusiasm, and deprivation.

"This day will be written in labour history in golden letters, though it is impossible to record even one percent of its events.

"There was a new turn in the life of the garment workers. A meeting was called for 9 o'clock, though many were busy on picket duty. There was a tense feeling that the strike was ending with a compromise, unsatisfactorily."

The Witness describes the strikers' meeting,

"The hall is packed with workers of all nationalities and both sexes: English, Jews, French and Italians. Not a vacant seat. The speakers use four languages, and the applause is deafening."

Schweitzer was the main speaker. A. Gordon was first introduced to the strikers, as was Mr. Marota. Gordon of the United Garment Workers Union assured the Montreal strikers of continuous support even if the conflict lasted into the winter. Socialist St. Martin, speaking in French emphasized the international nature of the current strike. He condemned the Jewish employers for inciting Christian workers against Jews.

Marota appealed to the working women "the silent fighters" to support their husbands and brothers in the labour battle. "They can bring success to any movement but they can also destroy any movement."

General organizer, W. Altman opened the meeting, "No one can or will settle the strike without you, and the struggle will only end when you order it to end."

Elstein appealed to workers who may be more comfortable, "Our union is becoming more effective every day. Who will lend us money for a year or for six months to help those who are suffering?" A presser from the Freedman Company offered $150. One after another $1500 was collected.

Israel Rabinowitch recalled a moment at Elstein's bookstore during the strike. Chazanovitch had come to discuss means of raising funds for the strike with Elstein and several other of the union. They decided that they would simply canvass sympathizers in the community. Elstein suggested a number of names, and Chazanovitch was taking them down.

At that moment a stranger in a corner of the store took down the names and addresses. It turned out that he was from New York, a canvasser for the American Yiddish intellectual journal Dos Neie Lebn being edited by Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky. He understood that citizens who were prospective contributors to the strike fund were potential subscribers to the socialist review, and proposed to canvass them first.

Judge Lafontaine liberated two strikers on charges of threatening workers at the Vineberg factory on St. Lawrence Blvd. During the hearings it turned out that the arrested persons had only winked at the workers.

Local organizers Blumenthal, Ages and Elstein spoke at a meeting which condemned Recorder Dupuis for his heavy sentences imposed on strikers to help break the strike.

Reuben Brainin was applauded when he entered a strikers' meeting.

S. Schneour told of a businessmen's group which was raising funds to assist hard-hit strikers. "After all, the workers are the customers of the retailers and many Jewish businesses rely on the strikers for their livelihood."

Separate meetings of union locals and of the Committee of a Hundred took place, and other meetings of workers from separate shops such as Rubin and Shapiro, of Gardner's, Freedman Bros., Kellert's, Friedman Co., Levinson's, Vineberg's and Elkin's.

There was talk of the manufacturers negotiating with individual workers to set them up as sub-contractors.

Support for the strikers was coming from garment workers in the United States as well as from local non-Jewish unions such as the boot and shoe workers, bricklayers, plasterers, blacksmiths, painters, carpenters, hod carriers and glass blowers. (Adler, July 17, 1912)

BRAININ

An extraordinary conflict developed in the heart of the strike, such as could happen only in Montreal, and in this decade between the leading Jewish personalities who came to the city at the same time.

Where else in provincial North America could a socialist group decide to invite the outstanding revolutionary militant of Europe and Argentina, Leon Chazanovitch - and a Zionist at that - to come and publish an inspirational Yiddish weekly? And where else in Canada was there a Hirsch Wolofsky, publishing a minor Yiddish daily, the Adler, who could decide to invite the leading anti-Yiddish prophet of Hebrew, a born aristocrat Hebraist, Reuben Brainin, to turn his Quebec paper into one of the leading Yiddish papers of the world?

Where else could the two meet on the small arena, in conflicting temperature of a historic mass labour strike, during their first months in Canada?

The archival record willed to later times by Brainin himself confirms the sharpness of his moral plight; his diary reports his natural distaste for the proletarian, Yiddish environment in which he suddenly found himself in the role of public leader and spokesman.

So, in the midst of the heated social conflictual society which fed Brainin's Adler, he found himself faced by a respectful but sharp challenge of a missive which could not but call upon his conscience.

Charles Schneour, a mechanical engineer residing at 54 Cuthbert St., recalled the great joy of all Montrealers at the news that Brainin would come to head the local Jewish press. "This feeling was the strongest among the workers who form the majority of the Jewish community and, of course, of the readers of the Adler - who expected from him the elevated journalistic word in defence of their interests.

"The tailors' strike is pitting several bosses against thousands of courageous heroes in vital conflict for their rights to enjoy life. This is the first such significant event since your arrival in the country. What are you doing for the strikers? Where are your fiery editorials to defend them? Where are your ideals, your sense of the battle for liberty, for justice, about which you preach so often? We hear nothing about this from you, as if you were thousands of miles from the city. How can you, the battler for all that is noble and free, be so indifferent at a time when you should be standing up against the bosses?

"I remember my days in Germany when you began the campaign against the Russian Jewish students there when you felt that their mutual human relations did not stand on a sufficiently high plane. I

remember the pamphlets in which you castigated them. I remember how the Jewish nationalist students cherished each of your words. Your present silence surpises me.

"Privately you have expressed your sympathy with the strikers. How else? But we expect more than sympathy from you."

Brainin published the letter - with his credo, "Speech or Silence." (Adler, July 17 and 18, 1912)

"By conviction I am a Zionist. I have been dreaming all my life of elevating Jewish culture, Jewish humanistic culture. I trust that through this renaissance of the Jewish spirit eternal Judaism will speak a new word of liberation for all mankind.

"In the course of time I have not failed to condemn the errors of my Zionist group - narrowness, one-sidedness, absence of culture. I have sought to introduce to readers of Hebrew the most advanced, highly humane trends in the philosophy, literature and art in the world's creation.

"My thinking and feeling is basically aristocratic. The superman is my ideal, the chosen. I may be too much the aesthete, but my entire inner man belongs to the entire Jewish people, and I am bound by all the threads and links to all my people - its mass.

"I feel deeply about the healthy elements, the fertile that is hidden in our 'lower' classes, the seed of our future, the purest of our idealism, the finest aristocratism, the true nobility, the readiness to sacrifice rests there. If I did not believe in these hidden virtues, in their potentialities, in their thirst for elevation, for justice, I would not believe in our shining future.

"I love our masses, but I do not hate the other classes of Judaism. Everywhere I see brothers, Jews, human beings. Social, economic, political and other circumstances have divided our people into capitalists and workers.

"In its nature capitalism is not religious, nationalist, ethical or aesthetic. It is an idol; it sees itself as a nation, a Torah. But I know from experience that among Jewish capitalists there are intelligent, moral, gentle persons. I never refrained from drawing attention to the flaws, the cruelty, the weakness of Judaism or humanity in capitalism.

"But I abhor hatred among brethren. I cannot hate or despise my brethren among the rich. I do not love the coarse, the wicked, the depraved whether he is rich or poor, prince or workman. We have to assert this truth to our rich and to our poor. We must not flatter the masses or smile at the wealthy. Our prophets chastised both the poor and the powerful.

"Blessed be those who teach, refine and ennoble our poor, who open their eyes to their true condition and their interests, who seek true redemption from eternal slavery, who strive for the golden future which will not tolerate separation between oppressors and oppressed, rulers and slaves.

"But I oppose those who teach workers to curse, to hate, to avenge, who would lower the higher classes to the level of the lower. I oppose the automatic Amen to everything the masses want or do; those who dare cast the truth in the face of the rich, but not tell the full truth to the broad masses.

"Where we plant hate and vengeance we will not reap gentle ideals. An atmosphere poisoned with hostility, contempt and curses - in such an atmosphere man, who is created in the image of God, must be crippled and blinded to his own interests.

"When the Montreal tailors called their strike I immediately wrote that their demands are moderate and justified; that they fight for human rights and for human worth and family life which they are entitled to enjoy. My entire sympathy is on their side.

"But I have read the vulgar attacks in the Folkszeitung upon the bosses; when I read the same face of hatred they showed the Russian officials that were dispatched into hell, I recognized that these fearless workers are debasing the socialist ideal much more than their opponents do. For I believe that socialism is an ethical ideal and a positive historical inevitability which has no need of any strategy that robs it of its worth. I recognized that their tactic is incorrect and unwise. The curses and the hail of pitch and sulphur complicate and render their condition the more difficult. Their case deserves factual, reasonable treatment, not threats and attacks.

"I have been silent in the Adler, but immediately addressed myself as a Jew and as a citizen to the manufacturers association with an urgent call that they settle the strike, that they take into consideration in particular the condition of the workers who fight for minimal living standards and that they recognize the consequences of the strike for the community and the nation.

"They heard me patiently to the end, but I heard them too. I must admit that I do not see before me bloodsuckers, the enemies of workers with fists as they are described in the Folkszeitung. They spoke like human beings who have their own sensibilities and responsibilities. I was convinced that they do not intend to starve or demean their workers. They wish to deal with the representatives of their own employees, and not be controlled in their factories by outside unions.

"The present strike began after the manufacturers had accepted orders from their customers on previous conditions of labour arrangements. I spoke of ethics, but business has its own logic, its own ethos.

"After continuous study of the strike I have reached the firm conclusion that it cannot be settled without the union, and it is not desirable that it be settled thus even in the interests of the manufacturers.

"When the manufacturers will meet directly with the unionmen, the latter will realize that they are dealing with human beings and with Jews with hearts and sentiments, who seek to concede when it is intelligent and possible; that the unionmen are people of reason, honesty and experience.

"The strike has been going on for some six weeks. The thousands of Jewish workers have shown exemplary peacefulness, courtesy; they have provoked no incidents - all this is to the credit of their leaders.

"I have attempted a peace, to bring about a meeting of the unionmen and the association, for I know that without these parties there can be no peace. This strike could have been settled long ago with much saving of moneys on both sides and the sparing of material and moral pain to the Jewish community. But the strike has dragged on unnecessarily, with superfluous speechmaking and writing, misunderstanding, stubbornness and personal attacks complicating the difficult problems of strike.

"In this condition of overheated spirits and irritations on both sides, with the refusal to see any merit on the other side, I believed that my words would but make a solution less likely. In such a condition, where the feelings of thousands are at stake, heated statements would aggravate conditions.

"Mr. Schneour forces me to reveal my secret.

"Events in this city have not left me indifferent 'as if I were living thousands of miles away.' The strike has given me no rest from its first day. I am devoting all my hours and all my energies to restore peace and to quiet spirits.

"The very air is explosive, and full of libels, vengeance. Do you wish me to make it more poisonous?"

In point of fact the parties did meet on the issue which Brainin specified with consequences that proved historic.

Chazanovitch replied to Brainin with what was probably the most vitriolic essay in his stormy career.

LABOUR PEACE

At first the employers refused to deal with the strikers, but on July 10, M. Gardner wrote M. Blumenthal. Nadler, president of the pressers union, and Barsky called on Gardner to suggest a review of the strike situation. That evening he was visited by H. Barsky, Altman and Schweitzer who discussed the strike on an unofficial basis.

Gardner told the strikers' representatives that it was impossible to concede to any of their demands on the basis of existing sales orders from the customers, placed on the basis of a 55-hour week. But he was prepared to recommend a 52-hour week immediately and a 49-hour week as of November 1. There was agreement that the demands on weekly wages vs. piece work were not immediate; the question of sub-contracting was minor.

The following day Gardner informed the association of his discussions and they conveyed their decision to their solicitor, S.W, Jacobs, who would communicate with Peter Bercovitch, the lawyer for the strikers. (Adler, July 14, 1912)

After seven weeks duration the strike was settled on July 27, 1912 with a partial victory. Instead of a 55-hour week the timetable was reduced to 52 hours and a 49-hour week was to be introduced on November 1. Subcontracting was to be abolished and the rates of piece work were increased, with working hours reduced.

"Thus ended one of Montreal's largest strikes which affected some 3,000 workers, most of them heads of families, nearly a third of the city's Jewish population.

"The union was justified in declaring that, upon calling the strike, all the workers left their work as one man. Tomorrow they will all return as one man." (Adler, July 28, 1912)

Months after the strike which had lasted seven weeks, the Folkszeitung summarized that "it was more important than its results and its partial success. The mass of labour appeared in such moral strength that the employers will not again so lightly challenge them to conflict."

CONGRESS

During his few months in Canada Chazanovitch interested himself in the problems of community organization, which have concerned Canadian Jewry, until it assumed the shape of the Canadian Jewish Congress and, decades later, of the World Jewish Congress.

Soon after Chazanovitch arrived in 1912, Rabbi H. Cohen proposed that Montreal emulate some American cities in organizing Kehillot.

Chazanovitch reacted in an article, "A Jewish Kehillah in Montreal?"

"When Rabbi Cohen first brought his plan forward, he spoke only of Kosher and Treifeh food, Chometz and Passover food and other matters on which the world rests; matters but for which this world would return to Tohu Bohu.

"Proponents of the plan, including Rabbi Cohen, had forgotten to deal with the real needs of the people. Not a word about poverty, unemployment. Yet the rabbis resent when they are accused of living off the people rather than for the people.

"Certainly no one will want to hamper the union of Jewish citizens for religious purposes. If some Jews feel the need of such a union of congregations to serve religious objectives, let them have such federation on condition that freedom of conscience will remain and that they do not become a religious police among those from whom they have no mandate.

"If their project would include, for the sake of appearances, an agenda for social and cultural programs, organized labour would have reason to engage in it."

Several months later Rabbi Cohen revised his thinking and Chazanovitch wrote,

"He explains that he spoke of these concerns because he is a specialist on religious affairs, but his intention is for the Kehillah to deal with all that touches the Jewish people from Mikveh to labour conflicts.

"The idea of a community united on common concerns is natural and justified.

"Good should be accepted from wherever, even from rabbis. Because a plan is presented by a rabbi is no reason for us to dismiss it.

"There are associations in many centres each of which touches a narrow circle but none which concern the entire Jewish population. The entire community is interested in immigration. Yet when the

enemies of such entry conspire against newcomers, the Jews of America stand with folded arms and hands. The influence latent and dormant in the mass organization cannot be laid on the record in favour of free immigration, for it is splintered and lacks a central body which would invite the numerous small groups to drown the nativists.

"That is the prime power centre which is sought in some American cities. However, some planners forget that in our secular age religion is not the foundation of unity but rather divides."

SCHOOLING OF JEWISH CHILDREN, 1912

As a stranger to Montreal Chazanovitch was shocked to find a Jewish community entrusting the education of its children formally to the denominational schools of the Protestant faith.

Aware as he was that Jewish history is replete with sacrifice by generations of parents to protect their children from falling into the hands of Christian educators, he issued appeal after appeal which were the first to raise the Jewish school question.

The issue extended beyond the contract with the Protestant school board. The same violation of Jewish tradition involved the care of Jewish orphans and of children from broken homes or who required care by the public. In some cases, when Montreal Jewry was young and small, such children were placed in Christian homes and institutions. Sometimes these Christian philanthropists were praised by Jewish authorities for their friendship to Montreal Hebrews.

Chazanovitch condemned the Canadian leadership, "Crime, Shame and Scandal. Jewish Children Educated in the Christian Religion," and "The Yellow Badge of Montreal Jewry."

"Do Montreal Jews know the danger they face, that they live on a volcano, that the earth under their feet has been mined and that it is ready to open up and to swallow them? If they are unaware, it is because they are blind and their hearts are dull. But if they are aware and do nothing in the face of this danger they are criminally light-hearted.

"We are referring to the 10,000 Jewish children who are being systematically educated in the Christian tradition, torn from their elders, from their people; converted, though the term may not refer to a precise ceremony, which is incidental. They grow up like their parents.

"What is essential is that religion is a perspective upon the world. Religions differ in feelings and their understanding of certain historic events. Therefore a Christian generation will be growing to maturity in Montreal Jewry if this condition will endure. For where else in the whole world has such a fearful, sweeping indifference affected the continuing Judaism of our children? Not even in bloody Russia, the land of pogroms, is this ever heard of.

"Yet here, in a free land, with its free laws passed by parliamentary institutions, Christian teachers are giving Christian instruction to Jewish children.

"Some 80% of Jewish pupils are allegedly free of direct Christian instruction, but they are forced to attend religious classes. They

can only pretend to be interested, a ridiculous and dangerous ploy and a painful inconsistency which these tender children cannot evade. They learn early to practise hypocrisy. They become estranged from their parents.

"Jews remain more subservient and submissive than we have ever seen in our history.

"They are swindled by the forms of the provincial school law.

"Jews are not engaged as teachers, and their representatives are not nominated to the boards of education.

"We are informed that every father can free his children from Christian instruction simply by petitioning in writing. But this is not so simple. They are placing the responsibility upon the parents.

"This is the work of tricksters who gamble successfully on the neglect and the preoccupation of the parents who do not even understand the language of the school board. This apparent freedom is ten times worse than farce. If this were an open farce to force Christianity upon Jewish children, Jews would boycott the public school or would emigrate. If need were, they would mount the auto-da-fe.

"Given good will and good organization Jews could benefit greatly from the clauses of the Canadian constitution where protection of the liberties of national minorities are considered.

"On the basis of these clauses Jews could erect powerful cultural institutions and a network of good Jewish schools, particularly in the Province of Quebec. Here the majority is Catholic and French, and it has not the slightest interest in Anglicizing the Jews or to place them under total anglophone and Protestant influence. If the Jews had responsible, capable leaders, with a trace of political and social sense, they would secure French assistance and develop an independent posture in the province.

"But this has not happened; the Jews are sold to the English Protestant minority. It is a dangerous situation from any point of view.

"Unfortunately there are many Jews ignorant and foolish enough to believe that the Protestants are doing them a favour in accepting our children in 'their schools,' and that we should accept all their decisions cheerfully, even the conversion of our children; not to speak of the objectionable, vulgar materialism which is implicit in this stand.

"If these Jews can buy the bit of useful education at the expense of their children's conscience let them openly sell out the primacy of their liberty for the price of lentils.

"The facts are incorrect. We owe the Protestants not the slightest thanks; for the Jews pay as much as the Protestants for the maintenance of the schools in blood taxes. On the face of it landlords pay school taxes, but in truth they are only the mediators between tenants and government. The money comes from the masses of the people who pay rent.

"It is characteristic of the gross Galut ignorance of many Jews, this talk of gratitude at a time when we should be claiming our rights!

"We can claim more than merely that our children should not be educated in the spirit of the Christian faith; much more. We can claim our own Jewish schools, with our own curriculum, our own teachers, our own school board. Our taxes suffice to maintain ideal Jewish schools; we can rely upon our power and upon the aid of French Canadians.

"Are we aware of the danger we can meet from the French side in the present situation?

"Jews assume that French Canadians are anti-Semitic. Every generalization in such cases is false.

"They truly have little cause to be greatly pleased with us. By turning ourselves heart and soul to the English minority we artificially increase its weight and weaken French Canadian influence. The province is the only area where they are the majority; should it glide out of their hands, they are lost in North America.

"We can understand that they cherish the province and we are instinctively angry at the role of the Jews here.

"It is our duty to maintain strict neutrality and not to become a tool for the intrusive English minority whose influence is greater even that its power.

"It is not a matter solely of morality, but also of wisdom.

"Jews would be more successful in trade, in industry and in public life if they developed better relations with French Canadians than with the English. if we could secure Jewish schools we shall need to accord no smaller part for the French language than for English. The fact that Jews here speak no French is in fact a deterrent to their material progress.

"At the very moment when they could occupy a fine place in Quebec, Jews are arousing the anger of the French population by their pro-English partnership. This may cost us dearly.

"As to gratitude, the claim is on the other side. Every immigrant in Canada strengthens the English side; every Jewish child in public school is an asset to the English and to Protestantism. Generous as they are, the Jews have given all to the English.

"The Jewish immigrants of recent years found the present situation ready made and had no notion of the magnitudes of the evil.

"The fault lies with the leaders, the representatives, the spokesmen and the intercessors. They know the evil; instead of fighting it, they kept it hidden and glossed over it. We have come to this point because of their weakness and their carelessness, on account of their deliberateness or their unconsciousness they helped create our current unnatural condition." (Folkszeitung, Oct.2, 1912)

A. Wohliner, pioneer editor of the Adler, recalled that some time earlier a proposal was made that a Jew be named to the Protestant school commission. The Baron de Hirsch Institute pressed hard in this direction and a delegation proceeded to the provincial capital on the case. But under threat of "divorcing the compact" the Jewish delegation closed the case.

"They were too much businessmen to take risks. They were anglophone Jews for whom Judaism and Jewish pride were a yellow badge on their English backbone. They attempted to socialize with the others for fear that the 'greenhorns' would make trouble. They had proceeded to Quebec to accept what would be given them and to kiss the hand that would give them nothing. They even blocked from view the fists of the Jews who were truly hurt.

"Their argument was 'we cannot maintain our schools by ourselves. At the most we might have two schools, while Jewish children are scattered all over the city. Many Jewish children will need to attend Protestant schools in any case, and the Protestants will have a right to keep Jewish children from their schools.'

"Two schools could have satisfied the major portion of the Jewish population at the time. Only the Yahudim, who had already been accommodated in non-Jewish sectors, would have felt uncomfortable...

"Jews are too poor to maintain schools? This is sheer stupidity. When they raised moneys for the YMHA many Jewish names appeared on the honour roll. Jews own considerable real estate and pay substantial taxes to the Protestant board.

"The city would certainly help the Jewish schools as it helps Protestant and Catholic schools. Jews would gain a measure of cultural autonomy, a measure of respect from the Protestants who now sneer at them, and a measure of sympathy from the French.

"As to our present movement, if the 'greenhorns' of yesterday who are the Yahudim of today will meddle in our project, our cause will end as did the movement for representation on the board years ago."

Chazanovitch convened a conference of twenty organizations on schooling where he pointed to the submissiveness of those who are content with an educational system which is an insult to Jewry.

The organizations represented included the tailors, pressers, pantsmakers, bakers, painters and cloakmakers unions, the Freiheit group, Poale Zion, Socialist local no. 2, Jewish National Workers Alliance Branch 8, the two branches of the Workmen's circle, Independent Citizens League, Congregation Beth Israel of Lachine, Tifereth Jerusalem Congregation of Papineau, Independent Hebrew Sick Benefit Association and the Folkszeitung Association.

Chazanovitch perceived the school question as the cardinal problem of Canadian Jewry. He revolted against the slavish compromise of a contract which labelled Jewish children as Protestants if only for educational purposes, and which permitted the New Testament to be introduced to these children without any protest from their parents.

Many of the 40 delegates declared that they did not know that Christianity was taught in the Protestant schools.

There were wide differences in opinion on the nature of the education to be presented to Jewish children. Socialists and atheists wanted no religion to be taught; "any who desire such education should arrange for this in Chadorim, Talmud Torahs or special schools. Public schools should be modelled on the American or French pattern." But observant delegates proposed Jewish religious instruction parallel to that taught Christian pupils.

The conference resolved to seek an end to the Christianization of Jewish children in the public schools.

Another resolution declared unanimously that religion should not be taught in the schools. "The instruction of the Christian faith to Jewish pupils in the Protestant schools in Quebec is a violation of the rights of the religious and the non-observant Jewish community which is opposed to the conversion of these Jewish children. We warn the community of the grave danger inherent in the present condition, and call upon it to exert all efforts to liberate these children from Christian religious instruction.

"In darkest Quebec we cannot seek elimination of all religion from the schools in the near future. But Jews can demand that their children should not be taught the Christian faith, a demand that every decent Christian will support.

"If this request is not met, Jews should withdraw from the public schools and fight for their own Jewish schools with their own board of education."

Belorabronsky supported the motion. Chazanovitch and fellow Poale Zionist Rombach urged that teachers should be engaged for Jewish religious instruction. Rombach recalled the philosophy of the new Jewish National Radical School when he urged that special Jewish instructors be engaged because even Socialist parents must teach the Jewish faith to their children.

Shlackman feared that orthodox and radical parents would differ on the school question because of their educational objectives. The radicals want to bring them up as citizens; the religious as Jews.

Kaufman, Gilletz and Wiskoff agreed with Shlackman but feared that such an approach would not resolve the community problems.

In spite of his fears that the orthodox might assume leadership, Goldstein also proposed an active program. Socialist Shubert and Poale Zionist Pruzhansky moved for a parents' petition to exempt Jewish pupils from Christian instruction.

An executive committee was chosen including L. Meltzer, H. Barsky, Cashin, H. Noveck and Steinman.

The Rev. Symonds, chairman of the Board of Protestant School Commissioners, stated that Jews' rights are fully protected. If there are any who desire to complain, they are welcome to state their case before the board which will investigate their allegations.

On October 9, 1912, Le Devoir interviewed a number of Jewish personages on the school conference of the preceding Sunday; among them the rabbi of a major congregation. A Jewish lawyer assured Mr. Bourassa's newspaper that "no credence is to be accorded to any movement that does not enjoy the backing of the Baron de Hirsch Institute through which any Jewish organization must pass."

Chazanovitch responded, "Must? We cannot see why the Institute would approve the conversion of Jewish children. But if it will seek to discredit the movement, there will be due time to deal with the Institute."

Not surprisingly, it was Chazanovitch's political colleagues who, years later, after Chazanovitch left Montreal, led the programs for distinct Jewish schools and for Yiddish education.

When the Folkszeitung folded in October 1912, it seemed as if his Montreal episode had ended in failure, but the historic record indicates otherwise.

Chazanovitch's final campaign in regard to the education of Jewish children was but the beginning of his revolution. His associates in the Poale Zion, who had just founded the J.L. Peretz School, would continue their far-reaching campaign which was eventually to develop into the government-supported Jewish day school system of Quebec without a peer in the world outside Israel.

His initiative for a Canadian Jewish Congress was to be followed, within less than two years of the closing of the Folkszeitung, by Reuben Brainin who foresaw that the outbreak of the war signalled the new age of cataclysm in the Holy Land.

He called for Jewish mobilization in a new breadth and intensity, under the auspices of a Jewish Congress which would parallel the Zionist congress idealism on the exile plane, with Jewish congresses in many countries to meet the challenges of world war and postwar reconstruction.

ON A BROADER ARENA

It was not possible for Leon Chazanovitch to continue the Folkszeitung in Montreal, and he returned to Europe just before the outbreak of the war to assume the direction of the Poale Zion movement.

His experience in socialist ideology and in the theoretical investigations of the radical movement enabled him to become the Zionist ambassador to the international where he won many friends for labour Palestine during the Balfour period and later, as well as for recognition of Jewish minority rights in post-war Central Europe.

During the balance of his short life he served the Labour Zionist movement as editor and as diplomat from his bases in Europe and America. His war years were spent in Scandinavia informing the world labour movement on the condition of Jewish proletarians and on the threats to Jewish rights in post-war Europe. His concern with the economic problems of Jewry led him to participation in the ORT and in Jewish agricultural efforts.

He died in 1925 in the service of the Jewish people - in the event, aiding the work of the ORT in Carpatho-Russia.

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