
Labor Zionism in America: The Challenge of the 1920's

Maier Bryan Fox

Despite the recent scholarly attention to the course of American Zionism, the bulk of concern remains with the mainstream organization, the Zionist Organization of America, and with the most famous figure among America's Zionist leaders, Justice Louis D. Brandeis. This stress ignores the strength and vitality of the Zionist "fractions." These ideological parties, though always minorities, provided viable alternatives to dissident minorities within the ZOA and maintained continuous pressure on the centrists to clarify or modify policy. During the 1920's the Labor Zionist parties were particularly active.

Labor Zionism occupied the left wing of the movement to create a Jewish state in Palestine. The leading Zionist-socialist organization, the Poale Zion (Workers of Zion), was a recognized international fraction. Slightly to its right stood the Zeire Zion Hitachduth (Union of the Youth of Zion). Though mildly socialist, the Zeire Zion might better be termed "reformist." It did not constitute a fraction, but served as a semiautonomous faction within both the ZOA and the World Zionist Organization throughout the twenties. When the Palestine labor movement unified in the early 1930's, the Poale Zion and Zeire Zion merged.

Poale Zion

Marxian socialism was not a major force in the American Poale Zion. By and large, one man was responsible for the ruling philosophy of Poale Zion in this country—Nachman Syrkin. A Zionist before the days of Theodor Herzl, Syrkin was a leading theoretician of Labor Zionism before the turn of the century, and when he came to the United States, he quickly became the guiding spirit of the movement here. Even after his death (1924), his philosophy was accepted by the Poale Zion.

Syrkin formulated a philosophy designed to reconcile the inherent conflict between Zionist nationalism and socialist internationalism. His chief intellectual guide was Moses Hess, a one-time follower of Karl Marx. Hess broke with Marx and became a precursor of Zionism through his tract *Rome and Jerusalem*. According to Syrkin, "Hess revealed the socialist essence of Judaism," and pointed out the link between prophetic Judaism "and the spirit of progressive humanity." Hess continued where Marx left off. While Marx studied the evolutionary process in history, "Hess strove to crystallize the eternal and everlasting which this evolution creates and materializes." Since Hess valued the permanent, he had to alter the Marxist view of revolution, and he did. To Hess, the revolution was considered "a philosophy."¹ He minimized the importance of the class struggle by insisting that Jews of all classes "shared one common vision of salvation of which Zionism was both the symbol and the practical expression. There inhered in Zionism itself a universal promise which lifted it from the level of a mere nationalist movement to the lofty heights of a great social ideal." Syrkin denied a purely nationalistic motivation for human behavior, stressing the role of man's emotional needs. Hence, the enduring importance of the prophetic spirit to the Jewish people, and the firm belief that the forthcoming Jewish state would be founded on ethical principles. The voluntary cooperation of Jews of all classes—the rich through their money, and the poor through their labor—would eventuate in the creation of a cooperative commonwealth where all would live in harmony.²

Perhaps because ideology was so important, the Poale Zion seemed to stress philosophy more than program, and that in the most general terms. Poale Zion Branch 4, for example, defined its goals as "the establishment of a Jewish national home based on social justice, and the agitation for social and economic reform in all lands."³ When the occasion presented itself, however, the Poale Zion quickly enunciated specific demands. Strongly against Jewish employment of Arab labor while Jewish workers were unemployed, it brought a demand for safeguards of Jewish labor to the 1920 ZOA convention.⁴ As negotiations for extending the Jewish Agency neared their end, the party explained its program in a letter to the non-Zionist conferees. There were five main points: national ownership of the land, mandatory use of Jewish labor "in all enterprises conducted or subsidized by the Jewish Agen-

cy,” encouragement of Aliyah, support of Hebrew, and “freedom of the colonist to choose his own form of social living.”⁵ The last plank was a defense of the collective settlements, which were often attacked by the capitalistic elements who supplied much of the funds used by the socialist settlers. The only contested election to a World Zionist Congress during the decade took place in 1929, providing the Poale Zion with a stimulus to a more complete explanation of its program. Three of the points made in the letter to the non-Zionists were repeated. Left out were nationalization of the land and emphasis on Hebrew. Since all Zionists believed in Hebrew as the national language, mention of it would have been meaningless, but the lack of reference to nationalization is surprising. Perhaps those who drew up the program simply assumed universal Zionist knowledge of Poale Zion’s position. Among the specifics that were proposed to the Zionist electorate, the Poale Zion favored regulation of immigration by the Jewish Agency, the passage of modern laws protecting labor, extension of existing municipal autonomy, increase in government provision of social services, and more government activity in developing the economic potential of the country. In all cases, the desires of labor were to be ascertained before action was undertaken.⁶ These proposals were not radically different from the ideas put forth by the Zeire Zion.

Zeire Zion

The Zeire Zion was a relatively new organization when its American arm was begun in 1920. With the exception of philosopher Horace Kallen, a Brandeis supporter, most of its founders were members of the ZOA who opposed the policies of the Brandeis–Julian W. Mack administration. They included the young Emanuel Neumann, soon to make his mark in American Zionism, and Israel Goldberg, a writer who used the pseudonym Rufus Lears. They were determined to create “a progressive or radical wing of the Z. O. A.”⁷ The founders considered themselves non-Marxist socialists who constituted a “loyal subdivision” of the ZOA, and called for national ownership of the land and industry of Palestine, Aliyah, and emphasis on cultural activity. Marxists quickly but briefly took control of the group, and many of the founders dropped out.⁸ Non-Marxists, led by David Wertheim, Abraham Levy, David Rabelsky, and Benjamin Bronstein, regained

control of the Zeire Zion, but the only real leadership seems to have come from Chaim Arlosoroff, a Palestinian leader who spent much of the last half of the twenties in the United States. No comprehensive statement of the Zeire Zion philosophy was produced until 1928, but the organization apparently sought to stand "midway between General and Socialistic Zionism."⁹ It rejected the concept of class war and fostered agricultural colonization (particularly in the form of collective farms), besides the general purposes stated above.¹⁰ True to its name, the Zeire Zion concentrated its efforts on American youth.

Like the Poale Zion, the Zeire Zion was concerned with clarifying and expounding doctrine. Since it sought to attract the youth, such efforts were of primary importance. The most complete doctrinal statement during the twenties was Solomon Schiller's *Principles of Labor Zionism*. It was a work that almost could have been issued by the Poale Zion, and one whose contents indicate why the two labor groups found it so easy to cooperate in the late 1920's.¹¹ Early in this work Schiller stressed that, since it was a synthesis of nationalism and socialism, Labor Zionism could be realized fully only if the individual became a worker in Zion. This attitude led American Labor Zionism to become the only branch of the movement to stress Aliyah—immigration to Palestine. Although it cannot be documented, one consequence of this stress on Aliyah certainly was the Poale Zion's negative attitude toward the use of English. If the Jewish stay in America was to be temporary, Yiddish and Hebrew were sufficient. Moreover, Hebrew would serve as a link between the Jewish communities in Palestine and the diaspora.

Upon arrival in the Jewish homeland any honest labor was acceptable, but special virtue was attached to farm work. In part, this may have been a reflection of the emphasis on nature by late-nineteenth-century intellectuals in Russia, from whence came many of the early Labor Zionists. The goal was a return to simplicity and directness that would revitalize creative processes dulled by the artificiality associated with urban life. But it also had Jewish roots:

Many a time, in the lands of our dispersion, were we the controlling force in trade and industry, nor were our numbers trifling, and still we remained strangers, both in the eyes of our neighbors and in our own eyes. Only those who strike root in the soil of a country are its citizens. A nation whose labor binds it to its soil can never be uprooted.

While stressing the labor orientation of the Zeire Zion, Schiller placed equal emphasis on the movement's opposition to Marxism. Marxism, he held, was geared to an urban, capitalist environment unlike that of Palestine, and it ignored the nationalism and freedom of the will important to all Zionists. Moreover, both socialism and Zionism contained "sinister powers and perilous seeds of poison," but the synthesis of the two elements would "be able to mend the defects on both sides."

Avukah

The Zeire Zion spent much effort in the attempt to recruit members.¹² The most visible aspect of this attempt was the link forged between the Zeire Zion and Avukah, an unaffiliated organization of college-age Zionists, in 1928–29. Apparently the contact was initiated by Avukah president Max Rhoades, who wrote to Poale Zion headquarters inquiring as to Arlosoroff's availability as a speaker to Avukah chapters.¹³ Arlosoroff seized the opportunity, and Rhoades soon credited him for the close relationship that developed. Rhoades remained somewhat wary, disliking a too complete identification of his cultural organization with Arlosoroff's political group.¹⁴ Despite the shakiness of this partnership, which led to some mutual recriminations, Zeire Zion cooperated with Avukah in preparing a book of Zionist essays (*Hechalutz*), and two pamphlets—Schiller's *Principles* and *Theodor Herzl and We*.¹⁵ Evidently, this was one of the few attempts by any group of American Zionists to produce literature aimed at the growing market of English-speaking young adults. It was probably this rare show of interest that led to Arlosoroff's election to the board of Avukah.¹⁶ In view of Avukah's traditional link with the ZOA and the Louis Lipsky administration's claimed interest in cultural affairs, it is surprising that only with the support of labor were educational materials produced. At about the same time that the Zeire Zion–Avukah publications were issued, a pamphlet on the early Zionist hero Joseph Trumpeldor was issued by the Poale Zion youth organization.¹⁷ Only the *Young Judean*, a magazine for children, represented General Zionism in the publications field during the 1920's, and Arlosoroff did not hesitate to point with pride to the contribution of the Zeire Zion:

The powerful Zionist Organization, with its administrative staff and its financial possibilities and Lipsky's new cultural course, has not done even as much as this.

When I handed one of the copies of Schiller's pamphlet to Mr. Emanuel Neuman [*sic*], he said: "This is the first Zionist educational matter which I have seen published in America for years."¹⁸

No one in American Zionism could have been proud, however, that *Hechalutz* needed European and Palestinian authors for most of its articles—native youth had not been trained.

Fund-Raising Conflicts

Of the two Labor Zionist parties, the Poale Zion was the larger and more active during the 1920's. (Reliable membership figures do not exist, but the total for both groups and their auxiliaries probably was little over 10,000 at any time during the decade.)¹⁹ Fund-raising was a key activity and a source of repeated conflict. Poale Zion's first campaign of the twenties was creative, well-timed (at least at first), and successful. It was creative in that it was not money that was sought, but tools and machinery that could be sent directly to the farmers and laborers of Palestine. The campaign began in the early months of 1921, a time when neither the fading Brandeis-Mack administration of the ZOA nor any other Zionist organization was involved in other campaigns. For one or both of these reasons, besides its inherent utility, it was supported by all elements in American Zionism.²⁰ Even this led to some grumbling, as the Poale Zion seemed to lose control of the campaign: "This is not a Poale Zion affair. The matter is in the hands of people who look upon it as a charity affair undertaken by them as an independent effort."²¹

When the fight for control of the ZOA began in May 1920, the campaign slowed drastically. Since labor openly and overwhelmingly supported Lipsky and WZO leader Chaim Weizmann, aid from the Brandeisians dried up. Equally important, the insurgents were so absorbed in the controversy that they had neither the time nor the interest to remain active in the tools campaign.²² Nevertheless, this unique campaign netted some \$80,000—\$100,000 worth of equipment for shipment to Palestine.²³ In the years to come, the tools campaign developed into the *Gewerkschaften* campaign and, finally, into the Hista-

drut campaign. At the same time, the Poale Zion became one of the constituents of the umbrella Zionist campaign, Keren Hayesod (Foundation Fund), and this dualism in fund-raising was a frequent source of strife. Briefly entering the equation was the Keren Hechalutz (Pioneer Fund), organized by the Zeire Zion, the major labor drive of 1922 and 1923.²⁴

Despite the Poale Zion's support of the Keren Hayesod, the Jewish laboring class was slow to support the new fund. Leaders of Labor Zionism blamed the Keren Hayesod's administration, claiming that nothing was done to explain labor's stake in the fund. To correct this problem, the Poale Zion recommended the creation of a special "labor bureau."²⁵ A Labor Propaganda Bureau was created but proved ineffectual, and after eight months the Keren Hayesod was ready to eliminate it.²⁶ Still, creation of this special arm at labor's behest indicates great respect for the potential, if not the power, of the Poale Zion, a conclusion supported by inclusion of representatives from that group on major committees.²⁷ But the Poale Zion still was caught up in a two-front battle—it tried to gain further concessions from the Keren Hayesod while attempting to coax increased support from Jewish labor. To a large extent, success in the second of these endeavors was a prerequisite to gains in the first.

The first large stride came in 1924 when, for the first time, the Jewish labor movement supported a campaign to aid Jewish workers in Palestine.²⁸ Previously, Jewish socialists, led by Abraham Cahan and the *Jewish Daily Forward*, had been indifferent to Palestine and Zionism when not actively opposed. In the fall of 1923 this labor solidarity was cracked by Max Pine, head of the United Hebrew Trades. Pine, working with the Poale Zion, organized the National Labor Committee for Organized Jewish Labor in Palestine and persuaded his union to lend its name (*Gewerkschaften*—"trades") to the new fund-raising campaign.²⁹ This new labor support was offset by a decline in aid from other Zionist groups, probably because of concentration on the Keren Hayesod, but \$51,000 was raised.³⁰

Two years later the *Gewerkschaften* campaign became permanent, and some \$113,000 was collected.³¹ The great leap in receipts reflects the inroads made into Jewish unionism by Pine and the Poale Zion. Alex Rose (Milliners), Abraham Miller (Tailors), and Abraham Shiplacoff (United Hebrew Trades) all opened the doors of their unions to

representatives of the *Gewerkschaften* campaign.³² More important, Cahan no longer threw his weight against Zionism.

Labor Zionism and the Non-Zionist Socialists

In 1922, when Poale Zion's main task as a constituent of the Keren Hayesod was to interest Jewish labor in Zion, one of its leaders exhibited mercurial changes in mood. On May 18, Pinchas Cruso wrote despairingly to Emanuel Neumann that efforts to penetrate the Jewish unions were seriously handicapped by the opposition of the *Forward* to both Zionism and the Keren Hayesod. Four days later he wrote again. More optimistic now, he held out hope that Labor Zionist propaganda soon would convert some elements of Jewish labor.³³ The first of these messages was the more realistic. The *Forward* was the most influential Yiddish paper in America, especially among leftists, and its policy—set by Cahan—was adamant. Unless and until Cahan moderated his opposition, the Poale Zion was doomed to large doses of frustration, interspersed with an occasional minor success.

With much of the Jewish left, Cahan rejected Labor Zionism's agricultural bias because of the orthodox equation of socialism with an industrial proletariat.³⁴ Many doubted the feasibility of Palestine as a solution to Jewry's problems, and all were ideologically antinationalist. But Cahan appreciated the value of Zionism in combating assimilation and recognized the leading role of labor in the Yishuv (Palestinian Jewish community). Thus, when he visited Palestine in 1925, the Labor Zionists made a major effort to convert him. Aiding them was the stop Cahan made in Poland, for Polish Jewry was undergoing a particularly hard time and Cahan recognized the need for a refuge, even if it was a temporary palliative. Cahan was not a Zionist when he returned to America, but neither was he an anti-Zionist, and the *Forward* reflected his shift. His positive reports, especially on the institutions run by labor's Histadrut, showed early results in increased union support of the *Gewerkschaften* campaign, an effect that was widely recognized.³⁵

From that time on, the Poale Zion had increasing success in its efforts to rally Jewish labor, and even gained some support outside of Jewish ranks. Milwaukee socialist leader Victor Berger announced his support of Zionism in 1925, and the American Federation of Labor, at

its 1928 convention, endorsed the Histadrut campaign.³⁶ Early in 1926, B. C. Vladeck, a leader of the militantly anti-Zionist Jewish Labor Bund, admitted that it was the community's duty to help those Jews who (misguidedly) chose to go to Palestine, praised Zionism's tendency to counteract assimilation among the middle class, and wholeheartedly supported the nascent Hebrew University.³⁷ During the same year, Cahan and Vladeck made public addresses admitting a modification of their previous attitude toward Zionism, and pointing to the sad situation of East European Jewry as the primary factor behind this change of heart. Both stressed that they were not converted, however, and gave their limited support grudgingly. Witness Vladeck's statement: "The situation of the Jews in Poland, Lithuania, Roumania and other countries is so distressing that nothing that has any bearing on Jewish life can be ignored by the labor movement. Palestine is connected with the situation of the Jews."³⁸

Labor's turnabout on Zionism was neither swift nor complete, as Vladeck's comments suggest. In fact, two Jewish labor conventions took opposite stands in January 1926. One, attended by representatives of friendly unions, the Poale Zion, and the Zeire Zion, came out strongly for renewing the *Gewerkschaften* campaign. The other, sponsored by the *Forward*-oriented Jewish Socialist Federation, adopted a resolution opposed to Zionism and Palestine, but expressed sympathy for the difficulties of Jewish workingmen in Zion. The resolution also opposed special drives for Palestine, barring development of a special situation.³⁹ As late as 1928, Pine was complaining of Jewish socialist opposition.⁴⁰ But advances outnumbered reverses. Cahan even addressed the opening rally of the 1927 *Gewerkschaften* campaign. He denied being a Zionist but admitted sympathizing with the movement, and promised to "do all in my power to help Palestine labor."⁴¹ In what seems to have been a major coup, but one that went virtually unremarked, the International Ladies Garment Workers went on record in support of Jewish labor in Palestine in 1928.⁴²

The United Palestine Appeal

Meanwhile, the Poale Zion remained within the orbit of the Keren Hayesod, but it was an oft-strained relationship. Dominated by the ZOA and fully aware of the success of labor's separate fund drives, the

Keren Hayesod's directors sought to minimize the percentage of its funds that would be allotted to Poale Zion institutions. With their increased independent success, however, the Labor Zionists felt they would bring more into the coffers of the Keren Hayesod, and demanded more money for Poale Zion projects. A major confrontation occurred in 1925. Toward the end of the year, plans were drawn up for the first United Palestine Appeal drive and, simultaneously, for the *Gewerkschaften* campaign. To avoid conflicting campaigns, leaders of both began negotiating for a joint effort.

The two groups were far apart. The UPA planned to try to raise \$5,000,000, and created alternative budgets with allocations dependent upon the amount actually obtained. Under the terms of the priority budget, the Poale Zion would be guaranteed \$67,000, and all money collected by the Poale Zion would be earmarked by them. However, the Poale Zion was to agree not to approach anyone who had already contributed either to the Keren Hayesod or the Jewish National Fund, if such approach might hurt either of those funds.⁴³ This was patently unacceptable to the Poale Zion, especially since it was planning a \$250,000 drive. The UPA proposal was rejected on the dual grounds of a guarantee insufficient to maintain their institutions and "as a matter of principle we cannot agree to have our labor institutions take a secondary place in the apportionment of the funds."⁴⁴

Obviously sincere in its position, the Poale Zion telegraphed to its comrades in Palestine that it would conduct an independent but coordinate campaign for the full \$250,000.⁴⁵ And the Labor Zionists did not retreat in subsequent negotiations. Emanuel Neumann complained that in some cities Poale Zion members refused to cooperate in the UPA campaign, apparently under instructions from national headquarters, "unless and until the Fund which the Poale Zion is interested in is included."⁴⁶ Unmoved, Poale Zion's general secretary replied by wishing the UPA success, but refusing to cooperate unless the UPA in any locality agreed to set aside a sufficient percentage for labor's Palestinian projects and the *Gewerkschaften* campaign happened to coincide with that of the UPA. Moreover, in conjunction with the United Hebrew Trades, the Poale Zion would conduct a separate national campaign for labor institutions.⁴⁷ The relevant sources appear to have been lost, but based on the correspondence, it would seem that a united campaign probably took place only where the Poale Zion was

strong enough to compel acceptance of its point of view.

Labor's Conflict with the ZOA and Keren Hayesod

Nineteen twenty-six passed without a major confrontation between the Poale Zion and the ZOA, but fund-raising again was a source of trouble in late 1927. At the Zionist Congress in Basle that summer, the General Zionists had urged passage of a resolution prohibiting the fractions from independently conducting campaigns for projects partly funded by the General Zionist budget. The motion was defeated, but Lipsky, in his message to the American Poale Zion convention in October, again raised the issue. He feared that a multiplicity of drives would stimulate conflict and competition injurious to the cause and, especially, to the ZOA. The Poale Zion was not receptive. Labor Zionists were angered by the diversion of funds to bail out the American Zion Commonwealth, a step that meant decreased support for labor's institutions. Moreover, labor cared little for the ZOA, which it saw as an organization so internally divided as to be losing its influence rapidly.⁴⁸ Poale Zionists were even more upset with the UPA for what they considered the immoral and unconstitutional act of

excluding us . . . from representation in the directorium. . . . You are trying to justify your deed by our participation in the Gewerkschaften Palestine Campaign . . . which is not a competition to but a completion of the U.P.A. We could expect from Zionists a sincere appreciation of our efforts to convert the indifferent, opposing Jewish labor elements to the cause of Palestine.⁴⁹

In consequence, labor continued its separate campaign. The opening rally, addressed by representatives of the Poale Zion, Jewish unions, and Palestinian labor, reportedly raised \$125,000 of its \$300,000 goal, the largest drive organized to that time.⁵⁰

Dissension continued through the remaining years of the decade. In May 1928, the Poale Zion publicized the complaints of its Philadelphia chapter. After participating actively in the local UPA campaign, the Philadelphians denied the ZOA's right to monopolize UPA committees and, even more emphatically, the ZOA's right to use contributions to the UPA to defray ZOA expenses, and to assume that part of the contribution could be used as ZOA membership dues.⁵¹ From 1927 to 1929 the Poale Zion also conducted campaigns for its Politi-

cal Fund. This activity brought charges of interference with Palestinian campaigns, but Poale Zion was supported in its position by Weizmann.⁵² Nonetheless, ill-feeling increased.

Differences over fund-raising procedure also divided the Poale Zion and Zeire Zion, though the two labor groups continued to cooperate in the *Gewerkschaften* campaigns. Unlike the leaders of the Poale Zion, Arlosoroff opposed separate campaigns by the Zionist fractions: "it is only securing or soliciting of investment capital . . . which should be allowed to be carried on independently." He admitted that opposition to unity existed among Labor Zionists, but claimed that the General Zionists and UPA authorities had shown no interest in reaching agreement with the Labor Zionists.⁵³ In view of Lipsky's earlier plea for united action, the reply of ZOA leader Morris Rothenberg is surprising. Rothenberg doubted that Labor Zionist inclusion in the UPA would benefit either labor's institutions or the UPA. Actually, he continued, a primary object of the *Gewerkschaften* campaign was "to interest organized labor," and a merger with the UPA would prove counter-productive.⁵⁴

Since there is no reason to doubt Rothenberg's devotion to Zionism, his cold reaction probably reflects the measured opinion that separate fund-raising campaigns provided the best possibility of maximum benefit for all Zionist endeavors. Throughout the 1920's, then, Poale Zion remained on the fringe of the Keren Hayesod. The world organization was a constituent, but except in the early part of the decade, the American branch remained officially aloof.⁵⁵ It was an anomalous position, but caused no serious problems, and members of Poale Zion probably were active in every Keren Hayesod and UPA campaign.

Poale Zion's Ongoing Problems

Fund-raising was not, of course, the only Labor Zionist activity during the twenties, though, as with all Zionist groups, it consumed an inordinate amount of time. Before the first tools campaign, a variety of problems nagged at the Poale Zion. One was a carry-over from the previous decade, when the organization split over differences in socialist theory and demands for ideological conformity. The effect of the Red Scare in this schism is problematic, but one authority concluded that the hysteria of the day did not hinder the growth of Labor

Zionism.⁵⁶ There is no evidence that the split was a serious hindrance to progress either, but the Poale Zion convention of 1921 passed a resolution designed to stimulate reunification. The members voted to readmit, without imposing conditions, "those who had retained the greater portion of the principles of Poale Zionism," provided that the "supremacy of the Central committee" was admitted.⁵⁷ There is no record indicating the number of schismatics who reaffiliated.

Other problems at the opening of the decade included a difficulty in attracting new members because of the almost universal use of Yiddish. There were only about ten English-speaking branches in the United States.⁵⁸ The Poale Zionists also were frustrated by the slow progress toward recreating the American Jewish Congress. They blamed the (Brandeisian) ZOA which, supposedly, was willing to torpedo the Congress in the hopes of attracting funds for the Palestine Restoration Fund from the wealthy members of the American Jewish Committee.⁵⁹ There may have been problems of leadership as well, for the organization's correspondence reveals considerable reliance on the activity of Rabbi Judah Magnes, a liberal with a wide following in the Jewish community.⁶⁰ More serious was the organization's financial plight. Because of its socialist ideology, large contributors were rare, and overdue bills were the norm.⁶¹ The party's Yiddish daily, *Die Zeit*, went bankrupt. There was a normal twofold result of these financial difficulties: a demoralized membership and decreasing contributions, for fear that donations would be diverted to pay the bills of the Poale Zion.⁶² Apparently this fear was not entirely unfounded. One local leader admitted misuse of funds and appealed to the ZOA for relief in order to rehabilitate the Poale Zion in the minds of Jewish workers, an appeal that was supported by a Palestinian General Zionist disturbed by the lack of money received for shares in the Worker's Bank.⁶³

As the decade progressed, the situation of the Poale Zion improved. Collections for the *Gewerkschaften* fund increased, the American Jewish Congress was firmly reestablished, and the financial position stabilized, probably because such expensive projects as *Die Zeit* were avoided. The Pioneer Women was organized, and, perhaps because it announced a willingness to accept "a progressive nationalistic doctrine" short of socialism, Young Poale Zion grew.⁶⁴ In 1925 renewed stress was put on fostering Aliyah, and a short-lived training farm for potential chalutzim opened.⁶⁵ Emphasis on immigration was a recur-

rent theme in Labor Zionism., It again appeared after the 1929 Arab massacres, when a conference of Zionist-socialist groups agreed to promote immigration, and the Young Poale Zion again created a training farm.⁶⁶ Like the Zeire Zion, the Poale Zion sought closer relations with Avukah, but with less success. It provided speakers and propaganda, but apparently did not adopt Rhoades's suggested manner of penetration:

Has nothing been done regarding my suggestion that the Poale Zion authorize certain of the Young Poale Zion members to join Avukah, as "associates" who would not thereby become obligated to the Z. O. A.?

I think it is very important that a favorable decision be made on the proposition from the standpoint of the Poale Zion as well as our own. Some of your leaders could exercise a very notable influence in the Avukah.⁶⁷

The Poale Zion also stepped gingerly into the field of English-language journalism, giving some support to the *Vanguard*, a labor-oriented weekly.⁶⁸

The Extension of the Jewish Agency

With one exception, the nonmonetary issues and events that agitated Labor Zionists in the 1920's were ephemeral. For example, the Poale Zionists were upset when Hadassah annulled its agreement with the Kupat Cholim, Histadrut's "Sick Fund."⁶⁹ Of less intense but longer-lasting concern were differences with the ZOA and WZO over policy fulfillment. All Zionist parties officially supported large-scale immigration to Palestine, a position unacceptable to Britain because of Arab opposition. When depression hit the Palestinian economy in the middle twenties, General Zionists moderated their importunities. Labor Zionists felt that this most hurt settlers of their party. Men of means would comprise most of the newcomers allowed to enter the Holy Land, and the Poale Zion complained repeatedly of the un-Zionist acceptance of British restrictionism.⁷⁰

The exceptional issue was extension of the Jewish Agency. Labor's reaction to the early attempts to forge an agreement with the non-Zionists has not survived. In all likelihood, however, it was not a joyful prospect, since labor had little in common with the Louis Marshall-led non-Zionists and would not have looked forward to dilution of its

strength in pro-Palestinian councils. In addition, the Poale Zion had clashed with the American Jewish Committee on the issue of the American Jewish Congress. On the other hand, it had been the lone Zionist organization that never attacked the AJC-Joint Distribution Committee's Russian colonization plan.⁷¹ By 1928, labor's position seems to have become one of unhappy acceptance of the inevitable extension. Arlosoroff complained to Weizmann of the lack of labor representation on the negotiating committee with the non-Zionists, and the Poale Zion's Baruch Zuckerman offered Marshall a list of non-Zionist labor people for consideration as non-Zionist members of the Agency.⁷² These seem to have been attempts to mitigate the effect of broadening the Jewish Agency, not hints of satisfaction with the course of affairs. The report of the expert commission sent to investigate Palestinian conditions (by agreement of the Zionists and non-Zionists) was greeted scornfully by labor, which called it "a plan which intends to construct a homeland based upon private concessions and opposes national enterprises, allowing no preparation for a sound basis for Jewish labor, closing the doors for Jewish colonization, hindering reforms that will raise the standard of living,—such a plan makes it impossible ever to attain a Jewish majority."⁷³ One Poale Zion leader even considered the agreement highly destructive of Zionism, a blow at the spirit that was the moving force in the Jewish people's return to Zion.⁷⁴

Conclusion

As the decade ended, Labor Zionism was in an uncertain state. Poale and Zeire Zionists both were upset at settlement policies in Palestine. The Jewish Agency was an unknown quantity. And the effects of the still young depression could not be gauged. Still, both labor groups had enjoyed considerable success in the preceding years. The 1929 elections to the international Zionist Congress were a sign of that labor success. Labor attracted approximately one-fourth of the total vote and elected eleven of the forty-two American delegates.⁷⁵ Moreover, Poale Zion and Zeire Zion were on the verge of a merger that held forth the prospect of future gains. They had demonstrated through the 1920's that American Zionism was not a monolith, and that the socialist approach was an attractive force to America's Jews.

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Notes

1. Nachman Syrkin, "Moses Hess," in Marie Syrkin, *Nachman Syrkin, Socialist Zionist: A Biographical Memoir* (New York: Herzl Press and Sharon Books, 1961), pp. 306–315.

2. This paragraph is based on C. Bezalel Sherman, *Labor Zionism in America: Its History, Growth and Program* (New York: Labor Zionist Organization of America—Poale Zion, 1957), pp. 12–13.

3. Minutes, meeting of May 7, 1920, Labor Zionist Organization Papers, reel 1501, American Jewish Archives (AJA) (Cincinnati, Ohio).

4. *Buffalo Morning Express*, November 26–29, 1920.

5. Central Committee of the Jewish Socialist Labor Party Poale Zion of America, "To the Members of the Non-Zionist Conference on Palestine" [October(?) 1928], Felix Warburg Papers, box 248, AJA.

6. [Isaac Zaar], "The Poale Zion Program," *Vanguard* 3 (June 1929): 45–47.

7. "Minutes of the First Meeting of the Committee of Ten," May 10, 1920, Poale Zion/Zeire Zion Papers, box 1, Zionist Archives and Library (ZAL), New York. In his memoirs, Neumann makes no mention of Kallen in this context, which is surprising, since Kallen was elected president. Cf. Emanuel Neumann, *In the Arena: An Autobiographical Memoir* (New York: Herzl Press, 1976), p. 49, and *Buffalo Morning Express*, November 27, 1920.

8. Neumann, *In the Arena*, p. 49.

9. "Manual for the Use of the American Delegates to the Fifteenth Zionist Conference," undated [1927], Abraham Tulin papers, folder 11, ZAL.

10. *Ibid.*; Ezekiel Rabinowitz to Louis Marshall, November 26, 1925, Louis Marshall Papers, box 134, AJA.

11. Solomon Schiller, *Principles of Labor Zionism* (New York: Zionist Labor Party "Hitachduth" of America, 1928), reprinted in *Seeds of Conflict, Series 2; Palestine, Zionism and the Levant, 1912–1946; The Debate—II* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprints, 1974). The material in this paragraph and the following is from pp. 5, 12, 13, 24–25. For the cooperation between the two groups, see LZO Papers, reels 1518, 1519, and 1591.

12. This is certainly true of the closing years of the decade, but there is virtually no source material available that is dated earlier than 1928.

13. Rhoades to I. Hamlin, April 30, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1518.

14. Rhoades to Maurice Schochatt, August 30, 1928, and Rhoades to Arlosoroff, September 26, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1519.

15. Arlosoroff to Rhoades, October 5, 1928, [Rhoades] to Arlosoroff, November 8, 1928, Rhoades to S. Bookspan(?), January 27, 1929, and Arlosoroff's form letters to leading Zionists of January 24, 1929, and January 29, 1929, LZO Papers, reel 1519.

16. See Avukah circular letter of October 15, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1521.

17. See Dov Hos to Poale-Zion Youth Movement, May 14, 1929, LZO Papers, reel 1520.

18. Arlosoroff to Pinchas Rosenbleuth, January 24, 1929, LZO Papers, reel 1519.

19. Available estimates on which this figure is based are: Zeire Zion, 1924–25, 3,000 (Leon Rubenstein, "Tz'ire Zion Hitahdut of America," in *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, ed. Raphael Patai [New York: Herzl Press and McGraw-Hill, 1971], p. 1139); Pioneer Women,

2,000 (*Pioneer Woman*, July 1927, p. 1, and November 1929, pp. 1–2); Young Poale Zion, 1924, 1,200 ([J. Schneider] to Young Poale Zion of Minneapolis, July 28, 1924, LZO Papers, reel 1588). No estimate for Poale Zion is available. Since it received almost double the Zeire Zion vote in the 1929 Zionist Congress elections, I presume its high point to have been a membership approximating 6,000.

20. See correspondence of February–March 1921, LZO Papers, reel 1503. In an interview with the author (June 2, 1978), Pinchas Cruso stressed the cooperation afforded by the ZOA both for the tools campaign and for the Workers' Bank, begun about the same time.

21. Samuel Finkler to Buntchick [*sic*], May 6, 1921, LZO Papers, reel 1503.

22. Herman Seidel to I. [*sic*] Bonchik, May 11, 1921, LZO Papers, reel 1503.

23. "Report to the Poale Zion Convention on Tools and Machinery Sent to Palestine," May 1, 1921(?), LZO Papers, reel 1503.

24. See *Baltimore Jewish Times*, October 5, 1923.

25. [Isaac Hamlin] to Administration Committee, Keren Hayesod Bureau, June 27, 1922, LZO Papers, reel 1506; [Hamlin] to Executive Committee of the Keren Hayesod, August 10, 1922, LZO Papers, reel 1507.

26. Keren Hayesod, "Secretary's Daily Report," April 15, 1923, LZO Papers, reel 1508.

27. See Morris Rothenberg to Hamlin, December 26, 1923, LZO Papers, reel 1510.

28. This has been the generally accepted view since that time (see, for example, *American Jewish World* [St. Paul and Minneapolis], March 14, 1924). Jacob Katzman, however, remembers some labor involvement as early as 1918, and increasing interest beginning with the visit of Palestinian labor leaders Manya Shohat and Berl Katznelson in 1921 (interview with the author, December 16, 1977).

29. Hyman J. Fliegel, *The Life and Times of Max Pine: A History of the Jewish Labor Movement in the U.S.A. during the Last Part of the 19th Century and the First Part of the 20th Century* (New York: Hyman J. Fliegel, 1959), pp. 20–21. Pine also sent out a form letter requesting funds. A copy, undated (March 1924), is in LZO Papers, reel 1511.

30. Fliegel, *Max Pine*, p. 28. Individuals from other Zionist groups helped, but the organizations played no role, according to both Katzman and Cruso.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

32. Melech Epstein, *Jewish Labor in U.S.A., 1914–1952: An Industrial, Political and Cultural History of the Jewish Labor Movement* (New York: Trade Union Sponsoring Committee, 1953), p. 410.

33. Both letters are in LZO Papers, reel 1506.

34. This paragraph, except where otherwise indicated, is based on Albert Waldinger, "Abraham Cahan and Palestine," *Jewish Social Studies* 39 (Winter–Spring 1977): 75–92.

35. *New Palestine*, December 18, 1925; *Baltimore Jewish Times*, December 25, 1925.

36. *New Palestine*, June 12, 1925; C. Bezalel Sherman, "American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations," in *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, ed. R. Patai, p. 29.

37. Waldinger, "Cahan and Palestine," p. 87.

38. *Baltimore Jewish Times*, March 26, 1926.

39. *Ibid.*, January 22, 1926.

40. Fliegel, *Max Pine*, pp. 43–47, quotes Cahan's speech of January 1, 1928.

41. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 39.

42. "Belated But Welcome," *Vanguard* 2 (June 1928): 45–46.

43. Lipsky to Hamlin, November 24, 1925, LZO Papers, reel 1012.

44. Hamlin to Lipsky, November 27, 1925, LZO Papers, reel 1515.

45. Hamlin to *Ovdim*, Tel Aviv, November 30, 1925, LZO Papers reel 1014.
46. Neumann to Hamlin, December 16, 1925, LZO Papers, reel 1516.
47. Hamlin to Neumann, December 21, 1925, LZO Papers, reel 1516.
48. [Isaac Zaar], "The Change of Front," *Vanguard* 1 (November 1927): 6–8. Also see Ben Abraham, "Zionist High Finance," *ibid.* (December 1927): 16–18, and H. Fineman, "The Fifteenth Zionist Congress," *Pioneer Woman*, October 1927, pp. 4–6.
49. Letter fragment, (?) to Board of Directors, United Palestine Appeal, November 9, 1927, LZO Papers, reel 1519.
50. *New York Times*, January 2, 1928.
51. "Palestine Labor News," May 18, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1518.
52. "Palestine Labor News," September 28, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1519, and Weizmann to Berl Locker, September 26, 1929, LZO Papers, reel 1604.
53. Arlosoroff to Morris Rothenberg, September 20, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1519.
54. Rothenberg to Arlosoroff, October 5, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1519.
55. A list of groups cooperating in the UPA does not include the Poale Zion (in I. M. Rubinow to I. H. Rubin, October 10, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1519), but the Poale Zion was invited to a UPA conference as "a constituent of the Keren Hayesod" (Bernard Stone to Hamlin, October 16, 1928, *ibid.*).
56. Zosa Szajkowski, *Jews, Wars, and Communism*, vol. 2, *The Impact of the 1919–1920 Red Scare on American Jewish Life* (New York: Ktav, 1974), p. 39.
57. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, July 6, 1921.
58. Saul Carson to H. Ehrenreich, January 21, 1920, LZO Papers, reel 1587. Even the youth groups were devoted to Yiddish—see Samuel Grand, "A History of Zionist Youth Organizations in the United States from Their Inception to 1940" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1958), pp. 204–205, and [S. Katz] to H. Silver, September 26, 1929, LZO Papers, reel 1592.
59. See copy of article from *Jewish Chronicle* of March 5, 1920, in Louis Marshall Papers, box 55 (AJA), and Harry Schneiderman to Marshall, May 28, 1920, *ibid.* My thanks to James Marshall and George Marshall for permission to use the Marshall Papers.
60. Correspondence in LZO Papers, reels 1500–1505.
61. E. Gorman to S. Bonchek, February 23, 1921, LZO Papers, reel 1503.
62. P. Cruso to S. Bonchek, March 21, 1922, LZO Papers, reel 1505, and B. Henkin to I. Hamlin, December 17, 1922, *ibid.*, reel 1508.
63. [?] to S. Kaplanski, January 11, 1923, and Arthur Rupp to George Halpern, March 1, 1923, LZO Papers, reel 1508.
64. [Ben V. Coder] to Louis Behlfer, February 18, 1927, LZO Papers, reel 1590. Socialism again was emphasized at the end of the decade—"YPZ Editorial Bulletin," April 10, 1929, LZO Papers, reel 1591. Also see the report to the Eighth YPZ Convention, 1929, in *ibid.*, reel 1592.
65. *Baltimore Jewish Times*, January 9, 1925; [?] to Dr. Palewsky, April 1, 1925, LZO Papers, reel 1012; [P. Cruso] to S. S. Bailey, July 8, 1927, *ibid.*, reel 1517.
66. *American Jewish World*, September 27, 1929; Grand, "Zionist Youth Organizations," p. 216; interview with Katzman.
67. [Coder?] to Max Rhoades, March 9 and March 2, 1928, Joseph L. Rubin to I. Hamlin, April 26, 1928, and Rhoades to Coder, April 26, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1518.
68. See, for example, [Coder] to [Isaac] Zaar, April 12, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1591.
69. [Cruso] to Mrs. I. Lindheim, March 8, 1927, LZO Papers, reel 1516.
70. [Isaac Zaar], "The Zionist Congress," *Vanguard* 1 (November 1927): 5–6; [Zaar], untitled, *ibid.*, 2 (May 1928): 47–48; Hayim Fineman, "The Failure of the Palestine Executive," *ibid.*, 2 (July 1928): 29–32; M. Schiffman, "The Need for a Zionist Opposition," *ibid.*, 2 (September 1928): 23–26.

71. Waldinger, "Cahan and Palestine," p. 83.
72. [Arlosoroff] to Weitzman [sic], November 20, 1928, LZO Papers, reel 1519; [Zuckerman] to Marshall, November 23, 1928, *ibid.*
73. Israel Mereminsky, "The First Conflict," *Vanguard* 2 (July 1928): 11-15.
74. [S. Katz] to H. Pine, June 17, 1929, LZO Papers, reel 1592.
75. Results compiled by the author from partial statistics found in the Jacob de Haas Papers, reel 29 (ZAL), LZO Papers, reel 1592, and Marshall Papers, box 1604.