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The Story of Hebrew Braille

HARRY J. BREVIS

I was graduated from the Jewish Institute of Religion in June, 1929, with the degrees of Rabbi and Master of Hebrew Literature after completing in three years the prescribed four-year course. About a month later, I explained the Hebrew Braille system I had developed for the reading and writing of Hebrew to a sightless friend who had retained his interest in Hebrew and mathematics despite his blindness. After studying it for a week, he called to tell me that I should also have been awarded, at my graduation, the degree of M.H.B., Master of Hebrew Braille.

In 1923, the consensus among my doctors was that I had inherited an eye condition through my mother, who, though unaffected by it herself, nevertheless transmitted it to me from her father, Rabbi Zeev Wahl, of Mogilev, White Russia. My grandfather had lost his sight at the age of sixty. This condition of mine was severely aggravated by my having fallen victim, on three separate occasions, to the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1917–1919.

When I came home from the last visit to my Philadelphia oculist in 1925, I gave my parents a brief report and retired to my room. It was nearly midnight but I didn't switch on the lights. I took a book off a shelf and sat down at my desk. I clasped it to my breast. It was destined to remain a closed book to me forever. It was a searing experience. I was twenty-five and had been practicing law for two years. I decided to leave the law and become a rabbi.

Through correspondence with Dr. Stephen S. Wise, president of the Jewish Institute of Religion, it was agreed that I would be admitted as a student in the fall of 1926. I had a little less than a year to wind up my law practice, to prepare for a new life and a new profession — and to learn Braille. Of these three, the last was the simplest by far.

Rabbi Brevis for years occupied the pulpit of Temple Beth El in Batavia, N. Y. Since his retirement, he has been living in Los Angeles.
Braille was invented about a century and a half ago by a Frenchman named Louis Braille and is based upon a simple mathematical plan. The Braille cell consists of six raised dots on thick Braille paper, three dots high and two across. The first ten letters of the English alphabet are formed by a combination of dots in the upper two-thirds of the cell. The next ten letters are formed by adding a dot to the first ten symbols in the lower left corner of the cell. The following ten characters are formed by adding the two bottom dots to the first ten letters. Since the six-dot cell allows 63 possible combinations of dots from one to six, the system is capable of providing symbols for the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet, the several punctuation marks, plus a number of symbols representing a series of abbreviations and contractions to reduce the otherwise bulky system of embossed type.

The theory of Braille is easy to understand, but facility in reading and writing can be acquired only through a great deal of practice. Only then can one attain the ease necessary to make Braille a useful tool for the blind person.

After learning English Braille, I proceeded to inquire about the existence of books in Hebrew Braille. To my amazement, I found that there were only two schools throughout the whole world where Hebrew Braille was taught to children on an organized basis — the Jewish Institute for the Blind in Jerusalem and the Blinden-institut in Vienna. From these two schools I learned that the only available texts in Hebrew Braille were prayer books and readers on a very elementary level.

There were also desultory attempts to develop Hebrew Braille codes by sightless scholars in England and Germany, but their efforts failed to receive the financial support necessary for such undertakings. After a great deal of correspondence with scores of individuals in Palestine, Austria, Germany, and England, I accumulated five embossed systems of Hebrew Braille which were cumbersome and unwieldy, and so much more difficult to learn and to use than the English Braille code I had recently learned. In sheer desperation, I determined to create my own code more suitable to my needs as a rabbinic student.

During my college and law school days, I found that taking
copious notes frequently interfered with my understanding of the subtler points the lecturer tried to convey, and occasionally even with the main theme. I learned to follow the speaker as he outlined his theme and marshalled examples and proofs of legal cases, and at the end of the lecture I was able to reconstruct the salient features from beginning to end. This method of concentration without transcription stood me in good stead throughout my seminary days.

I used it successfully in history, Bible, ethics, and literature. Talmud, however, was quite another story. Professor Hayyim Chernowitz, a talmudic scholar of international renown, loved to lecture on the juridical, ethical, and historic currents of the mishnaic and amoraic periods and the differences he discerned between them. But he always came back to the word or phrase he was trying to elucidate. It was evident that, in the face of such complexity, I would have to have the text before me in order to be able to follow his subtle reasoning. It became apparent that I would have to transcribe the text into Braille.

Also, in his Talmud class, Professor Chernowitz used the *Kitzur Hatalmud*, an abridged edition of the Talmud he had published some years earlier. After several lectures on halachah, rabbinical law, we were introduced to our first talmudic text, the tractate *Berachot*. Since I was not satisfied with any available embossed code, I was forced to utilize phonetic transliteration of the text into English symbols. From the outset I recognized that, in order to make the transliteration intelligible, I would have to devise symbols for sounds not present in English as well as for Hebrew letters which have the same sound, but are represented by different symbols. The word *hachamim* ("sages" — the initial *h* is a guttural), in the very first mishnah of the tractate, illustrates the problem. I used the *X*-symbol in English Braille for the *het*, and the *ch*-symbol for the guttural *chaf*, undoubtedly showing the Spanish and German influence. I similarly adopted new symbols for consonants and vowels without counterpart in English Braille. After consulting several Hebrew scholars, I decided to delete the final orthographic forms of the letters *chaf*, *mem*, *nun*, *fay*, and *zadi*.

Hebrew is read from right to left, and the problem of changing
the direction to conform with European languages seemed quite complicated. When I first began to write Hebrew, I used the Braille writer and slate and was, of course, forced to write from left to right. Contrary to expectation, I found this switch comfortable from the very outset. I discussed the question with a number of Hebraists, both Orthodox and Liberal in their religious orientation, and found that that question had been thoroughly aired in the Hebrew press some years earlier when Itamar Ben-Yehudah proposed the official adoption of the Latin alphabet in place of the traditional Hebrew. The switch seemed inevitable and, in the forty years during which I have been involved in this new medium, I have not heard a single word of protest raised against this phase of my work.

Within six months, I developed a code adequate to my needs. In the next two years, I made several additional modifications as a result of my work with a group of sightless high school children to whom I taught Hebrew and Bible. By that time I had smoothed out most of the difficulties, and I began to regard the code as a workable Hebrew Braille system.

In 1930, the Jewish Braille Institute of America, organized for the promulgation of education among the Jewish blind in this country, brought to the attention of the Synagogue Council of America the need for the adoption of a single Braille code for the use of sightless people, both here and abroad, interested in reading and writing Hebrew. The Synagogue Council undertook to create a worldwide committee for the specific purpose of adopting a unified embossed code to be used by sightless people throughout the world. Leopold Dubov, executive director of the J. B. I. A., was appointed secretary of this committee, and I was named chairman. It was our task to enlist additional members to represent Palestine and other countries with sizable Jewish populations.

Within a year, this committee came into being constituted as follows: Isaac Maletz, representing the Jewish Institute for the Blind, Jerusalem; Dr. Max Geffner, of the Blindeninstitut of Vienna; Canon C. F. Waudby, of the National Institute for the Blind, Great Britain; Leopold Dubov, of the Jewish Braille Institute of America; and Rabbi Harry J. Brevis, representing the New York Board of Rabbis. This committee functioned as a single body until
the International Hebrew Braille Code was officially adopted two years later.

Since distances prevented the committee from convening, its business was transacted by transoceanic mail. Literally hundreds of letters were exchanged among the several members of the committee as we examined the five Hebrew Braille codes previously mentioned, plus the one I had developed in the preceding three years. In 1933, after careful deliberation, the committee unanimously agreed to approve and sponsor my code as the one most suitable for international use. It was decided that it be called the International Hebrew Braille Code, and that it should supersede all other systems then in use in the United States, in Palestine, and in Vienna. I was authorized to compile and publish a reader in this new code.

Some years earlier, the United States Government had undertaken a massive program to publish Braille books for the blind and had established a number of distributing libraries for that purpose throughout the country. Herbert Putnam, the scholarly Librarian of the Library of Congress, was keenly interested in the educational and cultural development of all blind persons. In correspondence with him, I related the circumstances surrounding the adoption of the International Hebrew Braille Code and the importance of publishing a volume to present this new system for the previously deprived sightless readers of Hebrew. I also told him that I had compiled a volume of choice readings from the Bible, Mishnah, and modern literature and enclosed a table of contents. He replied that he would be more than gratified to authorize the publication of this book under the imprimatur of the Library of Congress. This volume appeared in 1935 under the title *A Hebrew Braille Chrestomathy*. Some years later, it was included in the library of the United Nations in New York City.

Subsequently, Mr. Putnam expressed the belief that, after the publication of the *Hebrew Braille Chrestomathy*, other books would soon follow in the same medium. His prediction came true in full measure: in 1946, the Jewish Braille Institute of America began the monumental task of bringing out the Hebrew Braille edition of the masoretic text of the Bible in twenty volumes.

Because of the limitations inherent in Braille, only three cantilla-
tion marks have been included in this Bible: zakef katan, which also serves to signify a minor pause in a verse; etnachta, as a major pause; and sof pasuk, the full stop. Of the numerous masoretic notes, only those essential for a correct reading of the biblical text are found in this Bible. They are of three kinds: ktiv-krei (written-read); nusha ahrina (another recension); and svirin (conjectures). These appear as footnotes in the usual manner. For the benefit of bar (and bat) mitzvah youngsters in congregations where they are expected to chant the sidra, or pentateuchal portion, and the haftarah, or prophetic portion, in the traditional manner, the Jewish Braille Institute of America provides recordings on disc or magnetic tape.

In the more than three decades that have elapsed since the publication of my Hebrew Braille Chrestomathy in 1935, many great historic events have affected the lives of Jews in all parts of the world. The happiest of these was the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, with its consequent reemphasis on Hebrew. In a land where scientists, industrialists, laborers, and farmers use the language of the Bible in their daily activities, it is also to be heard on the lips of children at play or of students in schools from the Kindergarten to the University.

By reason of mass immigration to Israel in the last four decades from Arab countries (where trachoma is prevalent), the number of sightless in the Jewish state has risen to 7,000.* For these people, Braille is the only means of acquiring an education, for reading books, and for writing letters.

Among the approximately 10,000 Jewish blind in the United States (exact figures are unavailable), there is a sizable number who wish to learn Hebrew Braille. During the past forty years, I have communicated with at least a dozen sightless non-Jews interested in Hebrew for scholarly or religious reasons, among them an Episcopal priest who is the director of the Episcopal Guild for the Blind in Brooklyn, N. Y. For most of these blind people, Hebrew Braille is, at best, an inadequate tool. Until someone invents an electronic means of transposing printed books into embossed type, most of these people will have to depend on sighted readers to help them acquire

* Jerusalem Post, November 9, 1967.
a familiarity with the vast field of Hebrew literature. The process of Brailling books by hand is difficult and expensive despite the kind efforts of volunteer transcribers.

For the benefit of interested blind persons who have no sighted readers to assist them, and who have no easy access to the twenty volumes of the Braille Bible, the Jewish Braille Institute published, in 1966, my *Anthology of Hebrew Literature* in two volumes. The first volume contains sixteen lengthy passages from the Bible and the full text of the *Pirké Avot* ("Ethics of the Fathers"), with English translations. Volume Two is devoted to twenty-one poems, stories, and essays from modern Hebrew, including a story by the recent Nobel Prize winner for literature, Shmuel Yosef Agnon.

My most recent task in the field of Hebrew Braille was in response to a request from the Hadley School for the Blind of Winnetka, Illinois, which has a branch in Natanya, Israel. I was commissioned to prepare a primer to be used in Israel's campaign against illiteracy. According to Dr. Shlomo Haramati — formerly with the Israeli Ministry of Education, and at present Educational Consultant to the Jewish Education Committee of New York City — the number of illiterates in Israel was 12 percent in 1961, due largely to mass immigration from Arab countries after the establishment of the State in 1948. It is important to recognize that the high incidence of blindness and illiteracy may be ascribable to the same cause.

In English there are three levels of the Braille System known as Grade One, Grade One and a Half, and Grade Two. Beginners start with Grade One, which reproduces in Braille all the letters of the printed word. Because Grade One takes so much time and effort, a progressive series of contractions and abbreviations has been adopted in Grades One and a Half and Two. One example from Grade Two will suffice: the word "will," instead of being written out in full, is represented by the single letter *w*. The word "work" is represented by the letter *w* preceded by one dot; the word "word," by *w* preceded by two dots; the word "world," by *w* preceded by three dots. There are many such contractions, abbreviations, and word-symbols with which the blind reader becomes familiar after a certain amount of practice. In Hebrew Braille, there were almost no such symbols for contractions, and with the exception of a few
Since my retirement a few years ago, I was moved to develop a number of symbolic contractions for Hebrew Braille comparable to Grade Two in English Braille, and in 1967 I spent two months in Israel in an attempt to introduce this new system to the sightless teachers and pupils of the Jewish Institute for the Blind in Jerusalem.

My new addition to Hebrew Braille consists of three parts: (a) contractions; (b) special use of the hyphen to be employed largely in prayer books; and (c) word-symbols. From lists of frequently-occurring basic Hebrew words compiled by Dr. Eliezer Rieger, Dr. Samuel Nachshon, and Dr. Arye Spotts, all recognized writers in Jewish education, I culled five words for each letter of the alphabet and let them be represented by the initial letter plus an additional dot or more to precede it. I believe that this system reduces the bulkiness of Hebrew Braille by at least 30 percent, i.e., spatially and temporally. My work in Israel was unfortunately interrupted by the Six-Day War, which necessitated my return to the United States. Since then I have been urging the adoption of this advanced system of Hebrew Braille through correspondence.

Although the sightless constitute but a tiny part of American Jewry, the Jewish community has nevertheless taken note of the developments in this field. The New York Board of Rabbis in 1958, and the Jewish Braille Institute of America in 1967, presented to me testimonial scrolls expressing appreciation for my activities. In 1959, Dr. Nelson Glueck, president of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, in conferring on me the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, said in his citation: "Creative scholar whose development of a Hebrew Braille Code brings the light of Jewish learning to the sightless. His work will endure for generations to come."
Antaeus

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTIONS

ALEXANDER M. DUSHKIN

The years of my life have seen cataclysmic changes in the world and in world Jewry. Some of these historic changes I experienced personally. Born in 1890 in Suwalki, Poland, I migrated with the multitudes that came from Eastern Europe to America, and then with the few that “went up” from America to Eretz Israel.

Indeed, the unique pattern of my life story was formed by my shuttling between America and Eretz Israel, the two focal Jewish communities of our day, in answer to calls made for educational service in them, and in quest of personal fulfillment. To me, both America and Israel have been the necessary testing grounds for the great question which concerns me deeply — how my people and I can live meaningfully in the new conditions of modern international humanity. The pursuit of education was my destined way in both communities — Jewish education in America, general education in Eretz Israel. In both lands, my educational activities have been based on the faith that the American Way and the Jewish Way are good for each other, capable of mutual enrichment in the living processes of interaction. In both lands, my educational concern has been with the pluralist cultural-national community in its striving for unity in variety, for continuity and change, for cultural preservation and social progress, for making group identity conducive to personal growth and self-fulfillment.

New Winds Over Russia

My early childhood was spent in the oppressive aftermath of the Czarist May Laws of 1882. In those days, Russian Jews were sustained by three great dreams: escape to America, social revolu-

Professor Dushkin retired in 1960 from the faculty of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Since his retirement, he has been associated with the Hebrew University's Institute of Contemporary Jewry and the University Center for Diaspora Jewish Education.
tion, and return to Zion. Singly and together these dreams formed the ferment of ideas which motivated the youth of my generation.

My grandfather was one of the comparatively few Jewish farmers in Poland. Living in his straw-thatched hut on a sprawling, primitive farm, which he managed for the local *pan*, or landowner, he obtained ownership of the farm when all the Russian serfs were freed in 1861. On that farm, my father imbibed in his childhood a deep love of nature and the out-of-doors. According to the Jewish tradition of learning, he was sent to the nearby town to study, but after completing as a young man the prescribed itinerant studies in several talmudic *yeshivot* of the region, he sought an outdoors occupation, and became the supervisor of a gang of woodcutters in the Polish forests. For a sensitive, scholarly young Jew, however, life with rude anti-Semitic Polish woodsmen was fraught with unpleasantness and danger. His love of the out-of-doors remained with my father throughout his life, but he turned to the profession of Jewish teaching.

The Hebrew school which my father conducted in Suwalki was a *heder metukkan*, an "improved Jewish school" in which modern Hebrew literature, Russian language, and arithmetic were added to the traditional Jewish school curriculum. He was a teacher in the period of the national renaissance, and so Hebraism and Zionism became his leitmotifs. To these, he added a passionate love of music which he transmitted to his children. He encouraged my juvenile appetite for modern Hebrew prose and poetry. Many were the moments both of joyous exaltation and of hot tears my readings brought me.

My mother, a devoutly pious Jewess, wanted me to become a

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1 Two of my brothers became professional musicians. My brother Samuel is an outstanding concert violinist who for many years was soloist with philharmonic orchestras in America and in Europe. He was associated with Stravinsky, who wrote a violin concerto for him. My brother David was founder and director of well-known experimental music schools in Winnetka, Illinois, and Weston, Vermont. In 1927, at the Beethoven Centenary, Samuel played the Beethoven Violin Concerto with an ad-hoc philharmonic orchestra on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, and David accompanied him on the piano in a series of concerts which my sister Eva (now married to Judge Shalom Kassan, of Haifa) then arranged for them in kibbutzim and elsewhere. I myself am an amateur cellist.
rabbi. In our home, Jewish traditional customs were rigorously observed. The memory is still with me of my mother’s complete absorption in her daily prayers and of her pious fasting regularly on Mondays and Thursdays. My father, however, was a maskil, an “enlightened one,” and was considered a bit of a freethinker. I remember, as a lad, finding that my father had brought with him to the synagogue on the Day of Atonement a Hebrew translation of Herbert Spencer’s Education to read between (or instead of) some of the prayers. That was my first quasi-contact with educational literature—then much too difficult, but of a forbidden fascination. At one time the government inspector of schools tried to persuade my father to send me to the local Russian government school, but like so many other Jews, my father recognized the assimilationist Christianizing motives involved, and liberal though he was, he refused the offer.

After leaving my father’s humash heder, or Bible school, I was sent to a nearby gemora heder, or talmudic school. There some of the older boys were clandestinely reading socialist pamphlets. From them, I caught my first whiff of the new winds which were blowing over Russia and felt the first pangs of desire “to do something big for humanity.” I also remember overhearing my father’s hushed sympathetic conversations with young men and women about the secret revolutionary movements, and his oft repeated statement to my mother that the two of them must get out of Russia before their children were “caught.”

My early education was thus a modest synthesis of the old and the new. The threefold heritage—aspiration to Hebraic national culture, classic devotion to Jewish religiosity, and commitment to human service—formed a deep, persistent substratum in my life, conscious and subconscious.

Beginnings in America

In December, 1901, we emigrated to New York, where my sister Kate and several of our relatives had preceded us. There my father tried for a while to follow his profession of Jewish teaching, but in those days the lot of the American Hebrew teacher was so degrading
and so hopeless that he could not endure it. Instead he opened a small store by which he and my mother sought to eke out a scanty living for the family — with the added help of the private lessons he continued to give on the side. Despite his personal hardships, my father was fervently in love with America for the educational opportunities she gave his children. Throughout our high school and college days, my younger brothers and I had to get "jobs" to add to the family income, but my own destiny began to define itself even then. At the age of fifteen, I became assistant teacher in a neighborhood private Hebrew school, and at seventeen, I was secretary and assistant teacher in a large uptown talmud torah.

During adolescence, my mind and heart turned with romantic passion to cosmopolitanism and to the religion of Man. Walt Whitman became my ideal poet, evolution my creed, and social service my ambition. During the years 1907 to 1911, while a student at the College of the City of New York, I became acquainted, through my violinist brother Samuel, with a wealthy American composer, Blair Fairchild, who befriended me and found work for me as club director at the Third Street Music School Settlement, an institution for bringing music and "culture" to the children of immigrants on the East Side of New York. One of my tasks was to edit the house publication, *The Music School Record*. I remember the quarrel I had with David Mannes, the distinguished violinist who was then the director of the Settlement; he had rebuked me for writing an "un-American" editorial, in which I urged the youngsters not to become estranged from the culture of their immigrant parents.

My friend Blair Fairchild, the descendent of an old American *Mayflower* family, was a gentle, soulful person. Instead of following his family tradition of banking and political activity, he devoted himself to musical composition and to personal social service. Fairchild enabled my brother to study violin in Paris and encouraged me to study cello with Effrim Rosanoff at the Music School Settlement. He made it possible for me to spend the summer of 1909 in England and France, and to engage in an unforgettable bicycle tour through the historic Châteaux district of France together with my brother and Rosanoff.
Blair Fairchild advised me to make social work my profession and offered me a scholarship at what would later become the Columbia University School of Social Work. I was headed in that direction when my guardian angel took hold of me by the hair of my head, as it were, and turned me around.

The years preceding the First World War witnessed an awakening of Jewish college students to the intellectual and moral implications of their Jewishness. The awakening arose from their need for emotional identification as well as from intellectual curiosity. A ludicrous indication of the pathetic ignorant yearning of many Jewish students of those days remains in my memory—the City College friend who wanted us to teach him to sing “Halitvak” (he meant the Zionist anthem Hatikvah, of course!). Two college movements developed spontaneously: Collegiate Zionism, centered in the quest for a Jewish Homeland, and the Menorah Societies, seeking generally “to study and to promote the culture and ideals of the Jewish people.” I joined the City College Zionist Society and became its president. As such, and also as secretary of the City College Menorah Society, I came into contact with many of the leading American Jews of that day—Judah L. Magnes, Henrietta Szold, Stephen S. Wise, Israel Friedlaender, and more particularly Mordecai M. Kaplan.

It was Dr. Kaplan who told me in 1910 about the great venture of the New York Kehillah headed by Dr. Magnes—the vision of an organized community that would attempt to introduce orderly planning and effective direction into the gigantic chaos of the rapidly growing mass of New York Jewry. Particular stress was to be laid on the need for more and better Jewish education. The incident which served as the spark for community organization at the time was the accusation of the New York Police Commissioner, Theodore Bingham, that a major percentage of youthful delinquents were Jews. The Jewish reaction was twofold: outwardly an indignant protest against the anti-Semitism implied in Bingham’s exaggerated statement; inwardly a shocking recognition of the relationship between Jewish youth delinquency and the sudden breakdown of Jewish mores and parental values.
Benderly: Teaching One Subject

Dr. Kaplan told me of the appalling findings in his first survey of Jewish education in New York, a survey which he had made together with Bernard Cronson. He urged me to meet Dr. Samson Benderly, whom Magnes had brought from Baltimore to direct the projected Kehillah Bureau of Jewish Education. Samson Benderly, born in Safed, Palestine (1876), had achieved remarkable results in modernizing and Hebraizing his school at the Hebrew Education Society in Baltimore. One of Benderly's first undertakings in New York was to recruit a new type of Jewish teacher — college men and women who could be fired by the new vision and trained for the new task.

I went to my interview with Benderly with much hesitation; I remembered my father's bitter personal experience, but was also impelled by some inner compulsion. Dr. Benderly impressed me as a person combining grandiloquent fantasy with realistic engineering. Despite my skeptical approach, I was overwhelmed by his impassioned, urgent optimism as well as by his reasonable analysis of the tasks ahead. His was an attractive, new approach to the forlorn field of Jewish education — a social-engineering approach through the "leverage" of community responsibility and programming, and a social-psychological approach placing Jewish teaching within the total education of the American Jew for worthy citizenship.

Pragmatically stated, Benderly's plan was "to improve the old, and to initiate the new." To improve the old, he proposed to work with a select group of East European educators in the larger existing talmud torahs and Hebrew schools. To initiate the new, he needed us young men and women from American colleges. For us, he

* M. M. Kaplan and Bernard Cronson, First Community Survey of Jewish Education in New York City (February 27, 1910). It was reprinted in Jewish Education, XX, No. 3 (Summer, 1949), 113-16.

* For Benderly's early years and his Baltimore activities, see Nathan H. Winter, Jewish Education in a Pluralist Society (New York, 1966), Chapters three and four.

* Among those selected were Israel Konowitz, Harry Handler, Joseph Braggin, and Rabbi Samuel Hurwitz; also Zvi Scharfstein, Simon and Pesach Ginsburg, and Shalom Baer Maximon among others.
Rabbi Harry J. Brevis
Blesses a Bar Mitzvah Boy
at Temple Beth El, Batavia, N. Y.
(see p. 105)
Samson Benderly
American Jewish Educator
(see p. 118)
outlined his threefold plan for “training on the job”: (a) to employ us immediately as teachers in the model schools which he planned to establish, and to give us pedagogic supervision and guidance while in service; (b) to enable us to pursue graduate studies in education toward the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at Teachers College, Columbia University; and (c) to arrange for us special courses in Judaic studies at the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Dr. Kaplan was the principal of the Teachers Institute, and I recall that he and Dr. Solomon Schechter wanted us to take the full rabbinic course at the Seminary. Dr. Benderly objected, however. Since he was aiming to create a modern profession of Jewish educators, he feared that we would be seduced by the more glamorous openings in the rabbinate. He objected also because of his personal stress on the Hebraic-national rather than on the religious-congregational aspects of Jewish education, and because he felt that, for our future work, it was more important for us to specialize in educational theory and practice than in advanced Jewish scholarship or rabbinic duties.

My initial assignment was as teacher in his first model Hebrew preparatory school at the Y. M. H. A. Others in that first American group of Benderly trainees\(^5\) were assigned to his three other Hebrew preparatory schools, or else to the school of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum which Solomon Lowenstein was then directing. These model, or pilot, schools were preparatory in a twofold sense: (a) they were laboratories for preparing the ways and means needed for modernizing Jewish schooling; and (b) they were preliminary training schools from which were to be selected those who could later be trained for the profession of Jewish teaching. They were experimental in organization, in content, and in methodology.

A devout believer in the public school, Benderly did not think in terms of Jewish day schools. Organizationally, he sought to create a type of school which would provide as intensive a Jewish

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\(^5\) In that and subsequent groups were Isaac B. Berkson, Barnett R. Brickner, Israel S. Chipkin, Samuel Dinin, Emanuel Gamoran, Jacob Golub, Leo L. Honor, Philip Kleinman, Samuel Margoshes, Ben Rosen, Albert P. Schoolman, Mordecai Soltes; also Rebecca Aaronson, Libbie Suchoff, Hanajlka Langer, Leah Klepper; and later, David Rudavsky, Judah and Dvora Lapson, Samuel Citron, Abraham Gannes, and others.
education as possible within the time available to the American Jewish child who attended public school, and would also be within the economic capacity of the average parent to pay the cost of tuition, or of the community to subsidize it. Each of us was, therefore, to teach four classes, every class receiving six hours of instruction weekly, one afternoon during the week, and on Saturday and Sunday mornings or afternoons. Benderly was experimenting with an “intermittent” school schedule, less demanding than the talmud torah, more intensive than the Sunday school. In its general conception, it was the forerunner of most of the schedules developed later by congregational Hebrew schools in the United States.

In content, the curriculum of his model schools consisted of the Hebrew language, Bible, and selections from modern Hebrew literature, all taught by the “natural method” (ivrit b’ivrit) through specially prepared children’s textbooks. Jewish history was taught in English with such visual aids as the stereopticon, overhead projection, and the like. Music, arts and crafts, dance, and drama were also zealously cultivated, and a variety of extracurricular activities was encouraged.

Methodologically, we were then beginning to struggle with the pedagogic classroom problems, theoretical and practical, which have been troubling the modern Jewish educator from that day to this. In teaching Hebrew, we insisted that the language sense had to be developed first in students by their learning to speak the language, even in a most rudimentary form, before learning to read it, and that speaking and reading were to be a continuously joined process, graded in difficulty. Benderly was the first to publish Hebrew “movable letters” and flash cards, and he experimented with a variety of Hebrew texts for beginners. However, we also had to deal with the principle of function and exercise in the use of a language which, outside of Palestine, was then confined almost entirely to the reading of prayers in the synagogue. We, therefore, had to divide our teaching time, at least in the beginning grades, between Hebrew and ivri, mechanical reading. We tried, not too successfully, to modernize the latter by various devices — chanting passages, classroom “services,” choral reading, silent reading, speed tests, and the like. In teaching Bible in Hebrew — which Benderly
used to characterize as “teaching the dictionary” — we sought to overcome the insuperable difficulties of content and language, even in the special, abbreviated children’s versions by Bialik and others. We attempted the teaching of small “units,” with introductory overview discussions in English of the central ideas in the unit prior to reading the Hebrew text. We made preliminary explanations and pupil “dictionaries” of difficult words and phrases; we dramatized the unit in the classroom after learning it; we had the children memorize significant biblical phrases; we arranged “objective test” reviews after completing larger units. In general, our effort was to “humanize” the Bible for the children.

In teaching Jewish history, we lectured in English with visual aids; adequate history textbooks and other reading aids did not exist then. I became rather expert in “splicing” bits of history films, obtained from whatever sources were then available, and in rearranging pictures, cut out from sundry books on the Bible and Jewish history, for use in overhead projection. We resorted, on the one hand, to telling our pupils “novelized” biographical tales of Jewish heroes and, on the other, to using the “cyclical method” for giving our pupils a sense of the “sweep of Jewish history” rather than massive factual data. In our teaching about Palestine, Jewish festivals, customs, and current events, we used school newspapers, assembly dramatizations, arts and crafts, and the like. Benderly kept impressing on us that, in all our teaching, we were essentially teaching one subject — Judaism! This type of curriculum and methodology is by now routine, but then it was revolutionary in American Jewish schooling. Its influence was considerable on future developments toward modernizing Jewish education, even though the underlying pedagogic problems still remain.

There was the quality of the Hasidic rebe in Benderly, and he molded us into a camaraderie of believers. We considered ourselves a band of pioneers who were “hastening the footsteps of the Messiah.” Benderly was not a religiously observant Jew in the traditional sense; he had revolted against the ultra-pietist atmosphere of his family in Safed, but something of the deeply emotional, mystic background of Safed permeated him throughout. I remember his singing Hasidic chants with tears streaming down his face;
I remember his frequent references to himself in relation to the *en-sof* (the "Endless One"). The Jewish people was for him not a national entity only, but also a mystic entity, an agent in the service of the *en-sof*.

Benderly’s professional career in America was itself an impressive personal “act of faith.” Upon his graduation from medical school, he was called upon to decide between a brilliant medical career and his “infatuation” with lowly Jewish education. He chose the latter, and that was the faith he imparted to us. To me personally, his example in choosing education rather than medicine as his life’s work was psychologically very important. That and his social-engineering-community approach helped me to turn my strivings for social service into the channels of Jewish education. Education is social service, perhaps the most significant form of it, and educational service to my own troubled and confused people became for me the most obligating and immediate aspect of human service.

For our personal contacts, we met with Benderly in pedagogic seminars, frequently during early morning hours, sometimes at dawn, before our daily schedules began. He also liked to invite us as individuals to his home in Englewood, New Jersey, for “endless” analyses, discussions, projections, fantasies. Like all great teachers, he recognized the value of devoting himself to his disciples, even to “wasting” time with them. Benderly’s wife, Hemda, who had been his pupil and assistant in Baltimore — a vibrant, outgoing personality — did much to make us feel at home, and we grew to call her *imma* (mother).

**Teachers and Preachers**

Our Judaic studies in special classes at the Jewish Theological Seminary — with Mordecai M. Kaplan, Israel Friedlaender, Moshe Levin, and other teachers — were carried on during evenings after the day’s work was done, and more intensively during the summer months and at other times. We did a great deal of individual study. Our Jewish training could be characterized as Hebraic-national in the Ahad Ha-Am spirit of cultural Zionism and religious in the neo-Hasidic-Conservative-Reconstructionist spirit. All our teachers
were cultural Zionists and belonged to the "historic school" of Jewish scholarship.

Kaplan, Friedlaender, and Magnes taught us the ethnic community approach to Judaism, but in different ways and in different moods. Kaplan was the ma-ayan hamitgabber, an ever-rushing stream, both destructive and reconstructive. His teachings fitted in with our deep need as American youth for a new conception of Judaism for our day. His vision of reconstructed Judaism as the civilization of a religiously endowed people was like a "fire in his bones." His provocative, passionate, and positive "message" had in it an element of the prophetic. He was — and in 1968 still is — a teacher with a mission. He taught his "truth" with missionary zeal, sweeping many of us along with him, not only in theory, but also in practice, particularly in his seminal promulgation of the synagogue as the community center for the entire family with the school as its nucleus and education as its primary function.

Friedlaender, on the other hand, was the Gentle Scholar, who believed in traditional Judaism as he saw it through the prism of his European and British culture. He taught us Bible, Maimonides, and Ahad Ha-Am, convinced that a thorough understanding of the great literary documents was the surest way toward arriving ourselves at the meaning and process of the evolving tradition of the Jewish People. In his community activities and in his private home life, he personified for us the classic Jewish sage. His broad knowledge of Arabic culture added an important dimension to his Jewish wisdom. It was a great tragedy for all of us that he was not enabled by the Zionist leadership of that day to contribute his wisdom to his beloved yishuv in Palestine, in its struggle with the Arabs and with the British officials. I remember my last sad conversation with him in 1918, when he poured out his heart to me prior to his accepting the fateful Joint Distribution Committee mission to the Ukraine, where he met his premature death at the hands of robber-bandits.

Magnes was not our teacher in the formal sense, but he influenced us considerably. He was the militant preacher rather than the scholar. What he essentially preached to us was his boundless love of the Jewish People, his belief in its beneficent place as a
historic “internationality” in the modern pluralist, nationalist society, both American and global, and his burning desire to normalize the life of that internationality ethically and politically. His attitude to the Jewish “folk” and to traditional folkways was romantic and rather vague. Benderly used to say: “I eat herring. Magnes believes in eating herring.” But Magnes’ commitments as a Jew went far beyond the Jewish community, and his readiness to suffer for his ideals, especially for world peace and for civil rights, raised our ethical sights and challenged our personal commitments.

Our professional university education was in the Teachers College of Columbia University in the days of John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, and Edward L. Thorndike, with their provocative new messages in American education. Dewey attempted to teach us “how to think” by the remarkable method of himself thinking out his philosophical problems in front of his students. His aloof, monotonous drawl as lecturer contrasted strangely with the vigorous original and germinal ideas which he taught us. On the other hand, Kilpatrick, the brilliant pragmatist interpreter of Dewey, challenged his multitudinous classes to analyze educational problems themselves in “free for all” heated debate, leading to a consensus of opinion. He spoke fondly and proudly of our group as his “Jewish boys.” When in later years I came to him for advice prior to my leaving to do educational work in Palestine, his message to me was: “You have had good training and experience, but you must think on the spot.” Thorndike opened up for us the possibilities of an eventual “science of education” through educational psychology, by indicating novel means for “quantitative studies of qualitative phenomena” in human behavior and in scholastic achievements. My own “major” study was educational administration under George Drayton Strayer, but it was the teachings of the three “greats” — Dewey, Kilpatrick, and Thorndike — at Columbia in those days that remained with me throughout the years, even when these teachings became considerably modified and altered by subsequent schools of educational philosophy and psychology.

I remember gratefully the letter which the aged Kilpatrick wrote about me in 1960 to Abraham Harman, then Israeli Ambassador to the United States, when he read of my seventieth birthday celebration at the Hebrew University.
True to his plan, Benderly encouraged us to write our doctoral dissertations at the University on Jewish educational themes. I wrote the first such Ph.D. dissertation at Columbia University in 1917 on “Jewish Education in New York City, its History, Theory, and Current Practices.” Berkson, Gamoran, and Dinin followed later with dissertations on other themes in or pertaining to Jewish education.

From the model schools, Benderly took some of us into the Bureau of Jewish Education proper, to engage in one or more of his various other experimental ventures, too many to enumerate here: the League of Jewish Youth and the Circle of Jewish Children (extension educational activities for youths and for children); the Jewish Home Institute (elaborate materials and devices for the pedagogic guidance of mothers in teaching their young pre-school children); Research and Information Services; Hebrew High School classes; publications of textbooks and educational materials; and other projects.

Autobiographically, I record here those activities in which I participated. Together with Rebecca Aaronson (later Mrs. Barnett R. Brickner), I was assigned to teach the short-lived experimental private Hebrew school which Magnes set up for the children of his “upper-class” Jewish friends — Louis Marshall, Cyrus L. Sulzberger, Leo Mielziner, and others. For a short period I tried to implement Benderly’s ideas in my Sunday school teaching at Temple Emanu-El under Rabbi Hyman G. Enelow. I spent several stormy years in struggling to organize and conduct the West Side Hebrew School, which was to serve as the modern branch of the large Uptown Talmud Torah. As one indication of that struggle, I recall the cutting of electric wires one Sunday morning by an Orthodox member of my school board to prevent me from showing stereopticon slides depicting Bible stories — I was, he thought, transgressing the prohibition against “making graven images.”


7 For a description of these and other activities of the Bureau during this period and in later years, see Jewish Education, XX, No. 3 (Summer, 1949), 3-113. The issue is devoted entirely to Samson Benderly.
Outside the schoolroom, Benderly encouraged us, morally and financially, to develop projects of our own dreaming. In 1916, I established The Jewish Teacher, a magazine which ceased publication in 1918; then I founded the more enduring children’s magazine, The Jewish Child, later edited by Chester Teller. I helped Benderly in the publication of his massive Jewish Communal Register of New York (1917–1918), using in it the “Yom Kippur Attendance Method” to estimate the Jewish population as distributed in the New York City school districts. I joined him and Julius Drachsler in their premature effort to establish a school for Jewish communal work, later reorganized and directed by Murray [Maurice J.] Karpf.

A large project, connected with the Research and Information Service, was my book Jewish Education in New York City. Dedicated to Samson Benderly, the book was the first attempt at a large-scale academic survey and analysis of Jewish education in an American community, or, for that matter, in any Jewish community.\(^8\) As such, the book continues to have a documentary value as a historic record, as a source for comparing the development of conditions and ideas since then, and as a suggestive analysis of basic facts and problems. Widely quoted as a standard work in the years following the First World War, the book has, in its general method and scope, provided reference materials for the numerous surveys and studies which have since been made of individual communities, as well as for the national study made forty years later by the American Association for Jewish Education.\(^9\)

Opposition to Benderly came from many sources. The Orthodox rabbis opposed him as an “assimilationist,” and their opposition reached the height of absurdity in an incident at one of the annual Kehillah conventions, when some of his opponents brought as “proof of his missionary activities” the fact that, in seeking to teach objectively the Hebrew words for “little book” and “big book,” some of his teachers were using a big dictionary containing the word “cross” and a diagram thereof. The Conservative rabbis

\(^8\) The valuable survey by Kaplan and Cronson, cited above in Note 2, was an introductory study based on the reports of a street-to-street canvass.

accused him of being a “secularist,” and the Reform Jews opposed him as a “nationalist.” More compelling were his increasing financial difficulties. Benderly liked to tell the story of his conversation with his friend, the financier Jacob H. Schiff, who was in the habit of talking to him about “Judaism as a faith”—to which he once replied: “The trouble, Mr. Schiff, is that you worry about philosophy and expect me to worry about finances. It would be much better if our roles were reversed.”

During that first decade (1910–1920), Benderly’s remarkable achievements were revolutionary and of lasting character. He aroused the community to the need for promoting and modernizing Jewish education, and he indicated experimentally ways to do so. He created the new profession of Jewish education and trained leadership for it. He expanded the scope of education to include both formal schooling, secondary as well as elementary, and also various means of informal education. He recognized the pluralistic character of American Jewry and created the first exemplary community Bureau of Jewish Education as a “roof organization,” aiming to bring some unity into that variety. His ideas and influence were retained in the lives of all who were touched by his fire, including mine. His image grows larger with the passing years.

But in his broad constructive vision there were several blind spots. He failed to see the synagogue as the inevitable unit of American Jewish life, and as growing in educational importance on all age levels. He was opposed to the Jewish day schools which aim to teach both Judaic and general studies; he refused to accept any “non-public” school deviate in the American school system. It was against his judgment that I included in my book cautious statements regarding the need for community day schools “for the selected few,” to train them for Jewish cultured leadership.\(^\text{10}\) The ever-increasing demand for and growth of Jewish day schools in America and in other democratic countries accentuate his error in not recognizing their value as the intensive element within every Jewish school system for as many children and youths as local conditions warrant.

\(^{10}\) *Jewish Education in New York City*, pp. 331–32.
Benderly was a lone eagle; he did not find it possible to work with other independent educators who were then rendering valuable service in their communities. Moreover, along with his splendid capacities for realistic thinking, he also projected fantastic, unrealizable plans, in education, in Palestinian enterprises, and in other fields; their failure caused him much heartache. Benderly was of the patriarchal type, with the faults and the virtues of a pioneer and a progenitor.

"Exhibit A"

In the days of the First World War, Benderly enabled me to have an unforgettable experience, outside the Bureau, as secretary of the Joint American Relief Commission that went to Eastern Europe. In response to the grievous distress of Polish Jewry in the German-occupied territories, American Jews were eager to unite and increase their fund-raising activities, but for that it was essential also to unite the Polish Jewish groups into joint distribution committees. To this end, the Commission was appointed, consisting of representatives of the three Jewish relief committees operating at that time — American, Central, and People's — under the chairmanship of Dr. Magnes. Benderly suggested me as secretary of the Commission. The main instruction to the Commission was "to arrange to have all American Jewish relief moneys distributed only through committees of representatives of all elements of the Jewish population in the various localities." We were also to investigate the efficiency of the German Jüdische Hilfs-Komité für Polen in the distribution of American relief funds up to that time.

Magnes and I, preceding the other members, left the United States on July 26, 1916. Because of Magnes' desire to go first to Russia to meet with Russian Jews during those momentous days, we traveled by way of Norway and Sweden. There, however, Magnes was informed that the Czarist government would not permit

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*The other members were to have been Samson Abel, Rabbi Bernard Abramowitz, Dr. Boris D. Bogen, Jacob Billikopf, and Jacob Pankin. They were to have followed later because difficulties had developed in obtaining entry permits for them from the German government; these were finally not granted, and the men did not come.*
us to enter Russia, presumably because of a public address against the Czar which Magnes had delivered in Chicago. We then went on to Hamburg and Berlin, where Magnes received permission to enter the German-occupied areas alone — no extra Americans were wanted. I remained in Berlin to study the operations of the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden, which was the operative agency for the Jüdische Hilfs-Komite für Polen. In doing so, I came into contact with Dr. Bernard Kahn, secretary of the Hilfsverein, and with Dr. Paul Nathan, its director. Dr. Nathan had incurred unjustified opposition in America as being among those who opposed the entry into Germany of East European Jews. The 132-page report which Magnes and I later submitted to the Joint Distribution Committee in America cleared his name in this matter and approved fully of the Hilfsverein's activities and attitudes in its work of relief distribution.

I was to return to America in September to render a preliminary report, and Magnes was to continue his mission alone. But, while in Vienna, Magnes was thrown from a droshka and broke his foot. He was brought back to Berlin as an invalid. However, he insisted on returning, even on crutches, and I was permitted to accompany him to Poland. Our travels and discussions with Jewish community leaders in Warsaw, Vilna, Lodz, Lublin, and Lemberg toward setting up local joint distribution committees were saddening but gratifying. We were deeply impressed by the calm capacity of the Jews for self-direction toward community welfare in the midst of deplorable poverty and great personal suffering. Particularly impressive were their brave plans and activities concerning the schools and Kinderheime in Poland. Magnes' efforts to create unified representative relief committees met with genuine approval, and everywhere joint central committees were organized locally, then or after we left.

When we arrived in Vienna, we were informed by the American

12 J. L. Magnes and A. M. Dushkin, Commission of the American Jewish Relief Funds: Report to the Joint Distribution Committee (New York, March, 1917).

13 I published some of this material in The Jewish Teacher: see the articles by Jakob Dinensohn and Stanislaw Natanson in Vol. I, No. 2 (January, 1917), and "Two Hebrew Schools in Poland" in Vol. I, No. 3 (May, 1917).
Ambassador in October, 1916, about the ugly “Zimmermann plot” to get Mexico to attack the United States, an affair which finally led to America’s entry into the War. We were advised to leave immediately, and we did. In Copenhagen, prior to embarking on the Danish steamer that was to take us home, we met Aaron Aaronsohn, of Palestine. I knew of him as the scientist of “wild wheat” fame, but not as the secret leader of the Nili spy ring that was working under dangerous conditions for the liberation of Palestine by the British. Evidently Magnes did know. Aaronsohn was a Turkish citizen, but he had apparently persuaded the gullible Turks and the Germans that he could pass through the British lines on his way to America “where he could get his influential Jewish friends to side with the Germans.” Actually he was a British spy destined for Britain. We gave him a place in our ship cabin. At the Orkney Islands, he was removed by the British police, much to my innocent consternation. Later Magnes explained the whole complicated adventure to me.

Upon his return from Europe, Magnes became absorbed in joint relief work, in anti-war politics, and in civil libertarian activities. By 1918, it was clear that the Kehillah could not continue to exist. Three factors combined to make for its demise — Dr. Magnes’ pacifist activities, which estranged many of his followers; the magnitude of the Kehillah undertaking, for which New York Jewry was not prepared; and the conflict between the Kehillah, as an affiliate of the American Jewish Committee, and the American Jewish Congress, a conflict spearheaded by Louis Lipsky and Justice Louis D. Brandeis, especially regarding Jewish representation at the Versailles treaty conference.

With Magnes’ charismatic influence on the masses gone, Benderly made a heroic effort to save the Kehillah by reorganization. Instead of the former membership by organizations, he proposed individual membership from among the Jewish masses of New York. He hoped to enlist “many tens of thousands” of members for the new Kehillah at the nominal membership dues of one dollar annually. In order to attract members, he proposed giving each of them, as a bonus, the Jewish Communal Register, which would enable the prospective member to obtain dramatic insight into the enormous complexity
of his community and of the need for identifying himself with it. The *Register* was a prodigious undertaking, resulting in a remarkable book of 1,597 pages replete with detailed data for 3,667 organizations and institutions, and containing, in addition, articles by fifty-six contributors dealing with many aspects of local Jewish life. It is a veritable mine of information, a lasting historic document of much value. But it failed to “sell” membership.

Benderly appointed me his “lieutenant” in the membership campaign, and I spent several hectic, unrewarding months in that impossible task. We were not fit for that kind of action, and the campaign failed. We secured far too few members even to pay for the heavy cost of producing the *Register*, and the resulting large deficit brought financial as well as organizational ruin to the Kehillah. By 1919-1920, the Kehillah had disappeared from the horizon of Jewish life.

Left alone, Benderly struggled valiantly to maintain vestiges of his Bureau during the following decades, when, despite lack of broad community support such as he had hoped for, his dynamic creative energy expressed itself in new educational projects of much value. The first pioneering group of the “Benderly Boys,” as we came to be called, had to find other posts for themselves. Many of us remained in Jewish educational activities for the remainder of our lives and carried the message of “community and modernity” to widespread communities in America.

Indeed, the idea of pluralist community responsibility for the development of modernized Jewish education spread both directly and indirectly. Thus Morris D. Waldman, who was in close touch with our group when he was the director of the Jewish Charities of New York, organized the Boston Bureau of Jewish Education in 1918, when he became the executive director of the Boston Federation of Jewish Charities. He had me come to address his board at the Boston Unity Club to help him in this endeavor. In retrospect, I believe that Waldman brought me before his board not only for what I could tell them, but also as “Exhibit A” — a modern, presentable young American, university-trained, who was dedicating

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14 *The Jewish Communal Register of New York City, 1917-1918* (New York, 1918).
his life to the new American Jewish education. Later Waldman carried the principle of community status for Jewish education to Detroit, when he became there the executive director of the “double-barreled” welfare fund. Other community workers were similarly influenced throughout the years by members of our group, who had frequent opportunities to present the case of Jewish education before the annual meetings of the National Conference of Community Service.

I left the Bureau in 1918 and joined Henrietta Szold, who had assumed the direction of the Zionist Education Department established at the historic convention following the Balfour Declaration. Thereafter, the Zionist Organization of America was to become primarily a practical agency for fund raising and political activity, but a polite bow was made to the cultural needs of Zionism by projecting an education department with Miss Szold as its head. Emanuel Neumann and Rabbi Eugene Kohn acted as her “inside” assistants, and I as her “field” assistant.

I accepted the post in the conviction that, to prepare myself for leadership in Jewish education, I must get to know American Jewry better and must also have some living experience in Palestine, which at the time was beginning to develop into “the Jewish homeland in the making.” For one year I traveled about the United States organizing and teaching Zionist youth groups. I also lectured in the short-lived School of Zionism, under the direction of Jessie E. Sampter.

Unfortunately, Miss Szold received from the politically minded Zionist leadership but scant support and much scornful denigration for her educational efforts. There seemed to develop among the leaders at that time a sort of secular messianism: the Jews of the Diaspora would be shipped anon to Zion in planned units of one hundred thousand. I was told by some of the leaders—among them, Jacob de Haas and Boris Katzman—“to stop fooling around with Zionist education in America,” and instead to join them by working out a complete and very detailed inventory of all the educational needs for units of one hundred thousand immigrants. That sort of “realistic planning” was too much for me.
Harassed and long-suffering, Miss Szold carried on as long as she could. During the one year that I worked with her, I came to admire her remarkable qualities — her deep love of Zion and of her people, her "spiritual green thumb" which made activities grow, her scrupulous, infatigable devotion to duty, her meticulous concern for giving importance to details, and her spontaneous teaching personality. Personal affection developed between us; I had the feeling, then and later, that she looked upon me as replacing one of the "sons" that she never had. But I was restless, and I determined to go to Palestine.

Renewal

I went to Palestine then not to settle, but to learn what I thought would be of importance upon my returning to do educational work in America. Fifty years ago, in 1917, I wrote: "To indulge in prophecy, it appears that the time is not far distant when no serious Jewish professional worker, whether rabbi, teacher or communal worker, will consider his training complete before visiting the Land of the Fathers, there to drink deep of the reawakened fountain of Jewish life and to bring back from there inspiration and re-doubled zeal for his work in this country." I went there myself as the first such professional "student" — as a forerunner, so to speak, but my goal was American Jewish education as I envisaged it.

New social forces were operating in America at that time. The East European immigrants and their children born or raised in America were taking over the leadership of American Jewish life and were changing its scale of values. Orthodoxy, Hebraism, Yiddishism, and Zionism were broadening the pluralist character of the communities. The new Conservative movement was beginning to proliferate synagogues and congregational schools. Reform Judaism was turning to a reformulation of its program, aiming toward greater emphasis on traditional Jewish values. The Joint Distribution Committee's relief activities on behalf of East European

15 Jewish Education in New York City, p. 341.
Jews during the war and its aftermath, together with the struggle for a Palestinian homeland for the Jewish people leading to the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate, created a renewed sense of Jewish responsibility, with American Jewry as the new world center. The Communist revolution in Russia, with its antagonism to religion, was causing Americans, Jews and non-Jews, to put renewed stress on religion and religious education.

Jewish education in all its forms, rather than Americanization and philanthropy, was beginning to be recognized as our most pressing and most difficult problem, in our struggle for survival and for meaningful life as Jews. Besides Benderly and his disciples, important educational work was being done by East European educators, among them Abraham Hyman Friedland in New York, Ephraim Lisitzky in New Orleans, Jacob Gordon in Minneapolis, Louis Hurwich and Nisan Touloff in Boston, and others. Emanuel Gamoran was beginning to reshape teaching in the schools of Reform Jewry. Mordecai M. Kaplan was promulgating Reconstructionism, and Horace M. Kallen was expounding pluralist orchestration. New textbooks by Zvi Scharfstein and others were beginning to reflect American educational ideas in method and in form. Experiments in summer camping by Albert P. Schoolman and Dr. Benderly were beginning to point to the great value of that new type of educational experience. New communal surveys and studies were beginning to emphasize the need for community efforts to bring order and planning into Jewish education, not only for increasing the number of children taught, but also for providing more teaching time and better methods of teaching. There were the beginnings of community certification of Jewish teachers, aiming at elevating their status and improving their conditions, socially and professionally. Rabbinical seminaries and teachers’ institutes were being projected or expanded for the training of teachers and leaders. Intercollegiate Zionist and Menorah societies were striving to reach university students. The Jewish Welfare Board was beginning to develop Jewish youth community centers.

Beyond these and other new forces operating in America, there were the dramatic beginnings in Palestine of a self-governing Hebraic society in the historic biblical homeland. I remember that, as Jewish
Israel Friedlaender
American Jewish communal leader and martyr
(see p. 125)
Solile of the East European refugees
whom the Joint American Relief Commission was organized to help

(see p. 130)
teachers in America, we were envious of the teachers of French, Italian, or English, in that they could bring before their pupils not only the cultural past of that people, but also its living social and cultural present, and its developing future. The new Palestine was beginning to enable us to do this also for our children. History-making current events, new festivals, social experiments, living spoken Hebrew, songs and dances, were being created there and were beginning to enrich our curriculum and to vivify our educational approaches.

I felt the need of becoming saturated with that creative atmosphere. In preparation for our Herculean struggles against ignorance, indifference, and assimilation, I was going to Palestine somewhat like the fabled Antaeus, who in his struggle needed the contact with his Mother Earth. It was as an American educator that I was impelled to experience life in the old-new land for a renewal of knowledge, strength, and faith.

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by

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The Anglo-Jewish scholar Israel Abrahams was no great admirer of Isaac Leeser, and in 1920 he permitted himself the comment that "we shall soon be thinking of putting Isaac Leeser's memory in a museum of Jewish antiquities as a specimen of a lost type" (By-Paths in Hebraic Bookland [Philadelphia, 1920], p. 259). Leeser's younger contemporary and disciple Mayer Sulzberger, however, had been far from consigning his mentor to such a fate. When Leeser died in February, 1868, Sulzberger eulogized him devotedly in the pages of the March, 1868, Occident and determined to carry on as editor of the monthly which Leeser had founded at Philadelphia in April, 1843—a few months before Sulzberger's birth. As it happens, he was able to maintain The Occident scarcely more than a year beyond its founder's death, and the magazine ceased publication in March, 1869. Still, a century later, few would quarrel with Sulzberger's estimate of Isaac Leeser as a genuine fons vitae—a genuine source of life—for the American Jews of his generation.

The Late Rev. Isaac Leeser

We can conceive of no tidings more painful to the Israelites of America, than the announcement of the death of Rev. Isaac Leeser. More widely known than any other Jewish minister in the country, acquainted with more persons in different portions of the Union than probably any clergyman in the land, he had, by his speeches, his writings, and his presence, interwoven himself into the whole system of American Judaism. His name was familiar as a household word. No intelligent Israelite could be found in all this broad land, who had not read or used some of the works produced by his genius and enterprise, and the veriest dolt knew him by the reputation he had so justly acquired. Nor was this confined to his co-religionists; for, among our Christian fellow-citizens, his fame as an elegant
writer, a deep thinker, a profound theologian and a good man, was firmly established.

Isaac Leeser was born at Neuenkirchen, in the province of Westphalia, Prussia, on the 12th of December, 1806. When but eight years of age, his mother died, leaving him to be reared by his father and grandmother. The father was a merchant, a man of strong, sound sense, of fair education, in comfortable circumstances, and sincerely and intelligently pious, without superstition. He possessed, besides, great bodily strength and powers of endurance. Such a man inspired the youthful Isaac with a freedom of thought and boldness of action, which could not fail to leave its impress. His grandmother was to him a good and kind parent, and to the last he mentioned her name with every mark of veneration and affection. After some preliminary education, he entered the gymnasium or college at Münster, where he acquitted himself with honor.

In his eighteenth year, he left Europe for America, at the instance of his uncle, Zalma Rehiné, who, having no children, desired to adopt one of his nephews. In May, 1824, he arrived at Richmond, Virginia, where his uncle resided, and after attending school for only ten weeks, he entered the latter's store. But his daily avocation could not check the ardent love of learning which animated the youth, and he spent his evenings and nights in literary pursuits. Even at that early age he gave evidence of the interest he took in Jewish education, by assisting his friend, Rev. Isaac B. Seixas, in giving gratuitous instruction on religious matters to such of the younger portion of the Jewish community as chose to attend at the Richmond synagogue on Saturdays and Sundays. Thus it was, that when the London Quarterly Review, in the year 1828, contained unjust and cruel aspersions on Jews and Judaism, this obscure stripling stepped forward, and in the columns of a Richmond newspaper, sent forth a vindication of his people and his religion, which at once attracted attention. This, be it remembered, occurred when he had resided but four years in the country, and his perfect mastery of the English language in so short a time shows the adaptation he possessed for philological science. Indeed, but a few years since, although totally unacquainted with the Spanish language, he translated in a short time a Spanish article for this magazine, without any other help than a
dictionary. And although it affected parties who considered themselves ill-used by it, no suggestion was made that there had been any error. On another occasion, we were present when he received from Palestine a facsimile of some portions of the Samaritan Pentateuch, and by the aid of an alphabet, he read it with ease and fluency in a very few minutes.

When Mr. Leeser first appeared as a writer, the Jews of the United States, lacking the proper esprit du corps, had been, so to speak, mere isolated representatives of Judaism. True, there were individuals who possessed even Talmudical learning, but they either would not or could not do much to further the interests of Judaism with effect. The office of Hazan of the Congregation Mikveh Israel, of this city, becoming vacant, he was deemed a fit person to fill that position in the then most important congregation of the country. He hesitated before consenting to become an applicant for the office, but the counsels of his uncle and of his friends overcame his reluctance, and he entered upon his duties in the year 1829. His active mind at once projected plans for the vivification of Judaism, and he brought to their realization so much talent, energy and perseverance, that it was soon felt that an original genius had arisen in America. Dissatisfied with the ignorance of his fellow-believers, and not content with the scanty methods of imparting instruction to them, he introduced the system of delivering English discourses at stated periods, and pronounced his first address on June 2d, 1830. But the duties of his office, novel as they were to him, did not prevent his literary labors. Within a year after his arrival in Philadelphia, he published his translation of [Joseph] Johlson's Instruction in the Mosaic Religion. In 1833 [sic—1834] his first work, the defence of the Jews against their calumniators, appeared in the book so widely known as The Jews and the Mosaic Law.

Early in the year 1834 he fell sick of the smallpox, and after the most acute sufferings, he rose from his bed, broken down in health, and impaired in his faculties. The distress of his mind was heightened and intensified by the reflection that his only brother, Jacob, who hastened to his bedside immediately on learning of his illness, fell a victim to the fearful disease. In progress of time, however,
he recovered strength and those noble faculties which he retained undimmed to the last.

At the beginning of the year 1837, he published a series of his sermons, in two volumes. In the same year he commenced his Portuguese Prayers, and in 1838 he issued his spelling book. In 1839 and 1840, he wrote a series of articles for the Philadelphia Gazette in defence of the Jews against strictures of the London Quarterly, which he issued in the year 1841, under the title of The Claims of the Jews to an Equality of Rights. In 1839 there likewise appeared his catechism, and in January, 1841, another volume of his discourses. In the same year, he edited Miss [Grace] Aguilar's Spirit of Judaism, at the request of the gifted authoress. In 1843, he began to issue this magazine [The Occident], which he lived to conduct till near the end of the twenty-fifth volume. In 1845, he published the Pentateuch in Hebrew and English. His edition of the Daily Prayers, according to the German custom, appeared in 1848. In the year 1850 he retired from office in the Congregation Mikveh Israel. This abandoning of public position, instead of abating, seemed rather to stimulate his zeal and ardor. Then appeared in rapid succession his English translation of Rabbi [Joseph] Schwarz's [Descriptive] Geography [and Brief Historical Sketch] of Palestine, and his edition of the Hebrew Bible, prepared in conjunction with Dr. [Joseph] Jaquett, a learned Christian clergyman of this city. He now proceeded to carry out the noble idea, long before conceived, of furnishing his brethren using the English language with a Bible, which should be free from the errors of the Authorized Version, from its Christianizing tendencies and partialities, and from the prepossessions which the headings of the chapters therein were intended to inspire. After years of weary labor, he completed this model of elegance, usefulness, and erudition. By it the Jewish authorities are made accessible to the English and American Jews, and an attentive student of the valuable notes in this work will have no mean idea of the rabbinical commentaries. He afterwards corrected and revised this translation and issued it in [an] eighteenmo [format]. In 1857, the Congregation Beth El Emeth called him to be their minister, and this position he filled to the day of his death, earning and obtaining the love and affection
of his flock to a degree rarely known. In 1859, he published [Benjamin] Dias [Fernandes' Series of] Letters [on the Evidences of Christianity], a powerful controversial work in favor of Judaism, and in 1860 he republished The Inquisition and Judaism. In 1864, he published the Meditations and Prayers of Mrs. Hester Rothschild, with notes and revisions, and, in the same year, Miss Aguilar's *Jewish Faith and Spirit of Judaism*.

Incessant labor had weakened his health, and in the fall of 1866, an affection of his lungs had become so alarming, that his physician ordered him to leave his home and spend the winter in the more genial climate of the Southern States. But illness could not quench his ardor, and he issued his prospectus for the republication of his English works, and especially for printing all the discourses he had written, amounting to about ten volumes of 400 pages each. This undertaking, great as it was, and hampered as he was in prosecuting it by his feeble condition, he lived to see nearly finished in the short space which intervened between that time and his death. Of the works announced, *The Mosaic Religion* has already appeared; the greater portion of *The Jews and the Mosaic Law* is completed, and of the *Discourses*, eight volumes are already published, and the other two will shortly appear. He possessed such a craving for active employment that, although engaged in the preparation, publication and sale of all these works, he had already projected an English edition of the *Sepher ha-Chayim*, and proposed the publication of the English translation of [Salomon] Munk's edition of the *Moreh Nebuchim* [of Moses Maimonides], now in course of preparation. Indeed, he rarely, if ever, completed any labor without having planned some new enterprise which should promote knowledge and improve his people. With all this, he performed the duties of his office, preached a sermon on every Sabbath and holy day, and edited *The Occident* with an ability which even his adversaries were forced to acknowledge.

Employments so harassing and multifarious as these, one would think more than sufficient to occupy the time of any ordinary man; but to Mr. Leeser ample time was left to attend to the sacred duty of charity. He gave the impetus to nearly every Jewish charitable institution in this city; he was a member of them all, and not only
freely contributed to their support, but attended their meetings and served on their boards. His farseeing vision, years and years ago, projected a Hebrew College, a Jewish Hospital, a Foster Home, a Union of Charities, a Board of Delegates of American Israelites, an Education Society, an American Publication Society, and everything else that could promote the welfare of his fellows.

To the Education Society, his services were peculiarly valuable. Impressed as he was with the truth of his religion, he held that pure Judaism could flourish only among enlightened men; his aim was to spread intelligence, and he felt convinced that Judaism would become widespread and deeply rooted. He devoted much time to the supervision of the school; he was liberal in his donations of books; he caused his friends to send their children to receive instruction, and his attention to the interests of the institution in all ways never flagged. When the College was to be pushed forward, his voice was heard, his exertions were felt. His personal influence procured considerable subscriptions, and, notwithstanding all other engagements, he offered his time and services gratuitously to act as one of the teachers in the College. When the institution was opened, as a just tribute to his eminent abilities, his exalted worth, and the honorable dignity of being the oldest Jewish minister in the country, he was elected Provost or President of the Faculty, his principal branch of instruction being homiletics and belles lettres. The duties of this position he faithfully fulfilled till his serious illness prevented him; and on his death-bed, he evinced his interest in the cause of education and enlightenment by directing in his will that his valuable library should not be sold, but should be delivered to the Hebrew Education Society for the use of the College, and by instructing his executors to present his plates of Miss Aguilar's works to an American Jewish publication society, if a proper one were formed within five years.

Some time in November, 1867, his physician discovered an internal tumor, which gave cause for serious alarm; and so rapidly did this increase in size, and aggravate his illness, that on the 19th of December he was forced to retire to bed. He recognized that his illness was fatal, and with calmness he uttered the confession for the dying, and gave minute directions as to the disposition of his estate, and the perpetuation of his writings. Although then very ill,
and considering himself dying, he dictated the draft of his will word for word, and a full and clear statement of where his various books, stereotype plates and other property were stored. His memory seemed to be as clear as at any previous period. He had two cherished desires: one, that his works should be perpetuated, and the other, that the writer of this [Sulzberger] should continue to publish The Occident, and nothing seemed to relieve him more than the assurance that every endeavor would be made to carry out his wishes in both these points. After his illness had been so alarming for three or four days, he appeared to grow somewhat better, and was so far recovered that he was enabled to leave his bed, and even to write something for the January number of The Occident. But about the middle of the month of January, he gradually began to sink, until, on Saturday morning, February 1st, at twenty-two minutes before eight o'clock, he died, as calmly as if going to sleep. His mind was perfectly clear to the last. Only on the Thursday previous to his death, when he was in great pain, he requested that the February Occident should appear early in the month, and on Friday afternoon, not more than eighteen hours before his death, he dictated a list of the receipts which were to be acknowledged in The Occident for February, and at no time during his illness, even when in the greatest pain, and under the influence of anodynes, did he omit to recite his prayers at the usual periods.

The news of his death, although not unexpected, created a more profound sensation than any other event that had happened among the Jews in this country for years. All the various congregations and societies in this city, and a large number in other places hastened to condole with his bereaved friends, and to testify to the world their appreciation of the services he had rendered to Judaism. The secular press and the public, with one accord, united with their Jewish brethren in lamenting the loss of so great a man.

The mental constitution of Mr. Leeser was gigantic. His memory was wonderful. He seemed never to forget the countenance or the name of a man whom he had once seen.

His comprehension was lightning-like. He could perceive in an instant the point of the most abstruse discussion or question, and his eminently logical mind at once followed it out to all its conclusions.
Frequently his views met with opposition from the fact that they were too farseeing and comprehensive.

There could be no greater mistake than a notion which some have expressed, that he was not a good scholar in the language and religious writings of the Hebrews. He had cultivated Hebrew grammar with industry and success, and though he never claimed to be a great Talmudist, yet his knowledge on subjects of Jewish law was considerable. It is true that in these branches he at once yielded to regularly educated rabbis; but this arose, we think, from an unwillingness to speak on subjects in which he could not take the highest rank. He had never pursued a thorough course of instruction in the Gemara [the Amoraic — mostly Aramaic-language — portion of the Talmud], but he was quite familiar with the Mishnah [the Tannaitic — earlier and mostly Hebrew-language — portion of the Talmud], and his singularly retentive memory enabled him to know more of the Gemara than many who had studied much more and much longer. As a general scholar he had few superiors, and his knowledge on all subjects cannot be described better than by terming it encyclopediac.

His thinking powers were so masculine, that their mere exercise supplied him with ideas, which other men obtain only by painful study. We remember well, that not many months since, in discussing a theologico-philosophical question with him, he used the same arguments and came to the same conclusion, as the illustrious Maimonides, without ever having read that portion of the great sage's writings.

As a speaker, his command of language and of ideas enabled him to present well-digested thoughts in excellent shape, without previous preparation. Indeed, many of his extemporaneous discourses might well serve as elegant specimens of pulpit oratory.

But it was, after all, as a writer that he earned the most fame; and in this he was truly great. The mere mention of a subject called up in his suggestive mind thoughts on its every aspect, and with wonderful fluency he wrote on it to as great a length as he wished, without exhausting himself or wearying his readers. Platitudes never issued from his pen, and no one could rise from the perusal of any production of his, without entertaining respect for the man who
could think so logically and so cogently express his thoughts. His style was plain and simple, his language easily comprehensible, his argument direct. The secret of his popularity was that he never appeared learned. He did not burthen his articles with masses of pedantic quotations, in tongues foreign to his readers; he did not cite authorities for any position of his own; but his calm, self-reliant mind thought it out, and showed the process to his hearers and his readers. All this may have detracted from his reputation for deep learning, but it added immensely to his influence and his usefulness. His knowledge was not in the clouds or in the stars, that the people should inquire, who will bring it to us. It was near, in his heart and in his mouth, and he communicated it to the hearts and the minds of the common people.

We honestly believe that since the great [Moses] Mendelssohn, no one follower of the Law of Moses, either in Europe or America, has done so much and so successfully to vindicate Jacob's sacred inheritance when aspersed, to diffuse it when neglected, to promote its study when it had almost died out, as our lamented friend.

There have been greater Talmudists, there may have been more eloquent orators and more graceful writers; but among them all, there has been no greater genius, no better Jew, and no purer man than Isaac Leeser.

[The Occident, XXV (1868), 593–601]
The years preceding America's entry into World War I saw simplistic notions of easy human progress toward the millennium reach their climax in the Progressive movement. Linking the traditional American dream of an agrarian paradise with the problems of urbanization that already plagued the country, the Progressives turned their attention to the amelioration of working conditions for those who were new to the big city, whether they came from rural America or from the Old World. Among other urban institutions of exploitation, Progressive investigators from respectable middle-class backgrounds discovered the sweatshop and the brothel. Animated as they were by an oversimple sociological view that bad environment was the single cause of crime, vice, and corruption, the Progressives did not take long to trace an ostensible connection between the two.

In 1912, the Democrats of Illinois elected their first Governor in twenty years. Edward F. Dunne, the successful candidate, was the first and only resident of Chicago ever to be elected Governor of Illinois. Elected with him was another young Chicagoan, Barrett O'Hara, who won the office of Lieutenant Governor in part because he was a veteran of the Spanish-American War. Both these men, O'Hara in particular, were concerned with the Progressive aims of urban reform. With a sympathetic legislature behind them, they were able to establish a committee of inquiry into the problems of vice in Illinois and in particular into the connections between prostitution and poor working conditions. The Illinois senatorial vice committee chaired by Lieutenant Governor O'Hara held hearings for two years in all corners of the state. While these hearings focused public attention on the problems explored, hearings

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alone could not combat the situation which came to light — not the least because the investigators’ oversimplified assessments of the problem could not point the direction to real amelioration.

Today, the published report of the committee’s hearings remains as an example of American reformist thinking from the last “salad days” of nineteenth-century optimism.* Barrett O’Hara was subsequently elected to the United States Congress from a South Side Chicago district, one which has always been a bastion of the city’s Progressivist and reformist instincts. It was only in 1968 that this sprightly survivor of an earlier America retired from Congress.

The major portion of Chicago Jewry in the years before World War I was primarily an immigrant group living in the city’s oldest ethnic neighborhoods and making its living from the same processes of industrialism which called down the condemnation of the Progressives. Yet, as an exceptional group, it had its share of “bosses” as well as workers — men of the same immigrant background who were on their way upward toward business success. The O’Hara committee, seeking a full picture of the situation in Chicago, naturally had to take testimony from Jewish women working in the sweatshops of the Near West Side and from Jewish men who employed them. The record of their testimony presented below in verbatim selections from the published transcripts gives us a fascinating glimpse into the realities of social conditions among the settlers of the third wave of Jewish immigration and the problems they faced.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of those problems is the way in which the new immigrants were not simply victims of exploitation by the existing establishment in the United States, but were victimized by their “own kind.” Their employers were marginal operators who had come to these shores not long before and whose success depended upon the exploitation of their brethren perhaps to an even greater extent than did the success of businessmen from groups better established on the American scene. Like most employers of their day, they endorsed the system’s laissez-faire principles, but the testimony indicates that — perhaps because

* Report of the Senate Vice Committee, State of Illinois, 48th General Assembly (Springfield, 1916). The selections used here represent only a small portion of the testimony taken from the Jewish principals involved in Chicago’s garment industry. A copy of the full transcript is available in the American Jewish Archives.
they were Jews — they could be stirred by the committee's challenge to the morality of that system.

No attempt has been made to identify the people involved in the hearings. Their identity as individuals is of little concern. Rather, it is the role that they played in an emergent industrial society which is of interest to us today.

One further note of interest: running as a minor key throughout the testimony is an implicit acknowledgement of the changing patterns of Jewish life in the New World. Yiddish was the mother tongue of all the women. Some had to be questioned through interpreters, while others, who had been in the country longer, could more or less accommodate the committee in English. Some of the women who worked in the garment factories were Sabbath observers; most were not. The former even sacrificed a portion of their meagre wages to maintain something of a traditional Jewish life, while the latter tried to adjust themselves to a new environment.


E. B. testified through an interpreter, as follows:

Senator Juul:
Q. What is your nationality — what country were you born in?  A. In Russia.

Interpreter: She is a Russian Jewess.
Q. You are married?  A. Yes, sir.
Q. How many children have you?  A. Three children.
Q. Who are you working for?
Interpreter: She does not know . . . she is working in the shop.
Q. Who owns the shop?  A. She does not know. She works on Jefferson Street.
Q. Ask her if she knows how much money she brings home
Saturday night for the work she does. A. Three dollars and forty cents a week.

Q. Does she get that all at once? A. Yes, sir.

Q. How many hours a day do you work? A. From 7:30 till 6 o'clock.

Q. All the week? A. She does not work on Saturday.

Q. This $3.40 represents five days' work? A. Yes, sir.

Q. What line of work do you do? A. She is cleaning coats.

Q. How many coats do you clean a day? A. She doesn't know; they all work together.

Q. How old are you? A. Thirty-six years.

Q. What does your husband earn a week? A. Nine dollars a week.

Q. There are three children; do any of the children work? A. One child began to work, a very young child. She is written down as sixteen.

Q. Are you afraid to tell this Committee who you are working for? A. She says she doesn't know.

Q. Is she afraid of telling us who she is working for for fear of losing her job? A. No, she swears she doesn't know.

CHAIRMAN O'HARA: Sergeant, call Mr. M. R. of the firm of R&W.

THE SERGEANT: I have already been there twice and they claim they are both out of town.

SENATOR JUUL: Is there a member of the firm of R & W in this room?

THE SERGEANT: No, sir; they are not subpoenaed.

SENATOR JUUL: I was told he was here without being subpoenaed. If he is, he will please come to the front and be sworn. Is there a member of the firm in the room? — ask the witness. I think these witnesses are afraid to testify.

THE SERGEANT: Here is a woman that will testify.

M. D. testified as follows:

SENATOR JUUL: Can you talk Russian? A. Yes, sir.

Q. You live south of Twelfth Street? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Are you married? A. Yes, she is married, but her husband left her.
Q. How long since he left her?  A. Three years.
Q. What firm are you working for?  A. She doesn't know.
Q. Where do you work?  A. Jefferson and Twelfth Place.
Q. Is that R & W's factory?  A. She doesn't know.
Q. Is she afraid to tell us?  A. She is not afraid; she said there is nothing to be afraid of, but she doesn't know.
Q. How much do you make a week?  A. Four dollars.
Q. When do you start to work in the morning on Monday?  A. From 7:30 to 6 o'clock.
Q. You work how many days in a week?  A. She works all the week from Monday until Saturday in the afternoon.
Q. You work on Saturday for the same $4.00?  A. Yes, sir.
Q. Do you ever get paid anything for overtime?  A. Twenty-one cents for three hours.
Q. Do they pay you supper money besides?  A. No, sir.
Q. How long have you worked for them?  A. Three months.
Q. Did you ever make any more or any less than you are making now?  A. No, she never got any more than that.
Q. Did she ever get any less?  A. Never got any less.
Q. What kind of work do you do?  A. She is cleaning coats.

Chairman O'Hara: Has this woman any children?  A. She has no children.
Q. She supports herself on this $4.00 a week?  A. She boards.
Q. How much does her board cost her?  A. She pays $6.00 for room and then she makes her meals herself.
Q. Six dollars a month?  A. Yes, sir.
Q. And she gets $16.00 and pays $6.00 for her room. That leaves $10.00. What does she eat — how much does the food cost her?  A. Well, she doesn't know exactly; she says when she has more money she eats better and if she has less she eats less.
Q. Let us find out what she generally has for breakfast.  A. Half a pound of meat and coffee and bread.
Q. What does she pay for that half a pound of meat?  A. Eight cents for half a pound.
Q. What kind of meat is it?  A. Chop.
Q. Will she be docked for the time she is here before this Committee now?  A. She doesn't know.

Senator Juul: Before we go any further with the summoning
here of these people, to whom $1.00 is a fortune, I suggest that the Committee pay each of these witnesses $1.00, and if the State of Illinois will not pay it, we will pay it individually, because it will be a hardship for these people to lose $1.00 in coming here. A dollar to them means a fortune. I do not think they ought to be permitted to go away from this Committee without being paid the $1.00. People that will make a human being work that way will dock them... I think they would dock them for a minute.

**Chairman O'Hara:** Give them $1.00 an hour. And if any of these women are discharged because of the evidence they give here, the Committee will make it known, the name of the employer who discharged them for that reason.

**Q.** How much do your clothes cost you a month?  **A.** She says she don't know exactly.

**Q.** How often does she buy a new dress?  **A.** She wears one until she cannot wear it, and then she gets another one.

**Q.** How much does she pay for a dress?  **A.** She paid for suits $15.00.

**Chairman O'Hara:** Well, I am afraid this line of questioning will prove unprofitable because of the element of pride that enters into it. These people have pride the same as everybody.

**Senator Juul:** They go to a second-hand place to buy their clothes.

**H. M. G. testified as follows:**

**Chairman O'Hara:** **Q.** With what concern are you connected?  **A.** With myself.

**Q.** How many stores have you?  **A.** Two.

**Q.** Where are they located?  **A.** West Twelfth Street.

**Q.** You hire and discharge your own employees?  **A.** Yes, sir.

**Q.** How many girls do you employ?  **A.** Twenty-six.

**Q.** What is the least that you pay any of these girls?  **A.** Nine fifty a week.

**Q.** Do any of those twenty-six receive less than $9.50 a week?  **A.** The apprentices.

**Q.** How much do they get?  **A.** Two get $4.50 and one gets $5.50.
Isaac Leeser
America's most distinguished ante-bellum synagogue leader

(see p. 140)
Q. With the exception of those three, all of your girls get $9.50 a week or more?  A. Only two get $9.50, the rest is more.

Q. They get so much a week, depending on the number of hours they work?  A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you the piece system in your place?  A. No, sir; the ten-hour system.

Q. Ten hours a day?  A. Yes, sir.

Q. How many hours a week is that?  A. Sixty hours.

Q. They work full time on Saturday?  A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know of any time during the last two years when you have paid any girl, not an apprentice, less than $9.50 a week?  A. Well, I guess so.

Q. Have you during the last two years paid any girl but an apprentice less than $4.50 a week?  A. Yes, sir.

Q. What is the lowest you have paid any girl?  A. Well, the apprentices, when they first start in, when the father or mother bring them down there, they come in my place and I always start them in with their carfare and lunch.

Q. How many of these apprentices have you got in your employ now?  A. Three of those.

Q. You say you do take some apprentices and give them carfare and their lunch?  A. No, sir; I give them money, $3.00 a week to cover carfare and lunch.

Q. Coming down to dollars and cents, what is the least amount you have paid any one of the apprentices during the last year or so?  A. The least is $3.00.

Q. During the last two years?  A. The last two years I could not exactly remember; I can remember the last year.

Q. Have you ever paid any of these girls $1.50 a week?  A. No, sir.

Q. Never in your life?  A. No, sir.

Q. You would not do that?  A. No, sir.

Q. Did you pay some $6.00 or $7.00?  A. Those were girls that worked extra evenings.

Q. How many girls have you?  A. I have more than twenty-six girls.

Q. How many girls have you, all told?  A. I could not figure
out exactly; I have girls that work evenings for me, stenographers that work there.

Q. They come down at 7 o’clock? A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long do they work? A. Half-past nine, two and a half hours.

Q. How many of these girls come down in the evening? A. Well, I could not tell just exactly, but I think there is ten of them.

Q. How old are those girls? A. All big girls.

Q. What do you call big girls? A. Well, they are all over twenty.

Q. Some of them are stenographers during the daytime? A. Yes, two or three of them; some of them are salesladies in the downtown stores.

Q. You take care of one place, and a [fore]woman takes care of the other place? A. Yes, sir.

Q. These girls go out every night? A. No, sir; three nights a week.

Q. What do you pay them for their services? A. Well, the lowest I pay them is $1.00 for the two and a half hours. Some get as high as $1.50.

Q. You never have paid any of these girls less than $1.00 for the night’s work? A. No, I am paying as high as $2.00.

Q. You would not pay less than $1.00? A. They would not come for less than $1.00.

Q. If they would come for 25 cents, how much would you pay them? A. I never had any experience; I could not tell you. Those girls I pay some as high as $2.00.

Q. In other words, you are a good businessman, and you buy these women as cheap as you can? A. No, sir; if I get good girls I do not care for the money. When a girl comes to me for a job I tell her if she will make good she can name her own price.

Q. You tell them that when they come to work for you? A. Yes, sir.

Q. That is what we call taking them up on the mountains and showing them the green valleys. I once worked for $9.00 a week and that is the way they treated me. A. It is different times now.
Q. Now, when these girls leave the place, where do they go? Do they go directly home under escort?  
A. Yes, I know them all nearly, and they have parents.

Q. You never had any men around the place there trying to entice these girls away?  
A. No, sir; I would not have it.

Senator Juul: Are you doing a pretty good business?  
A. Well, pretty fair; yes, sir.

Q. Your business is an office business, isn’t it?  
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And an evening business. The fact that you have evening business would not excuse you from treating the girls that work evenings any different than any other merchant would treat girls working in the daytime, would it?  
A. Well, I don’t think so.

Q. Well, if your business necessitates the working of girls evenings, do you know of any reason why those girls should not be paid on a good living basis the same as girls working in the daytime?  
A. No, sir. But they have steady jobs and only work nights for extra money.

Q. You don’t give them a chance to take steady jobs?  
A. I do; but they would not do it.

Q. Would you hire those girls all the week and work them the legal number of nine hours a day and pay them a full week’s wages?  
A. I would if they would come.

Q. Have you tried them to see?  
A. Many times.

Q. How much have you offered them?  
A. I offered them, if they would work six evenings, I would pay them $9.00 a week.

Q. How many hours would they work in three evenings?  
A. Three hours a night, eighteen hours a week, but that would be only in the season.

Q. When is your season?  
A. This year it began the 15th of March, but it usually begins in April to the 1st of July and from the 1st of September to the 1st of December. Of course, I could not keep them steady during the dull season; I have not got any work at all.

Q. You drop them when you are through with them?  
A. I do except some I keep steady the whole year.

Q. Do you know all the girls you employ in the evening, all of the girls that have employment in the daytime?  
A. Yes, pretty nearly all.
CHAIRMAN O’HARA: How do you know them?  
A. I know them personally, most of them. They are neighbors of mine; pretty near all of them live in the same neighborhood.

Q. In order to live in your line of business, it is necessary for the girls to work at two jobs?  
A. Only a few. Some of the girls work all the year around.

Q. The work they do for you at night, the pay they receive from you, would it enable those girls to live out of what they get from you?  
A. I don’t think so; no, sir.

Q. They have got to take a chance on finding other jobs?  
A. They come to me when they have other jobs in other places.

Q. If they didn’t have another job?  
A. I would take them steady.

Q. Have you any that are working now for $9.00 a week?  
A. Yes, sir.

Q. How many?  
A. There are three girls.

Q. How many have you that get less than $9.00?  
A. None with the exception of that three.

Q. And those girls work for you three nights a week?  
A. No, sir; those three only work in the day, three apprentice girls.

Q. You make hats?  
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And sell them at retail?  
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you any girl clerks?  
A. Yes, sir.

Q. You pay none of those clerks less than $9.00?  
A. Two of them $22.50 and one $18.00 a week.

Q. You are able to compete with some of the State Street stores in prices?  
A. I don’t think so; if I should do it, I would make more money than I do, a good deal.

SENATOR BEALL: You say you pay your girls from $9.00 to $22.00 a week as salesladies selling goods?  
A. In the store.

Q. We have found stores in this part of town that pay a great deal less than that. Now, I am told you have the name of selling the cheapest millinery in the city, and these shop girls come to your place to buy. Is that correct?  
A. Yes, sir.

Q. If you can pay $9.00 to $20.00 a week, why cannot these high-priced stores down here, why cannot they afford it, too?  
A. Because I am satisfied if I make $5,000 in my two stores; I feel perfectly happy.
Q. That is exactly what we have been trying to find out for weeks.

Senator Tossey: What were your profits last year, do you care to tell?  A. No, sir; I could not tell you. What I have left in the bank is for myself. I have made in the last three years, besides my living, $15,000 to $20,000.

Senator Beall: You can manufacture hats and sell them to these shop girls cheaper than these stores in this part of town who pay them $5.00 a week, while you pay $9.00 to twenty?  A. Yes, and I pay one lady $35.00, and one young lady $27.50, and one $25.00.

Q. Do you belong to the Manufacturers' Association?  A. No, sir.

Q. Why not?  A. Well, not because I don’t like them, but I have not got the facilities. I do not see any necessity for it.

R. S. was examined through an interpreter, and testified as follows:

Q. Do you understand English?  A. No.

Q. What language do you speak? What is your nationality?  A. Jewish.

Q. How old are you?  A. Seventeen years.

Q. Are you sure you are not fifteen?  A. No, I am seventeen.

Q. What year were you born in?  A. I don’t know, but I know I am seventeen years old.

Senator Juul: You are seventeen, but you look like fifteen.

Q. How long have you been in this country?  A. Nine months.

Q. What are you doing for a living?  A. I baste coats.

Q. In what place of business? For whom are you working?  A. I don’t know the name; I am not working long there so I don’t know the name of my employer.

Q. If you knew it, would you be afraid of telling it?  A. No, I would not be afraid.

Q. How much do you make a week?  A. Four dollars.

Q. That is, if you work all week?  A. Yes.

Q. Do you work out of the shop too?  A. Yes.

Q. Do you work on Saturdays?  A. Yes, but I don’t work on Sunday.

Q. You go to work at what time in the morning?  A. At seven-thirty.
Q. And you quit when?  A. At six.
Q. How much time for lunch, for dinner, do you have?  
A. Three-quarters of an hour.
Q. Is that R & W?  A. Yes.
Q. Have you seen any of the bosses since last Saturday?  A. Yes.
Q. How many are there in your family?  A. I am all alone here; I have no family here.
Q. How did you come here?  A. My brother brought me here.
Q. Where did you come from?  A. Russia.
Q. What part of Russia?  A. Vilna.
Q. You are not talking Russian now?  A. No, I speak Yiddish.
Q. Is your brother married?  A. No, me and my brother both stop with strangers.
Q. What do you have, one room there?  A. No.
Q. Well, you have to have a room apiece?  A. Sure, we have both separate rooms.
Q. What do you have to pay for your room?  A. I pay three and a half a week for room and board.
Q. That leaves you fifty cents a week for shoes, clothing and other necessaries?  A. Yes, sir, that is all.

Chairman O'Hara: When did you buy your last dress?  A. I didn't buy a dress here; when my brother brought me to this country nine months ago, he bought everything for me. Ever since then I haven't bought anything; I haven't money enough to buy any clothes.
Q. How long have you been working there?  A. Six weeks.
Q. Out of the four dollars a week that you get, you pay out three dollars and a half for board and room. How much of those four dollars do you have left?  A. I have the three dollars.
Q. You have been working six weeks and you have saved the entire three dollars?  A. Yes; I have it.
Q. What are you going to do with that? What are you saving it for?  A. I don't know; I think I will buy a dress with it, but I don't know.
Q. Where is your washing done?  A. I am doing it all by myself.
Q. Have you had any amusement of any sort?  A. I go sometimes to a theatre.
Q. Who takes you?  A. My brother sometimes takes me.
Q. Do you also do your brother's washing?  A. No, the Mrs. washes for him.
Q. Will they dock you for the time that you are absent today?  A. Surely they will do it.
Q. How did you happen to get this job?  A. My brother got it for me.
Q. What does your brother do?  A. He is a tailor.
Q. When you went to get your position, what member of the firm, or what official of the firm, asked your age?  A. Why, the boss, the foreman.
Q. Did he give you a position immediately?  A. He told me to wait.

S. S., called as a witness before the committee, testified as follows:

Senator Juul: You speak English?  A. Yes.
Q. How old are you?  A. Seventeen.
Q. Where do you work?  A. N & Company.
Q. What kind of work do you do there?  A. Make dresses and dressing sacks.
Q. Do you operate a machine?  A. Yes.
Q. How do you get paid, by the piece?  A. Yes.
Q. How much did you make last week?  A. Ten dollars.
Q. How much did you make the week before?  A. Nine dollars.
Q. What is the least that you have made the last year in any one week's work?  A. We had a new foreman there. Before he came we used to get good prices, then he came and cut the prices down on our work there. I used to make eight and nine dollars a week, but all of a sudden I had two and a half and three, and three and a half dollars, and I could not make a living out of that, and I says to him, "I am going to quit," and he says, "Quit if you want to, you are welcome to quit." Then I went away from there, and I went back to a place on Market Street where I had worked once before and they gave me seven dollars a week. I worked there three months and then that foreman there they fired, and they sent over...
and asked me to come back, so I went back to the old place, and
now we get good wages.

Q. How long ago was that? A. About six months ago, some-
thing like that.

Q. How long have you been on this kind of work? A. Oh, I
worked there about four or five months, and then I left for two or
two and a half months, and then I came back there; it will be three
weeks, now the fourth week.

Q. How many years have you been working now? A. About
three years, I think; since fourteen years I went to work.

CHAIRMAN O'HARA: What time do you go to work in the
morning? A. Seven-thirty.

Q. And what time do you have for lunch? A. Half an hour.

CHAIRMAN O'HARA: How much are some of the other girls,
some of the new girls, making? A. Oh, there is a friend of mine
to work last week. She worked about seven days and she had about
five dollars; she worked all week and she made around three
and a half.

Q. How many girls do you think there are there working for
three and a half? A. I don't know; we don't look much at each
other's pay.

SENATOR GORMAN: How long before that girl that is earning
three and a half now will be able to earn as much as you are?
A. I can't tell you.

Q. How long did it take you to get where you could earn as
much as you are earning now? A. It took me a couple of months
until I got used to the work.

Q. During the time you were only earning two and a half, did
the amount of work that you were doing or the class of work that
you were doing remain the same as you are doing now? A. Yes,
but they changed the prices a little, not very much; the same work,
but I was not used to it; it was a different kind of work, and there
was a foreman before I left, and I says to him, "Have I got any
money coming?" every Saturday. We don't keep any books, and we
never knew anything about it; we don't know how much is
coming to us; he used to write it on his own book, and one Saturday
I thought I ought to have five dollars and something, and I come
for my pay and I seen that I was short of money. I says, "I am short of money," and he says, "Can you prove it to me? Of course you can't remember what you made all week," and I says, "No, I can't, but I am short."

Q. How much was short in the envelope that week? A. About a dollar and sixty-nine cents.

Senator Juul: How much was in the envelope for the whole week? A. Something about five dollars.

Q. And you thought you were a dollar and sixty-nine cents short? A. Yes, so I told him that I was short, and I says, "I will quit." And he says, "You can quit if you want to," and after that my boss told some friends of mine, he says I have got some money coming, so I thought I would go down and see, so I went down there and the boss gave me back a dollar and sixty-nine cents, something like that.

Chairman O'Hara: Who was your boss? A. N.

Senator Tossey: How do you keep track of your piece work? A. I got a book and he marks the price down every week.

Q. What did they pay? A. Sometimes eighty cents a dozen and some more than that.

Senator Juul: Eighty cents for a dozen waists? A. All according to the waists.

Q. Have you any idea for what these waists are usually sold? A. No.

Q. You don't know what you would have to pay for a waist of that kind if you went down to buy one? A. No, I can't tell.

Q. Are you living with your parents? A. Yes.

Senator Tossey: Did you have to pay for any waists that you spoiled? A. When the old foreman was there.

Senator Juul: Where were you born? A. In Russia.

Q. What town? A. You would not know the name — Kabrink.

Senator Woodard: Have you ever spoiled any goods under this foreman? A. I, no.

Q. Do you know of anybody that has? A. I know one girl that spoiled a waist and she had to pay for it.

Senator Juul: How much did he charge for it? A. I don't know.
Q. They never charged you for anything you spoiled? A. No, sir, I didn’t spoil anything.

Senator Tossey: Did this old foreman ever swear at the girls? A. Yes, he used to call them funny names.

Q. What do you mean by funny names? A. I don’t know as I can call it in English. He used to call us, we are all Jewish, he used to call us “Lousy Jews.” Every girl had a name back there.

Q. A nickname? A. Yes.

Chairman O’Hara: What name did he give you? A. He used to tell me, but it is just a funny name; I don’t think it is nice for me to pronounce it.

Q. Do you mean vile names? Names that you would not call decent? A. Yes, that is what I mean.

Q. Who do you get your pay from? A. The foreman brings it up to us every Saturday.

Q. I want to get this clear; I judge from your testimony that this is the practice there, that the girl, if she finds that she has been wronged, as in your case where you were a dollar and sixty-nine cents short in your envelope of that amount, and as in the case of the girl who was fined for spoiling a piece of work; in both of those cases you both quit or threatened to quit? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Up to that point the employee admitted that the employer was always right? A. Yes.

Q. But when you quit or threatened to quit, then they came through with your demands? A. Yes.

Q. That is the system? That is what happens there? A. Yes.

Senator Juul: Do you think they will discharge you for coming down here and testifying? A. No.

L. N. testified as follows:

Chairman O’Hara: Have you a system by which you sweat out, which is the English term, work to girls? Do you employ men who send the work out at a less figure than is done by your employees? A. No, sir.

Q. Your firm pays whatever they earn without any middle men getting any profit out of it? A. Yes.
Q. How many employees have you? A. About twenty-four or twenty-five.


Q. What is the best salary you pay to any girl? A. Last week there was something like fifteen dollars and some cents; that is, that was the highest pay.

Q. Do you consider piece work is a good way of working women? A. I think it is. I think the most efficient ought to make the most money.

Q. Yes, that is right. But do you think that the weak, least efficient ought to make enough to sleep in a bed and to buy clothing to cover her? A. I do.

Q. And sufficient food to eat? A. I do, indeed.

Q. What is the least paid employee in your concern receiving? A. Well, for the first two weeks they earn from three to four dollars a week until they get experience.

Q. How long does it take them to get experience? A. That is up to the individual.

Q. What is the average time before they commence to be self-sustaining? A. Some of them never do.

Q. Those that never do keep on at three or four dollars a week? A. No, we would rather discharge them.

Q. How many girls have you now earning three or four dollars a week? A. I haven’t got the records with me, but I don’t think any more than two. They are learners; possibly they came in a week ago or so.

Q. How many girls have you earning less than five dollars a week? A. About two or three.

Q. All together? A. Yes.

Q. How many are earning less than eight dollars a week? A. Seven or eight.

Q. How many above eight dollars? A. The balance.

Q. About sixteen? A. Yes.

Q. Do you consider that a girl earning less than eight dollars a week in the city of Chicago is equipped so that she can resist temptation if it comes to her? A. That is up to the individual.
Q. Would you consider the fact that she is not earning enough to pay the necessary expenses of life would make her an easier victim?  
A. I do, in some cases.

Q. Do you think it is good morals or good policy for the State of Illinois to have less than the minimum amount of wage that it takes to keep a girl?  
A. No.

Q. But you pay about eight women less than it takes to keep them; thirty-three per cent of all your women earn less than it takes to keep them?  
A. It all depends on the individual. Some girls could not live on eight dollars and some could not live on twelve.

Q. What do you think a young woman can live on?  
A. Six dollars.

Q. If you were to die, would you think that would be a sufficient amount for either your sister or your wife to live on in case she had to go out and earn a living?  
A. No, but I think if they had to do it they could.

Senator Juul: Could you make a list for the Committee showing the absolute necessaries that a girl would have to have and which you could get out of eight dollars a week? Could you make a figure for this Committee showing that a girl could exist for less than eight dollars a week?  
A. Not offhand.

Q. Are you basing your wages on that idea?  
A. No. You can see it — for the girls make fifteen, sixteen and seventeen dollars — that I don’t base my wages on it. I would much rather pay a girl eighteen to twenty-two dollars than the other, because a girl would naturally turn out better work, but I would not base my wage scale on that.

Q. So there is 33 per cent of your employees that are below the bread-line?  
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Is it necessary for the success of your business that they should be kept below the bread-line?  
A. In piece work alone, if I should advance them, I would have to advance all along the line, because there [are] so many inefficient; to give them more money would be an injustice to the others.

Q. When you have a young girl come there on Monday morning, you take all of her time until Saturday night, take all that is in her, all she can give you. Don’t you consider that in return for that you owe her enough to eat?  
A. I do.
Q. Enough to live on and sufficient raiment to come to your place of business?  
A. Yes, sir.

Q. You consider, then, the girl who does less for you ought to have that much out of your business? If she does not get that out of your business, ought you to employ her?  
A. No, I should think I should not employ her.

Q. And taking the other alternative you should pay her enough so that she could do it?  
A. No.

Q. You don't think that is an alternative?  
A. No, not to meet the competition.

CHAIRMAN O'HARA: How much did you make this last year, Mr. N.?  
A. I prefer not to disclose that.

Q. I ask you, Mr. N., what was the net profit of your business during the last fiscal year?  
A. Must I give that?

Q. Yes.  
A. About $2,000.

Q. What is your investment?  
A. About $14,000.

Q. About how much was paid out during the last fiscal year in salaries to executive officers of your company?  
A. We just organized about a month ago as a corporation.

Q. We were talking about the last fiscal year. You made $2,000 net profit. You were president then, were you?  
A. We just organized a month ago. It is a corporation now.

Q. But this last fiscal year you say you made $2,000?  
A. Yes.

Q. You were the sole owner?  
A. Yes.

Q. How much was your salary that year?  
A. Thirty dollars a week.

Q. Was there any money spent in salaries to other executive officers of your company?  
A. No.

Q. Next to your $30.00 a week, what was your next highest salary paid to anyone connected with your business?  
A. The bookkeeper $10.00, the shipping clerk $9.50, the designer $22.00, one helper $10.00, and we have a helper for $9.00.

Q. What was the total amount of business done during the last fiscal year?  
A. Fifty thousand dollars.

Q. Fifty thousand dollars gross?  
A. Yes, sir.

SENATOR JUUL: Now, Mr. N., you say that $50,000 business yielded $2,000 worth of profit. How far did you increase the size of your business last year?  
A. We did not increase it at all.
Q. You did not buy any new machines?  A. No.

Q. In other words, your business was of the same size at the end of last year that it was at the end of the preceding year?  A. Approximately; I put in one or two machines.

Q. You didn’t put in much improvement actually out of the earnings?  A. No.

Q. Yet that business yielded only a profit of a couple of thousand dollars?  A. Yes.

Q. You don’t think it is possible for you to compete with other men in your line of business and pay the 33 per cent of your employees a wage which would enable the girls to look at the men and women in your office and say that the money that they got from you was sufficient to keep them?  A. No, I don’t think I could.

Q. Then it is not possible to conduct your kind of business and have the people that manufacture your merchandise make a living independently of what they might have on the outside?  A. This is skilled help.

Q. You don’t call it skilled help until they can produce a certain number of any design?  A. No, no, they just produce one item.

Q. They can produce that item, but they cannot produce it fast enough?  A. Some can’t produce it at all on the start; that is the idea.

Q. How long a period do you consider that they are unable to produce the merchandise at all?  A. An average of about three weeks.

Q. If, then, for three weeks, they learn to do it when they have been with you three weeks, do you then elevate them up to a point where they are self-supporting?  A. They usually, if they stay, make enough to come up to $7.00. I might quote an instance where a girl came over from abroad and never saw a power machine in her life and she made $7.21 the first week, I think.

Q. She was unusually speedy?  A. She was.

Q. Isn’t it a fact that the majority of your girls get from $4.00 to $6.00 a week?  A. Oh, no.

Senator Woodard: How long does a girl have to work with you before she can become skilled?  A. With that degree of skill she ought to make a living at $8.00 by working three or four weeks.
Q. What becomes of goods that are spoiled in the making? Are they charged up to these girls? A. Sometimes, and sometimes not.

Q. What becomes of the goods? A. It is given to them or sold, if they wanted it sold, for what it would bring and the difference they paid; the difference between that and what it cost.

Senator Juul: Suppose the State of Illinois were to establish a minimum wage law at which you would be compelled to pay, say, at least $8.00 or $9.00 a week to a girl that you pay less than that in the case of piece work. You would simply start her in from that and up? A. I should say that we would not employ a girl that could not make $8.00 a week.

Q. You would have to recruit your force from somewhere, wouldn't you? A. Yes.

Q. Then how would you get your new girls? A. That is a thing that time would have to solve for itself; I don't say this is a fact, understand, but that is my idea.

Q. Do you think it would be in the business if all men engaged in the same line of business that you are engaged in would be in the same fix you would be put in? A. I think so.

Q. Then you think it would be a pleasant thing for you if they were all put on the same basis and you were to pay the girl the minimum living wage as long as they are treated all alike? A. If they are treated all alike, yes.

NEW LOAN EXHIBITS

The American Jewish Archives is pleased to announce the availability of sixty-one new loan exhibit items. The material will be sent free of charge for a two week period to any institution in the United States and Canada. The only expense involved is the cost of return expressage. The items deal, for the most part, with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Twenty to thirty of them make an adequate exhibit.

Inquiries should be addressed to the Director of the American Jewish Archives, Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220.
**Brief Notices**


Angoff, one of American Jewry's most notable novelists (his multivolume "Polonsky Saga" deserves to be ranked as a landmark in American Jewish letters), is also a poet of genuine distinction. *Memoranda for Tomorrow* represents his first major collection of poems. One hopes it will not be his last. The book includes a listing of the periodicals in which the collection's previously published poems first appeared.

**AUCHINCLOTHS, LOUIS. A World of Profit.** Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968. 265 pp. $5.95

New York attorney Auchincloss is a leading American novelist, though — and in the 1960's this needs to be stated explicitly — not a Jew. Auchincloss is a "Wasp," but that does not prevent him from creating and writing with sympathy of a Jewish character. Jay Livingston, né Levermore, the "hero" of this novel, is not much of a Jew, to be sure. Still, his Jewish antecedents impart a special nimbus to his maneuverings among the rather decadent "Old New York" Anglo-Saxons of Wall Street.

**BELLOWS, SAUL. Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories.** New York: Viking Press, 1968. 184 pp. $5.00

Canadian-born, Chicago-raised Bellow has made major contributions to American (and American Jewish) letters. In this volume, he offers his myriad aficionados a collection of six superb stories, three of them — "Looking for Mr. Green," "The Gonzaga Manuscripts," and "A Father-to-Be" — previously published in *Seize the Day* (1956).

**CHESNOFF, RICHARD Z.; EDWARD KLEIN; and ROBERT LITTELL. If Israel Lost the War.** New York: Coward-McCann, 1969. 253 pp. $5.95.

Three young *Newsweek* staffers have written a novel — and Gott sei dank it is only a novel — of what might have ensued had Israel lost the Six-Day War of June, 1967. Clearly gifted not only with Gothic imaginations but with some knowledge of both the Israeli and the American scenes, the authors incorporate into their narrative a number of historical personalities, Levi Eshkol, Moshe Dayan, Lyndon B. Johnson, Walt W. Rostow, Joachim Prinz, Jacques Torczyner, Abe Fortas, and Elmer Berger inter alios. They have been skillful enough to give the book an air of chilling historical truth.


"More than forty years after his last performance in 1926," writes the author, himself a magician, "Houdini is still the world's best-known mystifier. . . . He was, and is, a symbol for man himself — the ingenious creature who overcomes seemingly impossible obstacles by sheer force of willpower." Born Erik Weisz, the son of a rabbi in Budapest, Hungary, Harry Houdini (1874-1926) was brought to the United States as an infant. It is a celebrated but not a very happy life that Christopher recalls in this attractively written book. The text has been supplemented with illustrations, bibliographies, and an index.
Mayer Sulzberger
Late nineteenth-century American Jewish communal leader

(see p. 140)

The compiler has assembled 188 items illuminating California Jewry during the Gold Rush era. An index enhances the value of this work which, as Moses Rischin says in a foreword, “should... provide clues... to a profounder appreciation by all Americans of the western experience.”


Rabbi Cohen’s book, he tells us in his preface, has a dual purpose: “to summarize some of the most significant findings of the social sciences in the area of race relations and... to view those findings in the light of the values expressed in the theology, history, and tradition of Judaism.” In six chapters (one of them on Negro anti-Semitism) and as many appendices, he offers us an opportunity of “learning to see with our minds and with our hearts.” His book is well-documented and includes a bibliography.


From the very first page of this collection, Leonard Cohen—who is a novelist and a musician as well as a poet—shows himself to be as Jewish as his name. One understands on the basis of poems like “Prayer of My Wild Grandfather,” “Isaiah,” “Lines from My Grandfather’s Journal,” “I Wanted to Be a Doctor,” “Hitler the Brain-Mole,” and “Winter Bulletin,” not only why Cohen should be regarded in the first rank of Canadian and North American Jewish poets, but also something very telling about the acid quality of contemporary Jewish life.


Oscar Solomon Straus (1850-1926), the first Jew to hold a Presidential cabinet post, that of Secretary of Commerce and Labor in the Theodore Roosevelt administration, took as much interest in his Jewishness as in his Americanism. As Dr. Cohen, of the Hunter College faculty, puts it, Straus “wove his religious heritage inextricably into his secular activities.” His biographer has written a fully competent, exceedingly well researched and well reasoned account of a career which, she observes, was “a symbol of America’s age of innocence.” A comprehensive bibliography and an index augment the usefulness of this book.


“These letters,” observes Leon Uris in his introduction, “speak... of hope” and reflect “the aspirations of ordinary people gathered from the spectrum of society.” Some of the letter writers are Americans, and they, too, give voice to “the hardships, the humor, the dream, the courage, and, ultimately, the greatness of man” as these unfolded in the Jewish State during its first two decades.


Ernest Orlando Lawrence (1901-1958), an Episcopalian of South Dakotan birth, and Julius Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967), a Jew of New York birth, are the
subjects of this book. Lawrence was an experimental physicist; Oppenheimer, a theoretical physicist. "The quarter century of their association," writes Dr. Davis, "was an age of personality in physics. . . . Theirs were the two strongest personalities." Initially, they were friends, but their divergent ambitions and values led them into an enmity which, even posthumously, may yet prove fateful for America. Dr. Davis has supplied a glossary, a bibliography, and an index, all of them substantially increasing the value of his important and eminently readable text.


Israeli Foreign Minister Eban is well-known to Americans and well-acquainted with American life. During the 1950's, he was Israel's Ambassador to the United States and her Permanent Delegate to the United Nations. "The Jewish career remains an unpenetrated mystery," he writes in this beautifully published volume. "The mark of interrogation is written everywhere. The problems can be illuminated but never solved." Even so, Eban declares himself "passionately committed to the strange destiny which he is trying to elucidate," and that commitment is omnipresent throughout his book. Western Hemisphere Jewry is by no means overlooked in Eban's reconstruction of Jewish history. Chapter 22 is devoted entirely to "American Jewry in the Twentieth Century." American Jewry's "growing strength...ranks with Israel's statehood among the two most formative events in twentieth-century Jewish history." The text of *My People* has been supplemented with an index of names and one of subjects.


Dr. Eisenberg, Director of the World Council on Jewish Education, intends this anthology to give students "an insight into the trials, vicissitudes and experiences of our people." The book is divided into four sections: "Holocaust and Resistance," "Israel," "America," and "Jews in the U.S.S.R." The section on America includes material by Elias Lieberman, Chaim Nachman Bialik, Curt Leviant, Len Giovanitti, Chaim Greenberg, Maurice Samuel, and the *Time* magazine editorial staff. American writers represented in other sections include Albert Einstein, Leon W. Wells, and Ben-Zion Goldberg. The book contains also biographical sketches of the authors and suggested additional readings.


"The wave of intellectuals from continental Europe arriving in the thirties and early forties, driven here by the forces of intolerance and oppression, was so large and of such high quality that it constituted a new phenomenon in the history of immigration." Mrs. Fermi sets out "to examine this wave, the circumstances under which it came and was received, and its performance in this country." A great many Jews were, of course, among these "illustrious immigrants" — to mention only a few, Hannah Arendt, Max Ascoli, Hans Albrecht Bethe, Hermann Broch, Albert Einstein, Lion Feuchtwanger, Erich Fromm, Kurt Goldstein, Henry A. Kissinger, Wanda Landowska, Paul Lazarsfeld, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Mendelsohn, Hans Morgenthau, Erwin Panofsky, Leo Strauss, Leo Szilard, Edward Teller, Franz Werfel, and Eugene P. Wigner. The book includes photographs, reference notes, and an index of persons.
Russian-born Raphael Soyer came to the United States in 1912 at the age of thirteen and went on to become one of America's most important artists. "He owns more prizes and medals than most of his contemporaries," says his friend Joseph K. Foster, but fame and fortune have not altered "his pattern of professional existence . . . by as much as a hair. He seeks good light, good space, workable plumbing and very little else." The present volume, though not a catalogue raisonné of Soyer's work, reproduces fifty-two water colors and seventy-two black-and-white drawings. Among them are self-portraits and portraits of members of his family.


This volume is the sixth edition, enlarged and revised, of a work which first appeared in 1942. The authors, both World War I veterans, hope that their book will "foster . . . the respect and esteem which . . . outstanding contributions to the defense and security of the United States merit." The book includes an index of names.


Topics of Jewish concern — anti-Semitism, Zionism, etc. — are not absent from this remarkable collection of correspondence between two key figures of twentieth-century American history, Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) and Felix Frankfurter (1882-1965). The letters between them constitute "a record of friendship, a chronicle of the New Deal, a manual on the high art of political leadership, and a testament of citizenship . . . No one else quite filled Frankfurter's role, for he was outside the Administration but always within Roosevelt's confidence." The editor supplies a running commentary, biographical notes, photographs, and an index.


His book, writes Rabbi Friedlander, "goes forth, as an act of gratitude, to all those who want to remember, to all those who will not forget." It is a beautiful, terrible book, and its mood has been caught and rendered most admirably by Jacob Landau's illustrations. The concluding section, "Questions After the Storm," is devoted to reflections on the Shoah by Americans Hans Jonas, Jack Bemporad, Abraham J. Heschel, and Emil L. Fackenheim.


Originally published in German in 1967, this lavishly illustrated volume telescopes Jewish history from the biblical period to the Six-Day War of 1967. American Jewry is designated "the greatest and most significant diaspora in Jewish history," but otherwise given short shrift. A chronology and an index are included.


"Politicians working in the areas of education and social welfare," writes Dr. Morgan, cannot avoid involvement in "conflict over the proper relationship between the government and the churches." In this book, he sets out to discuss the conflict "in terms of the organized groups which are the principal combatants," their ideology,
psychology, and structure, the issues and arenas of conflict, and "the potential for future civic conflict inherent in church-state issues." Jewish groups like the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Agudath Israel, and the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs enter the discussion. Dr. Morgan deals also with the unsuccessful 1967 effort to repeal the New York State constitution's church-state separationist "Blaine Amendment." Documentation, bibliography, and an index are included. Dr. Morgan's book is a companion piece to John M. Swomley's Religion, the State and the Schools.


As Hitler moved systematically toward the total annihilation of European Jewry, "the government and the people of the United States remained bystanders. Oblivious to the evidence which poured from official and unofficial sources, Americans went about their business unmoved and unconcerned. . . Many Jews were as disinterested as their Christian countrymen. The bystanders to cruelty became bystanders to genocide." Arthur D. Morse has come to this painful conclusion on the basis of intensive research. Readers may contest, but they will find it hard to overthrow his verdict. Source notes, a bibliography, and an index enhance the worth of his "chronicle."


This handsome book, subtitled "A Narrative of the Role Played by the Bible People in Shaping American History," is part of Doubleday's "Religion in America Series." In twenty-nine well-written, data-filled chapters, Mr. St. John sets forth his view of American Jewish life and history, with special emphasis on the Jewish involvement in social action. The book lists its sources for each chapter and contains an index.


A distinguished Protestant spokesman is at pains in this volume to discuss "the full dimensions" of the issues involved in the "Church-State controversy in the area of education." A question like public aid to church schools, he suggests, "is not simply a question of educational policy, since it is vitally affected both by Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish interpretations of religious liberty and by the political philosophy of the courts and legislators." The book, which is well-documented and provided with an appendix of United States Supreme Court decisions affecting church-state relations and education, a bibliography, and an index, is a companion piece to Richard E. Morgan's The Politics of Religious Conflict.


The "one purpose" of his book, says Dr. Teller, is "to convey the flavor and fever of the years and events since 1921 which transformed the American Jew from stranger into native." He has subtitled the book "The Evolution of the American Jew from 1921 to the Present" — from the days "when the majority spoke Yiddish" to the present "when Jews are among America's ranking authors." Dr. Teller may not be, indeed claims not to be, a professional historian, but his work deserves to be applauded by students of twentieth-century American Jewish history. Its value is increased by notes and an index.

Set in pre-World War II Poland and America, this novel about the psychic and emotional dislocations to be found in a Hasidic rabbinical household is something of a *tour de force* in irony. The Polish-born author, the son of a rabbi, came to the United States as a youngster and grew up in Brooklyn.


As Rabbi Jack D. Spiro puts it in an editorial introduction, the author seeks to engage his readers “in a study of contemporary social issues from the perspective of prophetic Judaism.” The issues are summed up in the book’s chapter headings: “War, Peace, and Conscience,” “Racial Justice,” “Poverty,” “Civil Disobedience,” “Civil Liberties,” “Religious Liberty,” “Anti-Semitism,” “Youth in Rebellion,” “The Family, Sex, and Law,” “Interfaith Relations,” “Israel and Zionism,” “Soviet Jewry,” “Germany,” and “Ethical Wills.” Documentation and a listing of resource organizations are supplied in this volume, which is as stimulating as its format is unusual.


In 1919, Stephen S. Wise (1874-1949) wrote to his wife that what he “most coveted” was “a day’s remembrance by my people.” The hundreds of his letters that Dr. Voss has selected for this volume will surely help win him a longer remembrance; written between 1896 and 1949, they show him eminently worthy of more than a day’s remembrance. Dr. Voss speaks only the truth when he says in his introduction that the letters “not only reflected a loving interest in people but bespoke his passionate convictions about freedom, justice and equality.” If it is possible to single out one American Jew as towering over all the others who have ever lived, Stephen Wise certainly has a strong claim to that dignity. The editor, a Congregational and Unitarian Universalist clergyman who was associated with Rabbi Wise in behalf of Zionism and other causes, has enriched the value and importance of this volume by supplying a chronology, a biographical register, and an index. Justine Wise Polier and James Waterman Wise have contributed a foreword. This is not Dr. Voss’s first book on Wise; he is the author also of *Rabbi and Minister — The Friendship of Stephen S. Wise and John Haynes Holmes* (1964).


Herman Wouk’s novel about a Bronx boyhood first appeared in 1948 under the title *The City Boy*. It has been retitled for this “Twentieth Anniversary Edition,” John P. Marquand’s foreword to the 1952 edition has been reprinted, and a new foreword by the author himself has been added. “If I have a favorite creation,” writes Mr. Wouk, “to this day, it is the fat little hero, Herbie Bookbinder.”


“If, in the crucial years from 1938 to 1941, the world had opened its doors to the victims of [Nazi] persecution, the history of Europe’s Jews from 1942 to 1945 would have been significantly different. Instead, the barriers held firm and relatively few
refugees found asylum. . . . The total response of the United States, though more liberal than that of most nations, fell tragically short of the need.” This is how Dr. Wyman puts it in his preface to a volume which can be seen as a companion piece to Arthur D. Morse’s While Six Million Died (1968). Paper Walls is richly documented and also offers a listing of its sources and an index.


James Yaffe has a number of novels on American Jewish life to his credit. Here he turns away from fiction to das Ding an sich. Noting that the contemporary American Jew has been described in what would appear to be contradictory terms — as feeling “entirely at home” in America and as “a symbol of the Alienation of Modern Man” — Mr. Yaffe has written his book “to account for this paradox, to show that it arises from certain deep contradictions within the American Jew.” The author’s conclusions will be seen by many a reader as arguable — for instance, that the Jews’ “history of suffering and persecution . . . deprived them of grace and spontaneity” and “kept them from loving nature” — but every reader will find the book a serious presentation. Mr. Yaffe has taken the trouble to supply notes, a bibliography, and an index.

WANTED:

CONGREGATIONAL minute books, board meeting minutes, financial records, cemetery records, charters, constitutional revisions, temple dedication and anniversary booklets, and other data tracing the religious life of American Jewry.

FAMILY correspondence, diaries, memoirs, scrapbooks, photograph albums, naturalization papers, military medals, and personal souvenirs.

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONAL minute books and transaction records: fraternal, cultural, social, and philanthropic.

FILES of American Jewish periodicals, magazines, and journals.

These and other similar manuscript materials will be gratefully accepted as: gifts; permanent loans in the name of the owner; or temporary loans to be examined, photostated, annotated, and returned to the owner.

The American Jewish Archives
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220
Hallowed Ground in Louisville—1832

Louisville, Kentucky, represented the Far West in 1832, but the town was not too far west for a Jewish businessman named Henry Hyman—probably a Cincinnatian—to settle there and embark upon an enterprising career during the 1830's, 1840's, and 1850's as restaurateur, confectioner and grocer, lottery broker, and clothing merchant. Hyman's advertisement in Louisville's first city directory, compiled in 1832, came to the notice of the American Jewish Archives through the courtesy of Mrs. Dorothy Thomas Cullen, Curator and Librarian of the Filson Club in Louisville:

WESTERN COFFEE-HOUSE, AND HYMAN'S ALTAR.

South side of the Market House, between 4th and 5th streets.

Since Hyman's torch e'er now is beaming,
Shedding its refulgent light around;
Since golden rays from it are streaming,
Prepare to tread the hallowed ground.

This establishment will hereafter be conducted by HENRY HYMAN, individually, who, thankful for past favors, hopes, by his exertions, to merit a continuance of that support which has hitherto been so liberally bestowed. His house has been recently re-fitted in a splendid and superior style. No pains or expense have been spared, to render it one of the most comfortable Restorateurs in the Western country. His Saloon (up stairs) being large and comfortable, is well calculated for large Dinner and Supper Parties; and the adjacent rooms being handsomely furnished, and retired, are well adapted for small Music or Singing Parties. His Bar, as formerly, will be regularly supplied with a general assortment of the best Liquors in the country. He always keeps on hand a large stock of the richest and purest Wines—which will be sold by the single bottle or dozen—Among them are Sparkling Champaigne, Golden Sherry, Old Port, Old Madeira, Bordeaux, etc., etc.

There will also be kept a regular Ordinary, from 6 o'clock A.M., until 12 P.M., abounding with Beef Steaks, Cold Hams, Turkeys, Ducks, Geese, Fowls, Partridges, and every delicacy that can be procured in the Louisville market.
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