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The Image of the United States of America  
As Presented In  
Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah, 1879-1882

Susan Lynn Miller

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for Ordination

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## Digest

Between 1879-1882, Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah published approximately 280 articles about the United States of America. Considering the fact that these East European Hebrew periodicals were intended for a specific readership, were geared toward the dissemination of a particular message, and reached only a small percentage of the total Jewish population in the countries of Eastern Europe, it is remarkable that they devoted so much space to American affairs. Ranging in topic from American industry and natural resources to American Jewish agricultural colonization, American Jewish aid to East European Jewish immigrants, the American government, and the American Jewish community, these articles presented a certain image about the United States of America. The purpose of this thesis is to describe that image.

In preparing to write this thesis, I translated from Hebrew to English all 280 articles cited above. While I undertook to adhere faithfully to the Hebrew text, it was necessary to render idiomatic, rather than literal, translations. The florid and involved Hebrew phraseology did not lend easily to colloquial English expression.

The attentive reader will discover contextual inaccuracies in many of the articles. Rather than emend or omit these passages, I retained them because they too contributed to the composite picture of the United States of America as presented in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah.

The first chapter of this thesis is comprised of articles which describe the United States of America as the technological and natural wonder of the world. Articles in the second chapter relate American Jews' efforts to establish East European Jewish immigrants in the invigorating and independence-fostering avocation of the farmer, while articles in the third chapter focus on other efforts by established American Jews to assist the East European Jewish immigrants. The fourth chapter contains articles about the American government, including the presidency, the electoral process, Congress, Jewish officials, and minorities, and the fifth chapter is comprised of articles which paint a picture of the multidimensional matrix of Jewish life in the United States. A concluding chapter describes the overall image of the United States of America as presented in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah, 1879-1882.

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Susan Lynn Miller

Cincinnati, Ohio

February, 1988

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## Introduction

The history of the United States and the history of the Jews in the United States can be gleaned from the pages of American and American Jewish history books, but the spirit of the time and the experiences of the people in their daily lives can be captured only from the journals they left behind. Between 1879-1882, hundreds of articles, written by American Jewish correspondents or reprinted from American newspapers, were submitted to two East European Hebrew periodicals, Ha-Meliz, a representative of the Haskalah movement, published in St. Petersburg and edited by Alexander Zederbaum, and Ha-Zefirah, a Warsaw publication containing general news and scientific articles. While the articles in these newspapers, which were published weekly, covered the same time period, they did not necessarily cover the same material. Ha-Meliz was more politically oriented.

The appeal of the United States as presented in the East European Hebrew press cannot be discounted as a factor impelling East European Jews to immigrate to the United States. However, this appeal was not widespread. Rather, it was limited to only a handful of people who were able to read Hebrew. Unfortunately, it is impossible to correlate the relationship between these articles and peoples' decisions to migrate to the United States. Nevertheless, the articles about America in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah shed interesting light on what impressed East European Jews about the United States.

The purpose of this thesis is to reconstruct the image of the United States, as presented in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah between



1879-1882, by translating and examining articles about the United States, particularly in the fields of American industry and natural resources, American Jewish agricultural colonization, American Jewish aid to East European Jewish immigrants, the American government, and the American Jewish community.

## Chapter One

### American Industry and Natural Resources

Between 1879-1882, a period during which the United States was establishing new phases of technology, articles about the American aptitude for invention were popular in Ha-Zefirah, the newspaper containing scientific articles. Reporters were impressed by the ability of Americans to substitute human skills with mechanical devices, replace animate power with inanimate power, and turn raw materials into finished industrial products.<sup>1</sup>

"Of all the countries of the world, there is none like America as far as new inventions are concerned."<sup>2</sup> These words by an American Jewish correspondent for Ha-Zefirah revealed his fascination with American industrial technology. Indirectly, they compared the superiority of American technology to the nascency of industrial progress in Eastern Europe. This comparison, in fact, was the underlying basis in Ha-Zefirah's articles about American industry. It allowed readers to contrast the advanced technological conditions in the United States with the archaic practices in Eastern Europe.

American industrial expansion in the nineteenth century was the result of several factors, including large deposits of coal and the possession of a common language with Great Britain. The latter factor made possible the adaptation and utilization of British inventions. Furthermore, a complex of geographic factors were of great importance :

The East Coast had good natural water transportation....Beyond the Appalachian Mountains, level land made for cheap canal construction, while the Great Lakes and the vast Mississippi River system opened the continent east of the Rockies to barges and

steamboats. These level north-central lands also lent themselves to cultivation of farms by machinery and hence to the production of great surpluses to feed industrial workers.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these factors, the rapidly growing population and the high rate of migration to new farms, towns, and cities created unprecedented demands for inexpensive home and farm implements which could be mass produced. Overall,

American society was suited to the needs of industrial business. In the United States the remnants of feudalism were insignificant, money was the common measure of success, and all occupations that made large profits were prestigious....Confident of the support of state and national governments and unafraid of foreign invasions, [American businessmen] did not hesitate to take long-term risks in economic development.<sup>4</sup>

The same conditions were not extant in Eastern Europe during the first six decades of the nineteenth century. In the period during which the United States was establishing new phases of technology, Eastern Europe was locked in an economic freeze, which meant the absence of industrialization and the continuance of serfdom and severe economic conservatism.<sup>5</sup> In the 1860s, when serfdom legally was abolished in Russia, that country began to show signs of industrial progress, particularly in the field of agriculture. However, the transition from feudal agrarianism to a more industrial character did not reach its stride in Russia until the last decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> It was not surprising, therefore, that the East European Hebrew periodicals focused on American industrial technology which, at the time, was the wonder of the world.<sup>7</sup>

Awe and admiration were two words which amply described East European Jewish readers' fascination with the new revolutions in American industry. The following excerpts, primarily from Ha-Zefirah, explained some of the new inventions. It is interesting to note the variety of inventions reported and the detail with which the correspondents described them. Although it is impossible to determine the precise reason why the editor of Ha-Zefirah included each of these articles in his newspaper, it is possible to surmise the effect that each one had on the people reading it.

One industrial innovation was the use of steam heat which replaced coal and wood as the major source of energy in the United States. Within two weeks, two different articles appeared in Ha-Zefirah which told of this innovation :

Ha-Zefirah, February 11, 1879

A certain group intends to heat all the houses of the city by means of a machine which can blow steam through a great distance by means of hollow, iron tubes stretching under the ground. The machine has the power to push between two...to two-hundred pounds of steam to every house. People will be able to regulate the amount of heat they need.

In 1877, this system was tested in a city in New York over a distance of three miles. It heated forty houses and a big school. Now the mayor has permitted these people to try the system here in New York [City], but only in certain places and on the condition that the group pay \$50,000 as a pledge to cover injuries and damages resulting from this experiment. This project will begin next spring. If it succeeds, all the houses of the city will be heated in this way.

This invention will bring great benefit. The price of wood and coal will decrease and the enormous bother to prepare a fire will be prevented. In addition to this, the use of steam heat will be good for the city in general because it will reduce, by a quarter of a million dollars a year, the expense of removing ashes from the furnaces of the houses to the outskirts of the city. Also, the city's cost to heat the courthouses, the fire stations, and the public schools will be reduced by a third. Moreover, the group must pay a tax of three cents for every foot of pipe it lays under the ground, up to the sum of \$150.

Ha-Zefirah, January 28, 1879

In addition, the city will be able to remove snow and ice from its streets by means of steam heat, and when there is a fire in the city, steam heat, instead of human power, will be used to turn the wheels of the machines which throw water on the fire to extinguish it.

One can almost imagine the astonishment experienced by some East European Jews when they read this article. Living in a climate which was prone to harsh winters and in a society which depended on coal, wood, water, and human energy to supply power for most of its industrial needs, they must have been impressed by this new cost- and labor-efficient type of energy which transformed American industry.

Between 1879-1882, Ha-Zefirah reported the invention of other labor- and cost-saving devices. In May, 1880, it ran an article about a new coal recycling process which greatly reduced the price of coal. By mixing coal ashes and fragments, which customarily were discarded, with boiling tar, a new substance was produced which burned like coal but was far less expensive than coal. The result of this innovation was the reduction in price of all other services which required energy

generated by coal.<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, this article interested Ha-Zefirah's readers as much as the article about steam heat. Whether or not they tried to reproduce and implement this system in order to reduce their coal expenses can only be left to speculation.

Ha-Zefirah's interest in Americans' conservation of natural resources led to the inclusion of one article which described a new way to acquire wood without having to cut trees for lumber. By reusing society's wastes, new, less expensive materials were produced :

Ha-Zefirah, May 7, 1880

In America, a new mechanism recently was invented which makes wood from chaff and straw. This wood is hard and solid. It resembles both mahogany and a nut shell, and it takes polishing well. It is made by immersing straw into a type of alcohol which softens the straw. When the straw is washed, it thickens into wood so solid that it can be burned in fire. From it nice polished things can be made.

Two other articles in Ha-Zefirah focused on Americans' preoccupation with conserving their nation's natural resources. They described the replacement of wooden gas barrels with paper ones and a new method for preserving meat from spoilage :

Ha-Zefirah, August 27, 1882

In America, a very nice device recently was invented in the gas business. Until now, gas was carried in wooden barrels which were expensive because of the way in which they were made....They had to be well fastened so that the gas would not burst through the cracks....Nevertheless, they tended to break on the road from rocking and knocking against each other. Now the barrels are made from thick paper, without connections. Each barrel is made from one piece of paper, and it is fastened with iron hoops,

like a wooden barrel. The gas keeps well in the paper barrels because they are soft and do not break. In addition, they are less expensive than the wooden barrels. One barrel costs \$2. A shipment of fuel in barrels like these already was dispatched to Hamburg from America.

Ha-Zefirah, November 7, 1882

In America, a strange and wonderful device for preserving meat recently was invented. As is known, there are several ways to prevent putrefaction in meat, but the best and most appropriate method is known by the name 'braising.' Braising will not spoil the flavor of the meat. Not all methods of preservation are useful. It is impossible for some preservatives to penetrate thick pieces of meat. As a result, entire pieces of meat spoil. Therefore, one wise man invented a new and very desirable device which works in this manner :

While the animal is still living, [the man] opens a small hole, like a cupper, into which he inserts a small mouthpiece....From this he extracts a small grate and inserts the braiser water which, like a small stream, flows into the sinews. Afterwards, he closes the opening of the hole. The water mixes with the blood and spreads throughout the body of the animal and inside all the pieces of meat....When the animal is slaughtered, the meat will be tasty, and it will be able to be preserved for up to five or six weeks without spoiling because of the braiser water which was absorbed in all the pieces of meat.

Considering the fact that this article was published in November and accounting for a time lapse in the writing and publication of the article, it is likely that the problem of meat preservation was most acute during the spring and summer months. It is not surprising, therefore, that this article appeared in autumn. It is curious, however, that the writer did not address the relation between the process of braising

and the kashruth of the meat.

In addition to the meat industry, the newspaper industry did not like waste. In 1879, Ha-Zefirah told of one publisher who tried to minimize wasting paper by using a new type of newsprint :

Ha-Zefirah, March 4, 1879

The French newspaper Gaulois stated that in America a new newspaper called 'Handkerchief' recently appeared. It bears this name because it is printed on white cotton. It is very nice, and all who purchase it, after they read it, can use it like a handkerchief.

The American Industrial Revolution helped transform the United States from a country of small, isolated communities into a compact, economic and industrial unit. A basis for both this transformation and the new economy was the railroad which fostered the development of new areas of commerce and increased production in the steel, iron, and coal industries.<sup>9</sup> By 1882, the railroad was a common means of transportation in both the United States and Europe. Nevertheless, the Hebrew newspapers continued to publish articles about this means of transportation and some engineering feats devised in order for trains to reach their destinations :

Ha-Zefirah, April 18, 1882

In the state of California, in the vicinity of Sonoma County, there is a narrow and deep valley at the bottom of which are big, tall trees. In order for the railroad to pass through there, the trees were cut and girders were put in place.

Unfortunately, the railroad industry, like all industries, was not trouble free. Many people accidentally were injured or killed while constructing railroad lines or operating trains. In 1879, Ha-Zefirah



reported that the widow of a train engineer who was killed when two trains collided head on, demanded that the railroad company award her "ransom for the redemption of her husband's soul." The judge hearing the case decided that she should be given \$5,000. However, the widow considered this amount of money inadequate and complained that another railroad employee, as a result of the same accident, received \$15,000 when his leg was amputated. The judge responded : "A man who lost his one leg can no longer acquire it, even for \$15,000, but a widow who has \$5,000 is easily able to find another man."<sup>10</sup>

According to Ha-Zefirah, the railroad was not the only form of transportation which opened the country. Canal building also helped transform the United States industrially and economically. It opened a broader market for manufacturers, especially in the frontier settlements on the western plains.<sup>11</sup> In an article of September 9, 1879, Ha-Zefirah described the United States government's plans to construct a canal in southern California :

Ha-Zefirah, September 9, 1879

In southern California in America there is a big and spacious valley, the land of which is so desolate that no plant will grow. It was thought that in earlier days the valley was the place of a big river which over time became waste and dried up. The length of this plain is about 200 miles, and its width is fifty miles. Its surface is 200 feet below sea level, and it is forty-five miles from the shore of the Pacific Ocean. It was advised that a canal be dug to connect the valley with the sea....In the strip of land which separates the valley from the sea is a river twenty miles long, so that only fifteen miles need to be dug. The cost of this work is estimated to be 4,000 pounds sterling, and it will be paid to the workers over half a year. The work, which was begun, is very important to the government of the United States

because it will transform the acres there to rich and fruitful land.

The relevance of reporting canal building to urban, non-agrarian Jews virtually land-locked in Warsaw is quite baffling. Had this article appeared in Ha-Meliz, which was published in St. Petersburg, a city located on the Baltic Sea, it might have been more appropriate. Perhaps the reason for including the article in Ha-Zefirah was to demonstrate the relationship between industry and agriculture, namely, that canal building would open up the land for cultivation.

Like agriculture, medicine benefitted from improvements in American technology. The invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell revolutionized the healing process by providing a faster means of communication between patients and physicians. In an article entitled "Healing According to a Distant Report," the benefit of the telephone in medicine was described :

Ha-Zefirah, February 28, 1881

For some time it has been known how great the danger of diphtheria is to children. This disease, which originates in the mouth, is first detected by a doctor by a change in the patient's voice. If the doctor does not hasten to cure him, his condition will worsen and he will die. Therefore, where there is no expert doctor, a patient can suffer great danger.

The newspaper Medical Report, which is published in New York, tells of a very wonderful thing. In the city of North Adams, a boy became ill, but there was no doctor in the city to diagnose him. Over the telephone, the boy's symptoms were described to a doctor who lives at a distance of two miles. He listened to the boy and knew, from his voice, that it was diphtheria. The doctor responded immediately over the telephone and ordered medi-

cation for that disease. The patient recovered and was saved from going to his grave.

Of all the diseases which could be diagnosed by a doctor over the telephone, it is interesting that this reporter chose diphtheria. Perhaps he knew that the readers of Ha-Zefirah were familiar with this acute febrile contagious disease and were aware, therefore, of the importance of securing immediate medical assistance. By writing this article as he did, the reporter also indicated that diphtheria was a problem in the United States, that not every community had a doctor, and that the telephone was no longer a rare commodity, but rather, a utility to which people had relatively easy access.

Another article in Ha-Zefirah informed its readers that the American Industrial Revolution had aided some people who had physical handicaps, especially impaired hearing. In December, 1879, the newspaper featured the story of a man who had invented a device to teach the hearing impaired how to speak :

Ha-Zefirah, December 16, 1879

Professor Graydon in America recently invented a new device called by the name audiphone, which performs wonderfully because it opens the ears of the deaf and enables them to hear what is spoken to them. The device consists of a microphone from which extends a taut wire. This is connected to a small piece of wood which the deaf person carries between his teeth. When someone speaks into the microphone, the sound travels by way of the stretched wire, which is like a harp string, to the wood and the teeth which hold it. [The vibrations travel from the teeth to the jawbone, to the skull, and to the auditory nerves.] In this way the sense of hearing comes to the brain, and the deaf person hears the voice of the speaker. However, this device benefits only those people

who had the sense of hearing and who became deaf for some reason other than damage to the auditory nerve....For those who have auditory nerve damage, there is no cure.

The wise person aforementioned performed different experiments with this device in the school for deaf mutes. He put the wood between the teeth of one deaf person who had learned to speak in his youth and spoke to him from a distance of twelve feet by way of the stretched wire. The deaf person responded and told him, word for word, all that he had heard. But when he tried the experiment with a student who was born a deaf mute, the student indicated to him in gestures that he felt ringing and noise in his ears, but he did not know what it was since he had been deaf from birth and never had heard the sound of words. Since he did not understand any language, he could not distinguish between the sounds of speech and the accent. Therefore, the aforementioned sage said that from now on, with this device, the deaf would learn how to speak because they would hear what would be spoken to them and learn the language from the mouth of the teacher.

Another auditory device was the topophone, a double ear trumpet for estimating the direction from which sounds proceed. It was designed for use by navigators :

Ha-Zefirah, May 7, 1880

In the land of America a new device called by the name topophone recently was invented. Its purpose is to make a sound so as to direct people straight to the place from which the sound originated. The topophone is beneficial to those people who are at sea for days. It is known that when thick cloud, darkness, and fog cover the face of the sea, navigators do not see the ships close to them and come into danger of colliding. Moreover, when they come to the shore, they do not know how to go straight to their docks. Besides which, the lighthouses which stand on the shore to illuminate the path at night are not helpful in times of fog.

Thus, this device was invented for those times of danger.

The topophone is a very long, hollow rod shaped like a big trumpet, which stands at the port and blows a powerful and strong blast by means of a steam engine. Its sound is heard for several miles... so the boat will be able to direct its course straight to the path from which the hollow sound comes.

Again, it is possible to question the rationale for publishing an article about navigation in a journal read by Jews in Warsaw. Perhaps the purpose of the article was to assuage the fears of potential landlubber emigrants should they be at sea on a cloudy or foggy night. After travelling for weeks to reach their destination, the last thing they would want on the final leg of their journey would be to collide with another ship or crash into the dock at the Port of New York.

The American Industrial Revolution brought changes in American work habits, means of transportation, leisure activities, and perceptions of time. According to Ha-Zefirah, time became a commodity not to be wasted. In 1881, it described the invention of the alarm clock, a device "for arousing sleepers to get up in the morning at a fixed hour; for arousing guests, who travel by road, to get up in the morning at a fixed hour in order to continue travelling on their way; for signaling workers to rise from their work; or for arousing servants in every house to work." The mechanism consisted of a bell connected by an iron wire to the "telegraph," and once it sounded, it could not be silenced until it was turned off with a special handle designed for this purpose.<sup>12</sup>

Americans' interest in the geography of the United States broadened as the vast expanses of their country became more and more accessible to them. Between 1879-1882, both Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah published a number of articles describing the natural wonders of the North American continent.

Niagara Falls, situated between the Canadian border and New York State, fascinated nature lovers as much in 1879 as it does today. In the winter of 1879, a correspondent for Ha-Zefirah related that ice floes from Lake Erie flowed down the Niagara River and became congested near the great falls. He described how the pressure from the ice and the pressure from the water combined to produce the effect of a large bridge of ice spanning the width of the river over a distance of one mile.

Unfortunately, not every article praised the beauty of American lakes and rivers. In 1882, Ha-Zefirah printed an article reporting a case of severe contamination of the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia. Another article told of widespread flooding in Massachusetts :

Ha-Zefirah, August 3, 1882

The newspaper from America announced a strange and dangerous phenomenon which occurred to the inhabitants of Philadelphia. The Schuylkill River, which passes through there, suddenly appeared green, and all the fish which were in it died. The river stank. Thousands and ten-thousands of fish were seen on the surface of the water, and because of their corpses, the surrounding air reeked and the water was undrinkable. This phenomenon occurred because on the way from its source, the river changed course and passed through brass and coal mines where its water was mixed with sulphur water.

Ha-Zefirah, December 12, 1882

The American newspaper announced that in December, Adventism became widespread in Massachusetts because of a vast flood there. The head of the [Adventist] Party tried to establish an association...to build a large ark like Noah's ark...into which could come anyone who desired to save his soul from the waters of the flood....Anyone who came to the ark would be able to take with him whatever beasts or animals [he so desired], since a place already was prepared for them in the bottom of the boat.

These two articles suggested the co-existence of science and religion in American society. The first article implied that some Americans were aware of scientific explanations (pollution) for what other people might have conceived of as a plague. The second article indicated that religious fundamentalism was alive in the United States. In a subtle way, the article mocked those people who believed that the end of the world was at hand and that the only way to save themselves was by boarding a replica of Noah's ark.

The East European Hebrew press introduced its readers to areas of the United States west of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. In one article, a reporter for Ha-Zefirah described Mammoth Cave, a sixteen-mile long cavern in Kentucky :

Ha-Zefirah, January 28, 1879

Between the many vestibules were found vaults, like the catacombs of Egypt, containing human bodies. The bodies were placed in sarcophagi. The opening of this cave is in a field which belongs to Thomas Kelly. Mr. Kelly has become rich from the cave because he sells the artifacts of the vaults for a high price to people who desire old things. Also, many of the inhabitants of America travel here to see the wonders of nature in the valley of the land, and they pay him a fee....The cave has many wadis and rivers....

Tourists can travel by small steam boats to see the structure of the halls and the stone pillars which were carved by nature.

If Cincinnati was "the Jerusalem of the West," then surely Kentucky to its south was comparable to Ancient Egypt and Mammoth Cave's stone vaults were comparable to the pharaohs' tombs. With this comparison in mind, it is not amiss to question whether some East European Jews who read this article were inspired to ask the following question : If I should decide to emigrate from Eastern Europe, why should I make aliyah to a land inhabited by Arabs and ruled by Turks when I could go to the United States, a land of liberty and freedom which boasts wonders comparable to those of the Ancient Near East?

It was evident that the wonders of the West Coast's forests also captivated the mind and attention of Ha-Zefirah's readers. One article stated :

Ha-Zefirah, January 14, 1879

One of the large redwoods which is in the forest of California, previously known by the name 'Old Moses,' fell and broke [in 1875].... After much toil and labor its thick trunk was brought to the city of San Francisco to be displayed to the amusement of its viewers.

Within eight months after the time it was displayed in San Francisco, the tree was transported to New York. A second article in Ha-Zefirah related that the tree stump, which remained in the ground in California, was 111 feet high and that the part which broke off was 240 feet long. Its circumference was seventy-five feet, and its diameter was twenty-five feet. Somehow, between the time when the first and second articles appeared, the tree aged ten years. In the first article, it was reported to be 4,840 years old, and in the second article, 4,850 years old.<sup>13</sup>



Another article in Ha-Zefirah described how tourists in California went out of their way to visit a redwood forest southeast of Stockton. Visitors were amazed at the height, thickness, pride, and glory of the trees, especially the one nicknamed "the Giant."<sup>14</sup> A forest of petrified trees near the Yellowstone River was the subject of yet another article :

Ha-Zefirah, March 26, 1879

Upon a mountain 500 feet high are rows and rows of trees whose height exceeds sixty-five feet and whose thickness exceeds six feet. The trees are fossilized like flint stone....According to the form of the trees...examiners judge that they are from the time of the flood, for their species is not found in the types of trees and plants that are in the world today.

The attention paid to these trees by Ha-Zefirah probably resulted from the fact that its American correspondents never had seen such trees in Eastern Europe and were impressed, therefore, by their grandeur.

Above and beyond the majestic redwoods in California were the wonders of the heavens. In an article in 1881, a reporter described three natural phenomena which amazed the people who saw them :

Ha-Zefirah, October 20, 1881

In the city of Long Branch in America, there recently appeared a natural vision known by the name phantasmagoria. It was extraordinary. Near the sea shore, sixty-five docked ships were seen in the heavens in an inverted image of their natural form. Thousands of people were astonished by this wonder.

In the city of Providence, there also was an extraordinary vision. Suddenly the temperature rose to a very high degree and a dark cloud obscured the light of the sun at noon. Finally, an announcement was made to kindle the gas lights.

On that same day, the air in the city of Boston was full of vapors which darkened the light of day, just like patina which covers an object. The reason for this vision, according to the opinion of Emerson, was because the smoke rising from the burning pitch in the forests of Canada filled the atmosphere.

These articles, like the article about the Schuylkill River, suggested that Americans were not totally unaware of scientific explanations for the natural phenomena they witnessed, including phantasmagoria, an eclipse, and smog. Perhaps such reports served as good omens to potential immigrants from Eastern Europe. They taught them that in the United States superstition did not hold sway over reason and that enlightenment was valued far above ignorance.

Across the Atlantic Ocean in the countries of Eastern Europe, these stories about American technology and the American continent circulated in the pages of the Hebrew press. Praising the benefits of a progressive approach to industry, they undoubtedly caught the readers' attention and sparked interest about Americans' strange and marvelous ability to harness energy and natural resources in order to make work easier, life less expensive, and leisure more personally rewarding. Other articles revealed that the United States was a spacious country well endowed with natural resources, varied in topography, and open for exploration. It was no surprise, therefore, that the United States was described by Ha-Zefirah as the wonder of the world and that during this period, many Jews from Eastern Europe came to settle in the New Land.

## Chapter Two

### American Jewish Agricultural Colonization

In 1878, a committee of Jews in Cincinnati recommended the establishment of several agricultural colonies in the United States to be cultivated by Jewish immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. The proposal stemmed not only from the committee's sincere desire to help the immigrants and from the belief that agricultural settlement was the most efficient means of successfully establishing the newcomers in the United States, but also from the desire to divert as many of the refugees as possible away from the urban centers of America.<sup>1</sup> Some Jewish communities in the United States were appalled by the problem of supporting thousands of East European refugees,<sup>2</sup> while others were embarrassed by "the oft-muttered calumny that our people are unfitted by habit, nature, and sentiment for honest toil."<sup>3</sup> In an effort to disprove the stereotype that Jews participated only in non-agrarian pursuits and to "repeal" the lengthy socio-economic history that had seen the evolution in Europe of a Christian policy designed to drive the Jews off the land, deny them agricultural experience, and confine them to commercial activities,<sup>4</sup> American Jews declared :

Send us funds, and you will be astonished how quickly we shall settle on government land every able-bodied Russian immigrant. We think that the long deferred project of teaching our people agricultural pursuits can now speedily be realized, and that the problem of what to do with the Russian Jew can at once be solved.<sup>5</sup>

The committee of Jews in Cincinnati viewed their East European brethren not as skilled workers, petty merchants, artisans, or avid

traditionalists, but as frustrated and potential farmers who longed to work the land and were capable of working the land. They believed that had Jews not been barred from villages or prohibited from acquiring rural property, each and every one would have tilled the soil.

Like the committee in Cincinnati, a number of Russian Jewish immigrants shared this eagerness to devote themselves to experiments of collective farming in America.<sup>6</sup> This desire was, in part, the outgrowth of an idealistic, back-to-the-land movement which began in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Following the abolition of serfdom, there developed a quasi-religious belief in the spiritual value of farming, a belief exalted by writers such as Rousseau and Tolstoy, that farming was the only truly productive occupation since it was basic to all others.<sup>7</sup> This belief was held in particular by Am Olam, a Russian Jewish organization begun in 1881, which aspired to make a living from the soil by establishing model communities on socialistic or collective bases. "Our motto," they declared,

is labor in the fields, and our goal is the physical and spiritual rejuvenation of our people. In free America, where people of various nationalities live in amity, we Jews too shall find a corner in which to rest our heads. We shall prove to the world that we are qualified for physical labor.<sup>8</sup>

Imbued with the idea of self-help and "prompted by a fervent desire to redeem their people from political oppression and economic misery," Am Olam furnished the greatest majority of farm colonists and founded agricultural settlements in Louisiana, North Dakota, and Oregon. None proved successful because "they lacked the material means and practical experience for such pioneering ventures."<sup>9</sup>

Utopian schemes for resettling East European Jews in American farming colonies were grandiose and impractical. Most were unsuccessful, and all experienced the same vicissitudes :

a premature birth, a brief struggle, and an abrupt death. They were conceived in haste and planned in distress. Indeed, their organizers tended to ignore or discount the complexities and dangers, the depressed state, of post-Civil War American farming.<sup>10</sup>

Despite these factors, American correspondents for the East European Hebrew press endorsed collective agricultural settlements as a solution for the resettlement and normalization of East European Jews in the United States. Reporting for Ha-Zefirah in 1879, Judah David Eisenstein explained why historically it was appropriate for the new immigrants to engage in cultivation of the land :

Ha-Zefirah, August 19, 1879

The Jews were always workers of the land....Moses our teacher chose to be a shepherd and a worker of the land....The reason why they [abandoned this type of work] is not dependent upon them, but upon their enemies who pursued them and did not allow them to buy even a handful of earth. They forced them to change [livelihoods] and to engage in commerce.

For this reason, Eisenstein and other American Jews like him supported a back-to-the-land movement for the East European Jewish immigrants. Eisenstein wrote :

Ha-Zefirah, July 1, 1879

In this land (the United States), the rich Jews decided to establish colonies for the Jewish immigrants in the southern and western areas. Behold, their idea is appropriate because the land there is rich and fruitful.

A statement such as this masked the other reason for the support of American Jewish agricultural settlements, namely, resettlement of the immigrants away from the burgeoning urban centers.

In 1881, Ha-Zefirah reported that the American Jewish quest to settle Jewish immigrants on agricultural settlements was aided by the state of Louisiana which provided land for this purpose. A letter from the office of the Governor of Louisiana to the Jewish committee in New York expressed the state's desire to do whatever it could for the unfortunate people from Russia. The letter was published in Ha-Zefirah :

Ha-Zefirah, December 22, 1881

Honorable Sir!

I am happy to announce in the name of the Governor of Louisiana that his government desires with all its heart to give each family of poor people from Russia 160 acres of land for free. The land which it will give them is fruitful and rich. The climate is healthy and wonderful. Springs of water are found here in abundance. Trees for lumber and fruit are plentiful. The land abundantly will bring forth sugar, wool-cotton, grain, wheat, rice, millet, vegetables, and all types of fruit in which all America boasts.

I hope that you will receive my tidings which I send you in the name of the Governor favorably.

This letter focused solely on the attributes of the land. It praised the area's natural resources and suggested that it would produce crops plentifully. It is curious, however, that no mention was made concerning the training of settlers to work the land. Even if some of the new settlers, such as the members of Am Olam, had basic agricultural training in Russia, surely the different conditions in the United States, including the climate, soil, and farming equipment, would have warranted

additional training. Not even the Governor's letter to the New York committee, which also was published in Ha-Zefirah, mentioned the possibility of the state's teaching the immigrants how to work the land. The Governor of Louisiana wrote :

Ha-Zefirah, December 22, 1881

Louisiana will welcome in favor and in love the sons of your people, and it will give them land holdings of 160 acres per family. This state is happy to welcome the immigrants and to receive them as brothers. The land is spacious enough for thousands and ten-thousands.

Undersigned by S[amuel] D. McEnery, Governor of Louisiana.

Ha-Zefirah reported that with the receipt of this letter, the Jewish committee in New York requested the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Paris to send them farmers and a few artisans and craftsmen. The Alliance Israelite Universelle agreed to comply with this request, but instead of sending able-bodied workers, it sent unskilled and inexperienced farmers and a motley crew, whom the committee in New York could not handle.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, this first attempt to settle East European Jewish immigrants on the land was carried out under the direction of a member of Am Olam, Herman Rosenthal. Working on behalf of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, Rosenthal desired to transplant East European Jews to the United States and settle them on socialistically planned agricultural colonies.<sup>12</sup> The colony which he helped found was Sicily Island in Catahoula Parish, Louisiana. The settlers, who had been organized in Russia, included thirty-five families from Kiev and twenty-five families from Elizabethgrad.<sup>13</sup> The history of the colony, from its

acquisition to its settlement, was described in Ha-Zefirah in an article entitled "The First Colony of Russian Refugees in the Land of America" :

Ha-Zefirah, January 24, 1882

The first colony for Russian Jews was established in the state of Louisiana, in the south of our country. At the meeting which was held on November 28, in the city of New Orleans, the capital of Louisiana, Mr. Julius Weiss was chosen to serve as president of the association. Governor McEnery, who was elected an honorary member, was among those gathered. He spoke, saying : 'The government will assist and will support all your efforts to plant on the land of Louisiana all the unfortunate people who are escaping from evil oppression and religious hatred. I shall be good to them, and I shall look after them so that no obstacle or trouble will befall them.' He noted that he was familiar with the piece of land which would be distributed to them, and he commented that it was very good earth. The climate was healthy. The earth was full of fountains springing forth water in the valley and in the mountain, and it would produce fruit abundantly....

In agreement with the committee in New York, the New Orleans committee purchased 2,000 acres of field in Sicily Island from the Newman brothers. Half of this land already was cultivated, and half of it was virgin land. A large portion of the cultivated field was fenced in. The immigrants sent from their group men well skilled in agriculture to see their portion, and they found the land very good indeed.

#### The Negotiations

On Monday, December 4, the Honorable Julius Weiss, head of the committee, gathered his friends, who are overseeing the welfare of the unfortunate people, to a meeting in the 'Harmony' House.... They announced that the land is very good, and they think that the immigrants will be willing to settle upon it, as long as it is given to them on worthy and acceptable conditions. Upon the



recommendation of Judge Max, five committee members and five immigrants were chosen to complete the negotiations with the owner of the land, Mr. Newman. After a long discussion in a special room, a contract was written with these conditions : That until January 1, 1885, the immigrants would possess the land...for free, on the condition that they cultivate it. During these years the Newman brothers would pay the state and regional taxes from their own pockets. After 1885, and for the next five years, the sellers would not receive from the buyers even one cent interest for the sale price if the holders could not afford to pay off the money for their possession. The Newman brothers would have to wait until the end of 1889, but from January 1, 1890, and thereafter, the brothers would claim their debt from the immigrants, in addition to 6% annual interest if they were late in paying what was required of them. The Newman brothers consented to accept these conditions which were agreed to by the immigrants and the members of the committee.

According to these conditions, the possessors of the land would be responsible for gathering the harvest of three years before they paid even one cent [for the land]. Tools for the cultivation of the land and its harvest, as well as seeds and groceries for them and their households, would, for the first year, be provided free of charge from the treasury of the committee....The terms of these conditions were received favorably by all those gathered, and both the buyers and the sellers were joyful and happy. Everyone rejoiced in knowing that their unfortunate brethren could buy fields and would flourish as citizens in the free land.

#### Reactions to the Agreement

In New Orleans, a writer for the newspaper Jewish South published an article concerning this matter. [He] wrote : 'May my tongue be cut off for not expressing the magnitude of happiness and enthusiasm which inflamed the hearts of those gathered and, in particular, the excited wanderers and immigrants who felt that...

this price and this endeavor would help break the yoke of the downtrodden. This is the way which brings one to livelihood with honor.' [Thanks] to the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Paris and to all the volunteers among the people in the countries of Europe who helped to bring our brethren out and caused them to arrive in this region of their desire.

Let us praise our brethren in Louisiana because, in addition to the \$1,000 which they sent for the immigrants to the head committee in New York, they supported with food and in all their needs approximately 300 immigrants for more than three months during the time they dwelled in New Orleans. Now they have brought their brethren to their rest and to their inheritance. Except for \$5,800 which they received from the committee in New York, they received no help or support from anyone, neither from outside our country nor from the rest of the states of our country.

The state of Louisiana should be praised because she was the first of all the states of our beloved country to put into action this undertaking in which there is so much good devoted to our oppressed brethren....The Governor of Louisiana, Samuel D. McEnery, promised to be a refuge, a support, and a shelter for the new colony. The government clerks who were appointed to oversee the immigrants proposed before the state legislature that it allocate \$75 a month from its treasury for the hotel payment for the Jewish immigrants.

All the newspapers published in Louisiana encouraged and endorsed the action of our brethren with good and compassionate words, and many of our Christian brethren generously donated to the immigrants the best of their plowing tools and their tools for the cultivation of the land. The correspondent for the aforementioned newspaper said : 'It is our faithful advice that the committees from the states and cities cease from acting as judges and debaters over which way is most fit for the unfortunate immigrants. The committees should only endeavor to help the New Orleans committee

which, with the help of the Lord, will soon find redemption and relief for the several thousand unfortunate and oppressed persons who will find refuge and sanctuary in being settled on their own property in tranquility and safety, "every man under his vine and under his fig tree."

#### Financing the Colony

Twenty-eight families purchased the colony. Nine families gave \$459 to the treasury of the association. In total, this exceeds \$4,000. The association will add on its own another \$12(?). From this there will be enough money to build houses for the immigrants and to obtain plowing tools and seed for sowing, as well as to pay for all their needs until the days of the next harvest. The land costs \$1.25 per acre, which amounts to \$2,500 for the 2,000 acres of field which they purchased from the Newman brothers.

In this article, Ha-Zefirah's correspondent, Eisenstein, focused primarily on the quality of the land and the financial arrangements for its acquisition. He did not mention whether provisions were made to teach the immigrant families how to cultivate the 2,000 acres of land or whether these immigrants truly wanted to engage in this agricultural experiment. Eisenstein's statements about helping the down-trodden find an honorable livelihood, bringing them to their rest and their inheritance, redeeming them, and finding them a refuge and a sanctuary suggest a quasi-messianic attitude on the part of American Jewry during this period. The article suggested that American Jews saw themselves as great deliverers, and rightly so, for here was a Jewry of approximately 250,000 persons helping a foreign Jewry approximately eight times its size.

Whatever the motives of American Jews to establish their East European co-religionists on American Jewish agricultural colonies,

their efforts to finance such endeavors were exemplary. In another article, Eisenstein described the work of the New York committee in collecting funds to establish the Jewish agricultural colony in Louisiana. Since this project was of primary concern to the committee, it sent Moritz Ellinger to Europe "to arouse our wealthy brethren in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, etc., to donate millions [of dollars]. There [was] hope that this journey [would] be fruitful."<sup>14</sup> In London, Dr. Max Lilienthal joined Ellinger, and together they visited the heads of Jewish communities in England and Germany and the heads of the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. Eisenstein extolled their mission, saying :

Ha-Zefirah, March 14, 1882

There is no doubt that they will put their plan into action, and in the days to come agricultural colonization will be a reliable source for the sustenance and livelihood of many Jews who have migrated from Russia.

Despite his avid support for the settlement of Jewish immigrants in agricultural colonies, Eisenstein was intelligent enough to realize that not everyone favored this endeavor. A good journalist, he did not hesitate to present the opposing argument early on in the discussion about American Jewish agricultural colonization :

Ha-Zefirah, August 19, 1879

Rabbi Dr. Moses from Mobile, Alabama said :

'Only our settling in large cities and our engaging in trade and commerce will enable us to acquire a good reputation in this country, to be counted among the merchants, and to participate in the affairs of our country. This will not be the case if we go out to live in villages or engage in agriculture....Let us

consider France, a country in which there are no more than 50,000 Jews, or let us pay attention to England, a country in which 75% of the Jews live in large cities....You say : Bring the poor Jews from Rumania, Turkey, etc., [to the United States] and gather them unto one place far from the other inhabitants of the country. How will they learn English, and how will they acculturate?'

Indeed, colonization was an obstacle to Americanization, but this was not the only reason why American Jewish agricultural colonies were unsuccessful. In a subsequent article, Eisenstein explained why another American Jewish leader thought that the settlement of East European Jewish immigrants, particularly in the Louisiana agricultural colony, was not such a good idea :

Ha-Zefirah, March 14, 1882

The committee chosen to select the site was not very happy in the choice of the land in the region of Catahoula Parish, which the government intended to sell to the immigrants for almost no cost. The committee decided to purchase the land of the Newman brothers, who are known for their generosity and their love for the children of their people. The Newman brothers' land, which they purchased, [contains] an area of 28,000 acres. However, the colony is 350 miles ( a long distance), or forty-eight hours by ship, from New Orleans by way of the sea, and twenty-five miles from Natchez, a large city in the state of Mississippi. The colony is connected with the aforementioned cities by way of the Mississippi and Ouachita Rivers. Nevertheless, the land of the colony is fruitful and rich. Half of it has been cultivated, and half of it is virgin land. It is not expected to flood when the rivers rise and overflow their boundaries. The area of Catahoula, in which the colony is situated, is known for its healthy and delightful climate. In the sunny days of summer, the temperature will not exceed 90°, and in the days of winter it will not fall below 0°.

Although Mr. Menken, the president of the New York committee who expressed these words which were published in Ha-Zefirah, did not explicitly state why he and his committee found the land in Catahoula Parish ill-suited for the establishment of a Jewish agricultural colony, it is possible to assume that his dissatisfaction arose from the fact that the land "abounded in swamps and marshes," and that it was "some 400 miles upstream from New Orleans and Baton Rouge,...[a] three days journey from a city with no train service."<sup>15</sup>

In the spring of 1882, Mr. Menken's fears came true when the first agricultural colony of Russian Jews in the United States was swept away by an overflow of the Mississippi River.<sup>16</sup> In November, 1882, Ha-Zefirah reported this disaster :

Ha-Zefirah, November 14, 1882

The newspaper from the colony in Sicily [reported that] the colonists taught themselves how to cultivate the land. They plowed and sowed the arable fields. If only the Mississippi River had not overflowed its banks and carried away the fruit of their labor.

Despite the fact that the settlers had a capable and self-sacrificing leader in the person of Herman Rosenthal, despite the fact that they were not dependent on a single crop, that the land was inexpensive, and that they had immediate housing and all their needs fulfilled, they could not offset the basic factors of harsh environmental conditions, including heat, disease, and flood, combined with their total lack of agricultural experience and their social isolation.<sup>17</sup>

Regardless of the failure of the first American agricultural colony for East European Jews, Ha-Zefirah reported that the committees did not cease to regard colonization as a prime solution for the problem

of resettling the immigrants in the New Land. Although the founding of colonies incurred enormous expenses, at least \$1-million per 10,000 people,<sup>17</sup> it was considered by many American Jews the only worthwhile occupation for the newcomers, most likely because it did not threaten their status in American urban centers. Through the efforts of the Jewish community of Cincinnati and Rabbi Wechsler of St. Paul, Minnesota, an attempt was made to establish another colony of East European Jewish farmers in Painted Woods, near Bismarck, North Dakota. This project was reported in Ha-Zefirah :

Ha-Zefirah, December 19, 1882

With the help of Rabbi Wise from Cincinnati, another colony for the Jewish immigrants from Rumania was established in the Dakota Territory. Rabbi Wise sent Mr. Wechsler, a rabbi and preacher in St. Paul, Minnesota, to investigate and familiarize himself with their situation. Here is his report from November 1, 1881 :

'I am happy to report that the colony which we established in the Dakota Territory, near the city of Bismarck, is blossoming. In my opinion, there is no doubt that agriculture is the best work for the immigrants who were sent to our country. But not all of the immigrants are fit for cultivating the land. It is our responsibility to choose well because many of the immigrants come here with false opinions and vain fantasies. Hence, it is our obligation to correct them because they will not be successful as farmers.

#### The Colony

We established the colony with fifteen families, and now their number is up to thirty families or 150 people. At first we were unable to supply all their needs. We had hoped to fulfill all their needs, but the committees from London and Liverpool spoiled

things when they sent us many immigrants straight from England, without asking the committee in New York. Also, many of the immigrants who were sent from London to Canada fled to us. Our confusion increased, and we were obligated to spend all the money, which we had set aside for the benefit of the colonists, on the uninvited guests who came to us. But we girded what strength we had to sustain the colonists. We sent them food and the remaining necessities. We told them that they should not rely upon us, but rather, that they should rely upon themselves, if possible, until we would be able to support them. And now I am happy to announce that the immigrants were more successful than we had hoped. They built themselves houses in which to find shelter and refuge from the cold which is intense in the climate in which they dwell, and they already gathered from their fields enough potatoes for themselves and more than 400 tons of hay for their animals.... They also have enough milk cows to supply them with enough milk for their consumption, and soon the number of cows will increase. They were given enough money to buy cows and oxen, wagons and plows, and other household and field tools. Next year the fields which they cultivated and harrowed will be ready for plowing and seeding, and they will continue to sow potatoes and other types of seeds. The land they possess is very fruitful, and the land which surrounds them already has been settled by other colonists.

#### The Surroundings

The city of Washburn is three miles from the colony, and in the approaching days of winter our colonists will find work there by cutting and selling trees for lumber. They have on their land about 400 acres of trees good for lumber. All the colonists love to work and hate idleness. Those who desire to work outside the colony will find work in the city of Bismarck or in its environs. Their neighbors and the people of Bismarck praise them, as do the newspapers. The Herald from Bismarck reported : "These colonists in Painted Woods (the name of the colony) are citizens who will bring profit because they are diligent and are satisfied with



a little. They love our country which has given them freedom and equal rights, etc." The Daily Tribune, also published in Bismarck, said : "Rabbi Dr. Wechsler and Mr. Julian Austrian came here to support the colonists working in Painted Woods with oxen, wagons, plows, etc. The colony of Hebrews is very successful and growing by degrees because the colonists do their work eagerly and voluntarily."

Rabbi Wechsler was a discerning reporter. He was not afraid to point out that not everyone was fit for farming or that the committees occasionally faced dire financial problems and were unable to support their own projects. Left to fend for themselves for a time, the colonists in Painted Woods seemed to thrive. Perhaps the key to their temporary success was the fact that they had to assume responsibility for their own livelihood and welfare. They could not rely on the local Jewish committee to supply all their needs.

Despite the well-intentioned efforts of American Jewish philanthropists "to furnish a profitable and useful opening for the able-bodied" East European Jewish immigrants and to save them "from the slough of pinching privation and mind-debasing penury" by establishing them in "the healthy, invigorating and independence-fostering avocation of the farmer," most Jewish agricultural settlements in the United States failed.<sup>19</sup> Not only were the immigrants chosen to found the farming colonies people with practically no experience in farming, people with no understanding of the hardships which lay in store for them, and people with virtually no financial resources to invest in the endeavor, not only were the sites for the colonies poorly chosen, and not only was it wrong to rely on the concept of colonies as an instrument for

converting East European tradesmen into American agriculturalists, but also "agricultural colonization ran counter to the trend of late nineteenth-century...American life."<sup>20</sup> In his book, Jewish Agricultural Utopias in America, 1880-1910, Uri D. Herscher explained why the American Jewish agricultural colonies did not succeed :

No period in American history was so ill-suited as the...late 1800s...in which Jewish immigrants sought to transform themselves into American farmer-colonists. The last two decades of the nineteenth century were marked by severe agricultural distress.... General financial conditions for the farmers were extremely adverse....Ever since the Civil War, the United States [had] been going through a process of industrialization which brought a resultant trend of migration from farm to city where greater opportunities existed....General industrialization inspired the overwhelming number of immigrants along with the great majority of Americans to by-pass agriculture for industry....Thus, agriculture ran counter to the trend of late nineteenth...century American life. A back-to-the-land movement undoubtedly had special significance for Jews who had been debarred from agriculture for centuries. But at the time that a large number of Jewish pioneers were attempting to return to the land, the main current of American life was away from the land.<sup>21</sup>

Herscher concluded :

A fundamental misconception the utopian immigrant brought with him from Russia was the belief that he had to normalize his position by going into farming in the United States....But the reverse, if anything, was true. In America, by becoming a farmer... the Jew would not be normalizing his position; on the contrary, he would be making it abnormal.<sup>22</sup>

Notwithstanding these factors which contributed to the failure of Jewish agricultural settlements in the United States in the late

nineteenth century, the East European Hebrew press continued to endorse farming as the solution to the question of what to do with the new Jewish settlers. Desperate to normalize the situation of the East European Jewish immigrants, American Jews succeeded only in burying their problem in out of the way settlements. By not teaching the immigrants new skills or allowing them to become Americanized by living and working in densely populated urban centers, American Jews exacerbated the problem of the immigrants and reinforced the image of them as strangers in a strange land.

In the next chapter, the relationship between the established American Jews and the East European Jewish immigrants, as presented in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah, will be explored.

### Chapter Three

#### American Jewish Aid to East European Jewish Immigrants

The impulse for one person to assist another person in distress is a universal human virtue. It arises from the almost instinctive love and sympathy felt when confronted with human suffering and need.<sup>1</sup> This impulse was awakened in the late nineteenth century among American Jews who were outraged by the hardships endured by their brethren in Eastern Europe. In order to express their sympathy and demonstrate their love and concern, American Jews collected money to aid their brethren and welcome them to the United States.

In February 1882, Ha-Zefirah reprinted an article from the New Orleans Democrat in which the people of America were summoned to assist the Jews migrating from Eastern Europe to the United States :

Ha-Zefirah, February 7, 1882

The cry to help thousands of men afflicted 'through oppression of evil and sorrow' rises in our ears, and the cry of 30,000 unfortunate men, downtrodden from violence and religious enmity, descends to our innermost parts. Before the end of next year, 150,000 refugees from Europe [will arrive in the United States]. Twenty-million dollars will be enough to sustain them...and supply all their needs....What is \$1-million compared to the great good which the immigrants will bring to us and to our country?

When the Lord proclaimed a famine in the land of Ireland, the inhabitants of all lands donated more than \$100-million. The Jews were not the last to offer generously their donations to the sons of Ireland. Was not this famine as nothing compared to the troubles which came upon the seed of the God of Abraham in Europe? When

God brought Chicago and the state of [Illinois] to judgement in fire, the number of those rescued from the fire like firebrands was approximately 300,000 people. Our country shook from the sound of their cry, from the cry of suffering souls burning in fire.... Was it not our responsibility and the responsibility of our country to hasten and accelerate their relief and their salvation?

It definitely has been ascertained that with each family who comes to settle among us that the wealth of our country is increased and strengthened by at least \$3,000. According to this, if 500,000 Jewish families come to settle among us, the wealth and success of our country will increase by \$1,500-million, and the fruit of their work and their toil will increase yearly to about \$150,000.

Therefore, it is our responsibility to support, sustain, and help them in the beginning, not for their sake alone, but also for our sake and for the sake that our country will be blessed on account of them.... Their action and their work will bring to us and to our children endless blessings.

Ha-Zefirah reprinted this appeal in order to show that American Jews were anxious to arouse universal sympathy for the oppressed Jews of Eastern Europe and in order to collect financial contributions on their behalf. Rather than focus specifically on the present situation, the appeal cited other cases of human suffering and recognized the actions undertaken by concerned people to ease the sufferers' distress. It now asked these concerned people to do likewise for the Jews of Eastern Europe.

The East European Hebrew newspapers reported that in many communities, special institutions and/or committees were established to welcome the Jewish immigrants and to provide them with food and shelter

until they could be settled permanently and given some type of employment. However, according to Ha-Meliz, most relief organizations fell under the auspices of a general relief committee established by the leaders of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites :

Ha-Meliz, October 25, 1881

The heads of the congregations of Jews in America (Board of Delegates) established a permanent committee to care for the immigrants and to watch over them. The head of the committee is Mr. Carl Bernheim, the treasurer is [Mr. Joseph] Seligman, and the secretary is Mr. Kursheedt.

American Jews "feared that the high visibility of the new arrivals would generate anti-Semitism and affect their own relatively secure middle-class position."<sup>2</sup> Thus, they appointed themselves overseers of the activities, livelihood, and settlement of the new immigrants. They established relief committees, recognizing that their efforts to assist the newcomers could not be haphazard or indiscriminate. A report from Ha-Meliz revealed that the reception of immigrants in New York City was systematic and well structured :

Ha-Meliz, March 28, 1882

Upon disembarking, they gathered us into a spacious hall which stands at the shore of the sea and is called 'Castle Garden.' There they asked what our names were and where we came from, and they wrote [this information] in a ledger. The people who were ill or in pain were taken to the hospital. They did not let us leave Castle Garden until evening.

Many people came to see the Jews exiled from Russia and they kindly asked how we were. We walked around in the garden. When we returned home, they gave us dinner and a place to spend the night. I did not sleep all night because I kept remembering my

homeland and the city of my residence. Moreover, I did not know where I was. Before dawn I fell asleep. When we awoke, we asked the agent who came with us to New York : 'What will be our destination?' He answered : 'Some of you will remain here, and others of you will go to Philadelphia or other places, but all of you will remain here another two weeks.'

Every day we went to see the wonderful city, the likes of which there is none in Russia. When we were walking, we heard youth calling us 'greener,' and we asked : 'What is this?' We were told that those youth go around idle all day, and when they meet a man foreign in his dress, they yell after him 'greener.' However, they will not do anything bad to him.

Every day they brought us to the place in which we were staying and fed us our meal. At the end of two weeks they sent us by railway to Philadelphia. I and some other immigrants remained here, and the rest of our brethren travelled onward. The agent asked us to tell him who of us desired to cultivate the land or in what handiwork we wished to engage. Since I did not know anything about agriculture, I chose employment....I chose sewing. In one day I learned this work because the machines here are preset and do not have to be moved by hand or by foot.

The anxieties felt by an immigrant were apparent in this letter. Here was an adult who had managed to travel all the way from his native country to the United States, yet upon his arrival at the American shore he was treated like an irresponsible child. Holed up in a strange building and given permission to explore his environment only at certain times, he had no choice but to put his fate in the hands of the New York committee. It is no wonder that so many immigrants were dependent on the Jewish community of New York City.

Ha-Zefirah revealed that welcoming the East European Jewish immigrants to the United States and integrating them into American society cast tremendous physical, emotional, and financial burdens on the Jews of New York City. Insufficient funds and overwhelming numbers of refugees made the tasks insufferable. In July, 1882, Ha-Zefirah published an article describing how the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society nearly folded because it could not handle the work load :

Ha-Zefirah, July 18, 1882

The waves of emigration and its breakers which passed over the head of the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society brought it to the brink of despair and [it almost ceased to exist]....Nevertheless, after the obstacles and the downfall, the society recovered and did not forsake the thousands of unfortunate persons hanging on its neck. From the time that this society was founded (in 1881) until this day, it has collected donations of approximately \$75,158, but only a balance of \$7,252 remains in its treasury at this time. From December 1, of last year, 3,693 immigrants from Rumania turned to the society....The expense for each immigrant rose to the sum of \$25.

Somehow, American Jewry was supposed to handle this financial strain. Yet how far would approximately \$80,000 stretch? At \$25 per immigrant, it was no wonder that the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society nearly failed during its first year. The East European Hebrew press revealed that American Jewry came to realize that it could not save East European Jewry by itself. Thus, as mentioned before, the New York committee sent Moritz Ellinger to Central and Eastern Europe to urge the Jews there to donate millions of dollars to this cause, and mass meetings were convened there to rally support for the unfortunate Jewish emigrants.



Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah also reported that efforts on the home front to raise funds on behalf of the immigrants did not cease. In New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other large cities, mass meetings were convened to show love for the oppressed Jews and disdain for their tormentors and to raise funds to sustain the Jews in Europe and finance their journey to the United States. Reports of these meetings appeared in Ha-Zefirah :

Ha-Zefirah, February 7, 1882

From the city of Chicago, the newspaper Jewish News announced that there was a large gathering in which the important donors of the city met to consult secretly about what to do to improve the situation of the Jews escaping from Russia. Those who gathered succeeded greatly in their mission, for they collected, from among themselves, the sum of \$200,000.

Despite the fact that this was advertised as a secret meeting, much information about its proceedings seemed to have been made public. It is unfortunate, however, that the writer of this article did not identify the donors who so generously contributed funds to relieve the situation of the unfortunate Jews or specify the tactics used by the fundraisers to amass the sum of \$200,000.

Two separate articles in Ha-Zefirah described one meeting convened in Philadelphia for the purpose of preparing the city for the arrival of some 300 Russian Jewish immigrants. The first article appeared in February, 1882 :

Ha-Zefirah, February 21, 1882

A Philadelphia newspaper announced that there was a large 'meeting' at whose head the Mayor presided. All the notables of the state attended. They spoke about the welfare of the oppressed immi-

grants. At the conclusion of the meeting they began to collect donations to support the 300 Russian Jewish emigrants who are prepared to come to this city aboard the ship 'Illinois.'

In addition to reporting what occurred at the meeting, the second article described how the citizens of Philadelphia assisted the newcomers once they arrived :

Ha-Zefirah, May 9, 1882

On March 3, the steamship Illinois brought from Liverpool to Philadelphia 326 emigrants from Russia. Even before they arrived, the Mayor, Samuel King, called a meeting in the City Hall. The heads and leaders of Philadelphia [attended]. They pledged donations of \$5,000. The president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company donated stations in the suburbs of the city in which the travellers could live until they found work and employment.

When the immigrants arrived, the committee received them with love and affection. They dressed them and shod them. With the donations received, they now will supply the immigrants' needs and help find work and employment for 200 people. The remainder of the immigrants are still detained in the stations.

A Second Meeting

On the eve of Shabbat, March 4, there was a big meeting in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. All the important people of the city gathered there, including the Governor of the state of Pennsylvania, the archbishop from this state, five bishops, and the important ministers from the various churches. Catholics, Protestants, Episcopalians, etc., Senators and Representatives also attended. Mayor King presided over the meeting. The speakers, particularly the clergy, spoke well of the Jews and exposed the evil of their persecutors....They resolved to bring this matter to the Congress in Washington and to the President, with a request that the government appeal to the Tsar of Russia His Majesty in the name of righteousness and honesty, and in the name of humanity....

They also decided to publicize the donations. According to the last announcement, \$20,000 had been received by the treasurer. The committee in Philadelphia intends to settle forty immigrant families in Iowa as agricultural colonists because approximately forty immigrants sent the committee a petition, written in Hebrew, expressing their desire to cultivate the land.

In addition to these 326 immigrants who came straight from Lemberg, the council already received more than 100 immigrants from the committee in New York. The committee in Philadelphia found work and employment for all of them, either in the city itself or in the small surrounding cities. In general, our brethren in Philadelphia evince brotherly love....

In this article, Ha-Zefirah reported how the inhabitants of the "City of Brotherly Love" demonstrated their concern for the East European Jewish immigrants who arrived there. However, the motivations for their actions were questionable. Were these people genuinely concerned about the welfare of the immigrants, or were they hastily doing all they could to prevent the city from being inundated by 326 unemployed and impoverished refugees? Moreover, where did the Jewish residents of Philadelphia fit into the scheme of welcoming the newcomers? Was their task simply to send the forty or so families off to a farm in Iowa, or were they also involved in the day to day maintenance of their brethren? It is encouraging, nevertheless, that the entire city of Philadelphia seems to have been involved in the project, from the Mayor and congressional representatives, to non-Jewish clergy and important businessmen. This indicated that the Jewish community of Philadelphia was not left floundering with the problem of what to do with the immigrants from Eastern Europe.

In November, 1881, Ha-Zefirah reported that a meeting was held at the Orphans' Home in New York City. One goal of the meeting was to raise public awareness of the plight of the Jewish refugees. Another goal was to review and evaluate what was being done to assist them. Among the 200 men who attended the meeting were Moritz Ellinger, Jacob Stanwood Menken, and Judge Myer Samuel Isaacs. The report of this meeting was published in Ha-Zefirah on January 17, 1882 :

Ha-Zefirah, January 17, 1882

The committee [in New York] announced in prominent newspapers that on Sunday, the fifth of Kislev (November 27), there would be a general meeting at the Hebrew Orphans' Home in New York City, and that every person who was concerned about the welfare of his brothers coming from Russia should come to the meeting. The appeal explicitly stated that at this meeting no pledges would be asked, so that no one would be deterred from coming. The purpose of the gathering was to establish a new association which would oversee the problem of the immigrants coming from Russia....

The Meeting

Approximately 200 men responded to this appeal. Among them were men of renown, donors and rich men, judges and lawyers of the Children of Israel, who knew how to put a matter in order with good taste and knowledge. It will not be superfluous to tell what was said by those people who gathered. One praised the immigrants for their diligence...and another told of their shame because they call uncleanness and stench Kosher and because they choose accommodations in hotels in neighborhoods of Jews from Russia and Poland, which are filled with dirt, rather than lodgings in clean guest houses owned by other Jews, etc. Mr. Charles Bernheim, president of the committee, was chosen to preside as chairman of the meeting. In his introduction he announced that the task of the committee was too great to bear. In the beginning, when

they took upon themselves this charitable work, he and his friends, the leaders of the committee, thought that the Alliance Israelite Universelle would select approximately 500 men who knew how to cultivate the land and send them here. For a number like that, it was easy enough for the committee to find them work. But instead of 500 men, approximately 1,500 men came, and there are still infinitely more to come....This never occurred to them. The committee wrote letters to the Alliance Israelite Universelle and warned it to stop sending people but, as it appeared, the immigration exceeded the limit which the association set for it. Its response was : 'We cannot stop [the immigration process] for the sake of those still to come, but send us money for their behalf.' However, the leaders of the committee were powerless and ineffective. Thus, they resolved to establish a permanent association, approved and established by the government, which would be called by the name 'Association of Jewish Supporters of Immigrants in the United States,' [Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society]. The permanent committee would transfer all the monetary accounts to the new association.

#### The Immigrants

To this day, the committee has received 1,225 immigrants. Of them, 580 were men and the rest were women and children. Two-hundred are ready to come on the steamship 'Allamania,' and 192 on the steamship 'Lessing,' from Hamburg. (Those ships had to return to England and were delayed there because of storms which obstructed their way at sea. The immigrants later were brought here in other ships.) According to this, the number of people who came each week was 1,642(?).

#### Donations

To this day, the committee has received donations of \$15,946 for the immigrants, and it received 50,000 francs from the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Paris. Another \$500 were received from Mr. Goldsmid for worthy and important emigres. Approximately

\$2,000 were in its hand before the new committee was established. The leaders of the committee successfully aroused Jews throughout the United States to establish local branches. The honorable Mr. Ellinger, a coroner of our city, is now travelling throughout the country to awaken and arouse our brethren to establish committees in their cities. His words have been productive.

#### The New Association

Two or three people at the meeting expressed their opinion that it was not necessary to establish a fixed and permanent association because immigration soon would end. It would pass, be cut off, and not continue for days and years. After the debate, they decided by a majority vote to establish a new and separate association which would be called 'The Association of Jewish Supporters of Immigrants in the United States.' [In Hebrew, this name varied slightly from the name given above.]

At the meeting, forty-five people were selected as supervisors and practitioners in the matter of this mitzvah. They met the next day and chose from among themselves Mr. J. S. Menken as president of the association and Mr. S. Henry and Mr. P. Nathan as vice presidents....

On December 5, 1881, the leaders of the association gathered at the Young Men's Hebrew Association and consulted concerning the administration of the association. They agreed that each member would be required to pay \$10 annually....

The meeting in New York discussed two problems relating to the immigration of East European Jews to the United States. The first was that the Jews already settled in the United States were appalled by the newcomers. They saw them as inferior people because of their old world traditions and their impoverishment. The second problem was

that the American Jews either misunderstood or miscalculated their role in the immigration and resettlement process. As a result, they felt overburdened by the seemingly endless stream of refugees.

According to these press accounts, the Jewish committee meetings were not casual gatherings. They were well organized and well chaired. In addition, they addressed important issues relating to the welfare of the immigrants.

Ha-Zefirah reported the convocation of subsequent Jewish committee meetings in New York. It announced that on March 1, 1882, many prominent Jews gathered in Temple Emanu-El to discuss the situation of the immigrants, to collect "a sum suitable to care for the thousands of people streaming here," and to announce a public appeal on their behalf :

Ha-Zefirah, May 9, 1882

The honorable Mr. Seligman opened the meeting. After him, Judge M. S. Isaacs spoke and described in detail all the things which the association did for the immigrants. He said that many of the immigrants found employment in the factories in New England.... The people desire to work, not to impose themselves upon the public.... Mr. Isaacs believes that if we rescue the immigrants, it will be well for us, for it is incumbent upon us to care for them, as for the rest of our flesh. Afterward, Mr. Louis May, president of Temple Emanu-El, spoke. [Following his speech,] all the people agreed to announce donations and to select a committee from among the elite of the city and the rabbis of the state.

On March 4, an appeal was published in our city's newspapers :

'A Request to the People'

Of the emigrant Jews from Russia, approximately 3,000 Jews already have come here. Among them are many farmers and workmen. Their value is greater than the value of the rest of the immigrants who settle on the shores of our country. At least another 10,000

will come here during the summer, and about 1,000 are on their way here.

In America, it is our responsibility to receive them lovingly, to supply their needs, and to find them work in the factory or in the field so that they will not become idlers or rely on charity. Rather, they will increase the good and the welfare of all people. In the name of humanity, our brethren request that we extend a helping hand to the unfortunate people who have escaped from their foes and from their persecutors.

This report suggested that American Jews endeavored to cope with the problems of the immigrants and to settle them successfully in the United States. This was the feeling of East Coast Jewry who did not want the immigrants to become a public burden. On the West Coast, however, far removed from the immediate problem, support was less generous. An article from Ha-Zefirah indicated that not everyone was willing to contribute his share to the cause of aiding the immigrants :

Ha-Zefirah, January 24, 1882

From the metropolis of the 'State of Gold,' from San Francisco, a writer for the newspaper American Israelite explained that the gold prospectors in this city are far from stout-hearted toward charity. Most of them will donate nothing, and the minority of them extend themselves by giving small donations. For example, Mr. Gerstle, the head of the Alaska Company whose worth is \$6-million, donated only \$200. Mr. Louis Max, whose worth is \$8-million, donated \$50. Mr. Adolph Sutro, whose worth is \$5-million, donated \$100. Rosenberg, Jr., who inherited from his uncle, the late Michael Reese, \$2-million, donated only \$5. Daniel Meyer and his friends, sellers of promissory notes, or money changers, whose worth is upward of \$8-million, donated nothing. One of the brothers was willing to give \$5, but his brothers rebuked him, saying : 'We have enough Russians here. Why should we squander



our money to increase their number?' There writer said that there are more than fifty Jews in San Francisco whose worth is \$1-million or more who donated nothing for their unfortunate brethren.

The frugality of some donors was matched by the hostility of some administrators when it came to distributing aid to the immigrants. At Castle Garden in New York, a commotion erupted between several Russian Jewish refugees and a paid employee of the New York committee who was appointed to oversee the newcomers there. Two different articles in Ha-Meliz described this situation :

Ha-Meliz, May 16, 1882

New York. The Telegraph from May 11, brought a sorrowful report which we consider unusual, although we cannot determine its precise meaning. The report reads : Many of the Jewish emigrants from Russia rebelled against the head of the committee who provides for their needs. They beat him with their hands because he denied their request. Eight of the men seized him. - Our hearts grow faint from hearing this strange report. It is true that the refugees are embittered. Undoubtedly, they have suffered and borne a lot and have no power left to hold out. But a disgraceful act like this will make men insane! We hope to receive new information which perhaps will explain this riddle for us.

New information about this incident was reported in the June 20, issue of Ha-Meliz. The article read :

Ha-Meliz, June 20, 1882

In Ha-Meliz, No. 17, we included a report from New York concerning the Russian Jewish refugees who injured one of the heads of the committee who oversees them, simply because he refused their request. Although the matter was strange in our eyes, we did not know its meaning. Now we have been informed of the details of the event. Reportedly, the injured man is Adolph Biernbaum. He is not a member of the committee. Rather, he was hired by the

committee to welcome the immigrants coming to New York, for which he receives \$100 a month. His responsibilities include caring for [the immigrants] and filling their needs.

The incident which occurred was this : Four families came to New York on May 10, and they were detained, to be sent two days later to the colony in Vineland, [New Jersey]. For their overnight stay, the overseer showed the men a place in Castle Garden and the women and children a separate place in a hotel, far away from the place from which they were supposed to depart for the colony. The men wanted permission to spend the night in the corridors of the hotel so that two days later they would be able to help their wives carry the children when they moved from the distant hotel to the place of their departure for the colony.

Biernbaum did not listen to them. He spoke harshly to them. The men grew bitter, and they took their wives and their children and went to Castle Garden to spend the night there together, each man and his household....The overseer became angry with them and, as a result, did not send them their meals. They were hungry because they had not eaten all day. At night, other immigrants came. The overseer ordered the servants to bring the first group and their households outside and to change places, at Castle Garden, with the new immigrants. Two days later, the men went to Biernbaum and asked him to send them to Vineland. Twelve embittered men arose from among them and fell upon him. They knocked him down, trampled him with their feet, and hit him. The police came, locked up eight men, and put them under close watch in order to bring them to court. The president of the committee paid \$200 bail for each man who had been seized. When their sentence was served, they were freed, and their punishment was explained. On May 12, this group was sent to the colony in Vineland, which is about four hours walking distance from New York [approximately eighty-five miles!].

The writer [of the newspaper article from which we obtained this information] tried to lessen the guilt of those belligerent persons whose malice encouraged them to raise a hand against their benefactor...and to defile, with violence, the country which opened its gates to them and gave them rest in the day of their trouble. He commented that Biernbaum is a hard man who behaves corruptly and criticizes people severely. [We also learn from the fact] that the head of the committee hurried to take the culprits out of jail that they acted correctly....In truth, the overseer whom they appointed did not know how to be deliberate in his actions or to adjust to the difficulties of the day. Nevertheless, we hope that this incident will not be a stumbling block or an obstacle to the rest of the immigrants coming to find shelter in America.

The clash at Castle Garden was a physical representation of the anxieties experienced by the immigrants combined with the "we don't want you here" attitude expressed by many American Jews. It demonstrated that the situation was extremely difficult for both parties. By including this article in his publication, the editor of Ha-Meliz offset other articles which suggested that American Jewish aid to East European Jewish immigrants was generously given and kindly received.

As is apparent from these articles, American Jews struggled to fund the immigration of East European Jews to the United States and to support them once they arrived here and until they were settled. Whatever their motives, whatever their personal likes and dislikes for the immigrants, they viewed this work as a mitzvah, a deed for which they and the country sheltering the oppressed refugees would be blessed. Because of their belief in this mission, they were able to raise funds and to enlist fellow countrymen to support their cause.

## Chapter Four

### The American Government

In addition to reporting specific Jewish concerns, the East European Hebrew press also featured articles about the American government, including the presidency, the electoral process, Congress, Jewish officials, and minorities. Having come from Eastern Europe, many of the correspondents for Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah tended to describe American elected officials as royalty. An example of this frame of reference was an article which described the sensational world tour which ex-President Ulysses S. Grant took in 1877. This journey from Philadelphia to San Francisco, via Europe, Asia, and Africa, was a journey which "was as yet a comparatively strange adventure...and the acme of indulgence by the rich."<sup>1</sup> As a result, it assumed an almost official character :

Ha-Zefirah, February 11, 1879

It has been two years since General Grant left the United States and crossed the great Atlantic Ocean to see all the countries of the world. He will visit all the governments of Europe, in addition to a few places in Asia and Africa. Wherever he goes he is honored, as is befitting his worth, because in addition to the fact that he was twice elected as President of the American Republic, he also is a high army officer. During the Civil War, 200,000 soldiers served under his command.

#### Grant in Ireland

He is now travelling in the country of Ireland which is controlled by the English government. When he visited the cities of Dublin and Belfast, he was welcomed honorably, as is proper. We were astonished, however, when, at the beginning of the month of January,

he decided to visit the city of Cork. The advisors of that city had resolved not to show Grant any signs of respect. The reason for this is that they are pious Catholics, and Mr. Grant is a Protestant. At that time, the Protestants were not willing to give the Catholics home rule....Many American citizens were enraged with the people of Cork because they dared to despise a man who is so distinguished. The president of France, Mr. McMahon, and the kings of Spain and Italy also are Catholic. Nevertheless, they showed Grant signs of love and honor. Pope Pius IX also spoke well about him.

#### The Irish in the United States

There are many Irish refugees in the United States, most of whom belong to the Democratic Party, as opposed to Mr. Grant who belongs to the Republican Party. As a result of religious jealousy, the Irish fear his being elected a third time....

Now Mr. Grant intends to travel to the countries of India, China, and Japan. The government of the United States sent a warship, the 'Richmond,' to bring him honorably to his destination.

Even lesser government officials were treated like royalty. Ha-Meliz reported that when Simon Wolf, United States consul in Egypt, visited his birthplace in Germany, he was treated like royalty because he was a representative of the American government :

Ha-Meliz, September 27, 1881

Mr. Simon Wolf from America, General Consul and diplomat of the American government in Alexandria, which is in Egypt, is a native of Hinzweiler....Thirty-two years ago, his father and his household journeyed from here and went to live in America. At the time, this man Wolf was eleven years old. When Mr. Wolf's family emigrated from here, they were very poor, but in America they became rich. After the family left, only twelve Jewish families remained in Hinzweiler, but all of them have since left. Not one remains.

On August 22, Mr. Wolf went to visit his birthplace. The people of the town were happy to welcome him, and they received him kindly. He was so happy to see his birthplace that he almost cried from the overwhelming joy he felt, especially when he saw some people he still remembered from his childhood. He asked that a memorial plaque be hung on the house in which he was born and that the date on which he came to see the house be inscribed on it. He even visited the cemetery and gave money to beggars and school children.

In addition to describing the reception of American officials abroad, the East European Hebrew press also described efforts by some American officials to aid oppressed Jews abroad. When Benjamin Franklin Peixotto served, in 1870, as the first United States consul in Bucharest, he pressed vigorously for the emancipation of the Jews there and took the initiative in founding Jewish schools, cultural societies, and a Rumanian B'nai B'rith, as part of his plan to modernize Jewish life in Rumania. He also endorsed Jewish emigration from there to the United States.

In 1880, an article appeared in Ha-Zefirah describing the intervention by Mr. Matthews, United States consul in Tangiers, to aid the Jews living there :

Ha-Zefirah, December 9, 1880

By writing letters to the local city government, I did everything in my power to obtain the government's trust. I received a letter from the Grand Vizier in which he promised that the Jews who wear European clothing will be able to walk in the streets of Fez. - The officer who disciplined the Jew by beating him until he collapsed was put in prison by decree of the Sultan, and he was brought to Fez. I wrote to the government and asked it to announce his punishment to me, to see if it has any influence over the

rest of the officers so as not to act maliciously, as is their custom.

Not only did Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah show interest in United States government officials abroad, but they also were concerned with American domestic issues, including the presidential election of 1880. On October 7, 1880, Ha-Meliz published an article about the candidates, James A. Garfield and Winfield Scott Hancock :

Ha-Meliz, October 7, 1880

In America, in another fifteen days, on October 22, the election of the President of the Republic will be held. There are two men on the ballot. The Republican Party, whose members reside in the northern part of the country, endorse General Garfield, and the Democratic Party, whose members reside in the south, endorse General Hancock. Garfield is a learned man, a wise and understanding master in matters of state and proceedings of government. He is liked by many of the people because he personally dwelled among the poor. In his youth, Garfield was a coachman, a driver of horses, a laborer, and a farmer. From the pasture he went to fight in the Civil War. Garfield showed great aptitude in the strategies of war. He was successful, and he was promoted to the rank of General. After the war he was elected to Congress.

General Hancock has been a soldier since his youth. He learned how to fight in the military academy and in the war between the North and the South. He is considered a great army officer, a famous man who knows war tactics. However, he has not yet tested his power in matters of governmental leadership. But there is nothing to fear because Garfield will be elected President of the country.

Whether or not it meant to, Ha-Meliz endorsed James A. Garfield's presidential candidacy. It supported Garfield who had both military and congressional experience and dismissed the election of Hancock

who knew nothing about running a government.

Confident that Garfield would be elected President of the United States, Ha-Meliz refrained from publishing more information about the presidential candidates. It focused instead on the electoral process :

Ha-Meliz, October 28, 1880

The system for electing the President of the Republic in America is like this : All the states of the nation which are unified in the association of North America select from among themselves 369 electors who gather in Washington, the capital city and the place where Congress resides, and they select the President according to the majority opinion....The term of office of the administration of the President of the Republic is four years.

Ha-Meliz's interest in the United States' electoral process probably stemmed from the fact that the newspaper was published in St. Petersburg, the capital of Russia. Living in close proximity to imperial and aristocratic families and exposed to news about the Tsar's autocratic regime, the readers of this newspaper undoubtedly were eager to learn about the democratic government overseas, including its structure, leaders, and organization.

Apparently, the editor of Ha-Meliz realized that his brief description of the electoral process did not provide adequate information for his readers to understand the American system. Hence, on December 7, 1880, he published a more comprehensive article about the electoral process and included a description of the make-up of Congress :

Ha-Meliz, December 7, 1880

In America, the legislators of the country are chosen as they are in Europe - to two houses, to the House of Representatives, which is the lower house, and to the Senate, which is the upper house. Together, these two houses are called Congress.



### The House of Representatives

Each state in the Union elects one man for every 30,000 residents to be its representative in the lower house. If a new state enters the Union but does not have 30,000 residents...it still will choose for itself one delegate to the lower house. If the number of residents in the state rises to 60,000, it will elect two, and so on. The state representatives are chosen for a period of two years.

### The Senate

The upper house is the Senate. Each state elects two senators for a period of six years, and every two years, a third of the senators are elected anew, so that after six years the entire Senate is renewed. The Vice President of the country presides over the Senate. In the lower house, the representatives elect from among themselves a man to preside over them.

### The Legislative Process

A bill which is proposed and accepted in the lower house by a majority vote goes to the upper house to be confirmed. When the upper house agrees to the bill, it comes before the President of the country in order to be confirmed as law. After fourteen days, the President of the country is obligated to return the bill, with his signature, to the Senate. If the President confirms the bill, it becomes law in America. If the President of the country vetoes the bill, it will not be confirmed as law. Rather, it will be returned to the lower house to be reconsidered. If the bill is confirmed by a majority vote of two-thirds, then it will be returned to the upper house, and if there too it is approved by a majority vote of two-thirds, then it will become the law of the country, even against the desire of the President....

### The Presidential Election

The President of the country must be a native born, American citizen. Approximately three or four months prior to the day

designated for the election, all the political parties publicly announce the name of their candidate. During these months, everyone is allowed to study the candidates and offer opinions about them. In an election year, all the people gather on the first Tuesday of November and, by ballot, select electors. The electors chosen are those who receive the majority vote. Later, they will select the President. Each state chooses electors according to the combined number of its congressional representatives. On the first Wednesday of December, the electors gather to vote for the President. The list of presidential nominees is sent to the Speaker of the Senate. On the second Wednesday of February, the upper and lower houses of Congress gather together and open the lists. They vote and announce publicly the name of the man who was elected President by the majority vote. On March 4, the new President is inaugurated to preside over the country.

Although the end of the presidential election occurs in February, the essence of the election occurs in November with the selection of the electors. At that time, it is known who will be President of the country because the number of electors for each party is known.

According to the number of people who lived in America in 1870, approximately 369 electors were chosen, and a majority opinion was 185 votes. According to the sum of electors who were chosen this past November 2, Garfield was elected President, that is, according to the voters' opinion. But the end of the election will occur in December and February, as was said above.

These paragraphs captured the essence of the presidential election process and made it meaningful to foreign readers. Yet something which must have perplexed the maskilim who read these articles was how a Republican President, namely Garfield, could preside over a democracy. Thus, a contributor to Ha-Zefirah defined the word "democrat" :

Ha-Zefirah, October 28, 1880

The notion of the word 'democrat' in America is very different from its essential meaning and significance in Europe. That is to say, in America, the man who desires government by the people and absolute equality for all is extolled by the name 'democrat.'

The East European Hebrew press' interest in the American government extended from political parties, Congress, and the presidency to Jewish officials in the government. In the following articles, some of these men were identified :

Ha-Zefirah, February 21, 1881

There are three Jewish men in the Congress of the United States of America. Mr. Jonas is the Senator from the state of Louisiana, Mr. Morse is from Massachusetts, and Mr. Einstein is from the city of New York.

Among the important diplomats in the government of the Republic there are many Jews, and the most honored and praised among them are Mr. Simon Wolf, government diplomat in Alexandria, Egypt, Mr. Benjamin Peixotto, diplomat in Lyons, which is in France, and Mr. David Einstein, in the city of Amsterdam, Holland.

In March, 1882, Ha-Meliz published a similar article :

Ha-Meliz, March 14, 1882

There are three Jews in the Congress of the United States of America : Senator A. P. Jonas, who represents the state of Louisiana, Leopold Morse, from the state of Massachusetts, and Edwin Einstein from New York.

Among the American diplomats in other countries we find Mr. Simon Wolf, consul general in Egypt, Mr. Benjamin Peixotto, consul in Lyons (in France. Previously, he was in Rome.) Also, Mr. David Einstein, consul in Amsterdam.

Despite the fact that Mr. Peixotto had served in Bucharest, not Rome, and that consuls were "a dime a dozen," both newspapers reported that between 1880-1882, at least six Jews were prominent in the government of the United States. Apparently, this was a source of pride to both American and East European Jews.

The treatment of minorities in America also was reported in the East European Hebrew press. The Declaration of Independence of the United States guarantees

that all differences among groups [and] among individuals are both natural and desirable....In affirming that all men are created equal, and that the rights of all to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are unalienable, it accepts human beings as they are, with all the variety and multiplicity of faith, of race, of sex, of occupation, of ideas, of possessions; and it affirms the equal right of these people freely to struggle for existence and for growth in freedom and in happiness....It repudiates the presumption that any individual or society may demand of the neighbor a justification of the latter's existence.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the policy and practice of the American government indicated that some people were less equal than other people. Within the former category fell the American Indians who, during the nineteenth century, were removed from the East to the Great Plains. The history of the Indians in America and their ill-treatment by the government was the subject of an article by Judah David Eisenstein :

Ha-Zefirah, December 9, 1880

When Columbus discovered America at the end of the fourteenth century [Eisenstein was off by a century], he found Indians, natives of the country who had been there eternally. At that time, they numbered about three-million people. Their skin was like smooth,

polished copper. They lived like wild men in the forest and fed themselves on what they hunted. They praised their gods, but they also believed in One God who ruled over all. They hoped that after their death they would be able to hunt wild game and buffalo in the Garden of Eden. For them, being born during the day or on a night with a full moon was a good omen, for they believed that the darkness of the night would darken their success.

#### The Tribes

They are divided into many tribes and are called by different names : Modoc, Sioux, Cheyenne, Creeks, Nez Perce. The heads of their tribes are called by adjectives or nicknames like Lying Ox, Pig from the Forest, Old Crow, Red Tree, Left Hand...Small and Big Horn, etc.

The first war with the white men was...in 1539 in the city of Mobile, Alabama. Here, the spirit of freedom and might enthused them, and they risked their lives to die on the battlefield. However, they lacked all the necessities of war, and the white men overcame, conquered, and destroyed them....Their number dwindled greatly. Those who remained were persecuted and oppressed....The last wars were with the Modoc, Nez Perce, and Sioux tribes. General Custer and 300 men were killed by them on June 26, 1876. The Indians who were captured by the United States troops were imprisoned in various fortresses and fed from the government's treasury by agents who supplied all their needs. But sometimes, when the agents were unfaithful...the Indians would arise courageously and escape from them. It happened, last January 16, that 150 Indians from the Cheyenne tribe, who dwelled in the Robinson Fort...stole weapons for themselves from their neighbors, the Sioux tribe, who always came to visit them, and suddenly attacked the guards who were surrounding them. They escaped, but the soldiers pursued them. After several days, they succeeded in bringing back seventy people, but the rest were unwilling to be subjugated by them and died martyrs' deaths. Nine men from

the army died and eleven were wounded.

On the other hand, the government will try with all its power to educate them and to enlighten them with the light of civilization. It will build them houses and give them fields and vineyards to work, whose fruit they will eat. The government also will build them schools and teach them English. Many of them will accept the Christian religion.

Eighteen months later, Ha-Zefirah published another article about the plight of the American Indians and the American government's attempts to enlighten and civilize them :

Ha-Zefirah, December 23, 1880

Our eyes see that the sun of civilization has begun to cast its rays in places which formerly were filled to overflowing with the darkness of fools. People who until now were blindfolded and groping in the darkness of ignorance opened their eyes and delighted to receive education. The Indians, who were in this land before the foot of Columbus tread upon it, were uncivilized and strong as wild animals. When the Europeans stepped here with giant steps of wisdom and built fortresses for themselves, the Indians in this land still lived the life of beasts. They lived in booths which they made for themselves and their households, in the valleys of the forests and on the tops of rocks. They walked around barefoot and naked, and they sustained themselves and their households with the game they hunted....Hate for the Europeans who stole their lands was innate in the Indians.

The Government of the United States and the Indians

Nevertheless, the government of this country sought peace with the Indians and did everything in its power to improve their situation and to civilize them....[The government] promised to support them with money and lands if they promised to cultivate the land, sow seeds, build houses, and raise their children as

United States citizens. In truth, the government was successful, and the Opatas...and the Sioux Indians in the Dakota Territory and the Indians on the shore of the Mississippi [River] have stepped forward into civilization. In Washington, letters of request for plowing tools and the like are received daily from the the Indians. The number of Indians in the United States, excluding Alaska, exceeds 255,938....The number of civilized Indians is approximately 17,750.

#### The Civilized Tribes

In 1880, the civilized Indians in the United States, except those who dwelled in Indian Territory, engaged in these types of work : They prepared 27,283 acres of land for seeding....Their fields produced 415,777 bushels of wheat, 6,664,300 bushels of corn, 222,429 bushels of barley, 376,145 bushels of vegetables, and 56,572 tons of hay. They also raised 78,812 cattle and 864,137 sheep. The five civilized tribes who dwelled in Indian Territory owned 314,369 acres of good field, which produced 336,424 bushels of wheat, 2,346,042 bushels of corn, 124,368 bushels of barley, 16,800 baskets of wool, and 14,900 tons of hay. They also raised 27,904 cattle and 400,202 pigs.

For the civilized Indians, except those who dwelled in Indian Territory, there were 110 schools and sixty missionary schools, in which 7,000 children were taught by 310 teachers. The leaders of the United States have not yet extended their promise in the matter of the education of the Indian children. Approximately 50,000 Indians are unable to pay for the education of their children in schools. However, the Congress in Washington agreed to build approximately thirteen new schools....

Thus you see how the uncivilized among enlightened men rejected the ignorance of their ancestors and chose for themselves the ways of wisdom and progress. It is our hope that the day will come when they will fulfill the words of the prophecy and 'the

land will be filled with knowledge.'

Although Eisenstein's articles amply described the history of the Indians in the United States and the government's involvement with them, it is possible to question whether he used the Indians as a symbol for the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. An Orthodox Jew from Eastern Europe, Eisenstein could have viewed the newcomers as uncivilized men whom other Americans hoped would "reject the ignorance of their ancestors and choose for themselves the ways of wisdom and progress." Eisenstein could have proposed acculturation and Americanization as solutions to the Jewish immigrant problem as easily as he proposed them as viable solutions to the Indian problem.

According to Ha-Zefirah, acculturation and Americanization also were the solutions proposed to solve the problems caused by Chinese immigrants in the United States :

Ha-Zefirah, April 1, 1879

The question of the Chinese...came before the House of Representatives and the Senate in the forty-fifth session of Congress in the capital city, Washington. Congress resolved to limit the number [of Chinese] coming to the United States by establishing a quota and forbidding all ships to bring to the shores of our country more than fifteen Chinese at a time. Any captain who transgressed this order would certainly be punished.

The representatives debated this issue for several days. Many among them, including Senator Blaine, sanctioned this law and justified their view with these words : 1) They are sons of Mongolia who believe in hidden gods; 2) Their skin looks like olive oil and is different from ours; 3) They defile themselves by eating abominable and creeping things, and they live in cramped residences which are injurious to the health of man. Finally,



and most important, their expenses are few and they are willing to work for very low wages. In this way, they decrease the wages of other workers who will not be able to feed themselves with this minimal wage.

#### Support in Favor of the Chinese

Other representatives, including Mr. Butler, a representative from New York, opposed this [line of reasoning]. He said that on account of this law the trade agreement between the United States and China, which is known as the 'Burlingame Treaty,' would become null. This would be bad for Americans who do business with China. In addition, [the law] would violate the Constitution which holds that there is one law for all the different parties and religions. Why should we reject a group of Chinese, the color of whose skin looks like olive oil? He made a comparison to the Negroes who are black and on whose behalf the Civil War broke out, [a war] which destroyed 600,000 soldiers and cost more than \$5,000-million....If occasionally they will need to work for a low wage, is this not a free country in which everyone does what is right in his eyes as long as he does not violate the laws and ordinances of his state!

#### The Decision

It came to pass that when the representatives voted, the nays were greater than the yeas, and the prohibition against the Chinese coming to the shores of the United States with more than fifteen people on one ship at one time was agreed upon and given to President Hayes to sign. Many newspapers were enraged by this. They contested this law and warned the President not to put it into effect. Nevertheless, many people advised him to endorse and confirm it. From California he received many letters encouraging him to endorse it. Many distinguished and renowned citizens came to the signing. Among them were some important and great Jews....In truth, it was not desirable or right for the Jews who were persecuted from of old now to become pursuers, and to turn

from exiles to banishers. In addition, it is against our holy Torah which teaches us, 'You shall love the stranger.' But thanks to the President who, on February 28, turned the scales of merit and returned the bill to the House of Representatives with his veto on it. Therefore, the bad bill and perverted law was not put into action, to the happiness of all lovers of mankind.

This article implied that intolerance against Chinese immigrants stemmed primarily from the fact that they were temporary residents in the United States, coolie workers who came only to make a living and accumulate wealth to take back to China. "They purchased little or no land or real property, and contributed almost nothing in taxes to the support of the state....They made no homes here and took no steps toward acquiring citizenship....They contributed nothing to the support of the charitable and other communal institutions of the land to which they came...."<sup>4</sup> Although Jewish immigrants, like the Chinese, often were labeled as barbarians, animals or people of animal instincts, they fared much better than the Asian immigrants in the United States. Despite the stereotype of Jews as parvenus, as people who lacked table manners, as people who attracted attention by clamorous behavior and forced their way into society that was above them, and despite their foreignness and cultural eccentricities,<sup>5</sup> Jews were, for the most part, well regarded.

Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah's interest in United States domestic and foreign politics lessened following the assassination attempt by Charles Guiteau against President Garfield. For four months, both Hebrew periodicals provided detailed and descriptive digests of the shooting itself and of the condition of the wounded President. The intense

interest in this tragedy most likely stemmed from the fact that just months before, in March, 1881, Tsar Alexander II had been assassinated in St. Petersburg. The reign of Tsar Alexander II had ushered in an era of hope for the Jews of Russia. The reforms he had introduced, following the abolition of serfdom, had created new opportunities for Jews. They had effected their economic situation and forced them into new areas of commerce and industry. During this period, Russian society had manifested a more positive attitude toward Jews which, in return, had led to Jews' rapid Russification (i.e. acquisition of the Russian language; identification with Russian culture and Russian national ideals; and involvement in the reunification of the religious and national traditions of Judaism)<sup>6</sup> and to the spread of secular learning among them.<sup>7</sup> With the succession of Alexander III, the "Police Constitution" was reinstated "as a counter-balance to the idea of a legal state prevalent in the 'rotten West.'"<sup>8</sup> Whether the editors of Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah saw parallels between the attacks against Tsar Alexander II and President Garfield and the subsequent rise to power of two unpopular leaders, Alexander III and Chester A. Arthur, or whether they focused so intensely on the welfare of the President because they knew that their readers were interested in the United States, the fact remains that during this period, coverage of the American presidency was extraordinary :

Ha-Meliz, July 5, 1881

From Washington in America came the information that last Shabbat, July 2, when the President of the Republic went to the railroad, a man confronted and shot him from behind with a rifle. The President's right hand and right side near the spinal column were injured. The President is very unfortunate. His life

is in danger because the doctors are unable to extract the bullet from his stomach. At first, they feared that the blood would aggravate the wound and that the wound would rupture within him. On Sunday, it appeared to the doctors that the severity of his illness had eased a little. The President might not die, even if the bullet remains within him.

After the shooting, the assassin was apprehended. It was discovered that his name is Guiteau. Previously, he was an American consul in France, but he resigned from his position. It is not yet known if he who lifted his hand against the President of the Republic took vengeance upon him, or if he is a friend of dissidents, people who conspired to commit this brazen crime, that is, desiring the lives of kings and rulers of the earth.

Ha-Meliz, July 12, 1881

The President of the United States did not die from his wounds. Rather, he is recovering, and there is hope that he certainly will live. What was the reason which caused the assassin to attack the President of the country who, only four months ago, assumed office over the people? In the beginning, they thought that the man was angry...but others feared that he sought vengeance from Garfield because the latter did not appoint him to the office he desired. But now it seems that this may be a political matter, and it may indicate that a conspiracy exists in the administration.

#### Corruption in the Government

This is a country blessed by the Lord with liberty...rest...wealth and happiness, a country for which all the people of the land are zealous. - This country also is not free from sin, for it has been plagued for a long time with evil : its princes are like locusts and its commanders are like locusts. All the officials who hold government positions are lovers of gain made by violence and seekers of bribes. Not for the good of their country or for their native land do they toil, but rather, their eyes are toward

gain only and toward filling their pockets with gold and their homes with spoil in order to get rich illegally.

This plague, which ruins almost all the officials of the government, first bloomed in the days of President Lincoln at the time of the [Civil] War, and it later took root in the days of President Grant because he was a good-hearted man who hid his eyes from his officials, and they did what their hearts desired. The next President said that he would purge the country of the leeches and restore honest officials in their stead, but he was unable to complete this task since he would have needed for this a basic reformation in all the branches of government. During the term of a President, which is four years, such a program could not be completed. Besides which, the task was too great for him. He was discouraged and left things as they were. Thus, corruption increased and oppression became manifest in the country, not in secret and not underground, but publicly.

#### Congressional Appointments

This is how people are nominated in America : Approximately 70,000 men who hold positions and offices in the government are chosen and appointed by the President of the country. The Senate approves the appointments and confirms the men in their offices by a majority vote. Thus is implanted the evil custom which the elders who preside in the Senate uphold : each man tries to appoint his friends and his relatives and give them a source for their livelihood. In the Senate, there once was a party of men who worked to provide the positions and the offices to those who desired them, and this too was not without its cost....All of this was done practically with public advertising, and it was known to all the people. Since the appointment of officials depends on the knowledge of the President, the selection of the President depends on the appointment of the officials. At the time of an election, all the officials do whatever they can to try to tip the balance for this one or that one, if they know that there is hope in it for them that

they will not be removed from their positions.

#### President Garfield's Administration

Behold, when Garfield was elected President, he desired wholeheartedly to eradicate this evil from the country a little at a time and to remove the people who were known to him as pursuers of bribes and replace them with good, honest people. Because of this, many of the Senators, the Representatives, and their aides... rose against Garfield. When Garfield needed to appoint an officer over the customs house in New York, which was a lucrative position because it provided gain abundantly, a quarrel erupted between the President of the Republic, Garfield, and Senator Conkling and his faction because in the round-about ways of Conkling, the Senate was not willing at first to give this position to the man whom Garfield chose. Rather, it was inclined to endorse the man whom Conkling presented before it. But Garfield was persistent and the Senate was forced to abrogate its desire in favor of the President's. Then the members of Conkling's party saw that as long as Garfield lived, they would not be able to stand their own ground, so they resolved to remove him.

#### Conkling-Guiteau Conspiracy?

The man Guiteau was not a middleman in the crime of others. When this man was apprehended after the assassination attempt, they found in his bosom two letters, one by Grant, who previously was President of the country, and the second by Sherman, an army officer. From these letters, it appeared that these two men also belonged to Conkling's faction....When the judge examined and investigated the matter of the assassination, he asked the seized man who he was and why he had attacked the President of the country. Guiteau replied frankly, saying that he was a citizen of the country, a native of...Illinois. He wounded Garfield in order to save the Republican Party.

When the Kaiser of Germany heard about this murder, he feared greatly and sent, via the telegraph, to ask about the welfare of the wounded man. Also, Queen Victoria of England inquired three times about Garfield's welfare. She said that she was very sorry about the tragedy which had happened to him.

Ha-Zefirah, July 12, 1881

The report which came in the early days of last week from beyond the sea, the Atlantic Ocean, about the murder of the President of the Republic of the United States in North America, irritated us because the United States, among all the countries of the world, is the most enlightened country. We were enraged to see that the spirit of perplexity which hovers over the many inhabitants of Europe also hovers over the inhabitants of the land of liberty and paves the way for evil in the land of political freedom and freedom of opinion. These are the details of the incident :

On July 2, President Garfield went to the courtyard of the railroad which runs from Washington to Boston. There he encountered a man named Charles Guiteau. Previously, [Guiteau] was the American consul in Marseilles, France. Guiteau shot the President two times and wounded him with dangerous blows on the hand and body. The President fell helpless, his blood dripping and flowing. He was brought to his residence, the White House. For many days the sick man hovered between life and death. Because the bullet went deeper and deeper into his stomach, they could not extract it from him. According to the information that came out today, his situation has improved. He is almost out of danger.

It is now known that the assassin Guiteau committed the crime of his own volition, that is, taking vengeance on [the President]. He was not an agent of a political party.

Ha-Meliz, July 19, 1881

The information coming from Washington tells us that the condition of President Garfield is improving, and there is hope that he will recover and live. The federal judges who examined and investigated the matter of the assassination are certain that the assassin, Guiteau, plotted and committed the sin by himself. Others had no part with him.

All the officials of the government and the leaders of the state who were opponents of President Garfield, including past-President Grant, Senator Conkling, and Vice President Arthur, hurried to express publicly their opinion, to pour out their anger against the sinning murderer, and to express their sorrow over the tragedy which occurred to the President....By these actions they wiped out from the heart and mind of many people the suspicion that they were involved in this treachery. The assassin will not be brought to justice until it is known whether the President will recover from his wounds and live, or whether he will perish and die. According to this outcome will the punishment of the assassin be decided.

Ha-Zefirah, July 19, 1881

The President of the Republic of the United States, which is in North America, General Garfield, is recuperating, and there is hope that in a number of days he will be healed of the wounds which he received at the hands of the assassin, Guiteau. [This will be] to the joy of all the honest people in the two hemispheres who are embittered by an assassination attempt like this, an attempt upon the life of the head of the citizens of the land of liberty and freedom.

Ha-Meliz, July 26, 1881

Garfield, the President of the United States, still turns in his travail upon his bed, and his life hangs before him. Were it not for his strong temperament and the strong power of his soul which



sustain him, then perhaps he already would have bent and sunk under his pains and his agonies. Last Friday, he lay awake because his illness intensified....The doctors, who always watch over the sick man, saw that his fever increased, and they hurried and called two expert doctors from New York to consult with them. The doctors fear lest this advancing disease cling to the sick man.

Ha-Meliz, August 2, 1881

The American Secretary of State announced to all the American officials who are in other countries that on July 23, at noon, Garfield's condition worsened and that his illness overcame him. That night, sleep escaped him. The doctors decided to cut the flesh under the wound in order to provide an exit for the pus dripping from it. After they made the incision, the illness eased and he slept. By noon the next day, his status improved, and now there is hope that he will arise and recover from his illness.

Ha-Zefirah, August 2, 1881

On Shabbat, July 2, the ears of all the inhabitants of our country rang to the sound of the terrible news and hearts which heard the telegraph from Washington became fearful because a bloodguilty man, an assassin, fired two shots at the President of our country, James Abraham Garfield. The President was seriously wounded. Report after report came that when the President went at nine o'clock in the morning to the railroad station in Washington to travel via New York to Williamstown, [Massachusetts],...a scoundrel by the name of Charles Guiteau lay in wait for him. Guiteau fired two bullets at the President. The first bullet wounded his left shoulder and the second bullet wounded and passed through his eleventh rib, penetrating his stomach above the hip. He fell to the ground, rolling in his blood. The doctors rushed to help him and brought him to the White House, which is the President's residence in Washington. The blow was nearly fatal. The President

felt a depressed pain in his legs, but he was clear minded from the first hour and his heart was strong. Occasionally, he would repeat himself....It was not known exactly where in his body the bullet was situated, but in Dr. Bliss' opinion, the bullet had wounded or touched the liver or the diaphragm. On the evening of July 4, his illness reached a critical point, and the doctors gave up hope for his life....However, they conquered it and his illness lessened from day to day. Twelve days already have passed since the time he was shot....He still is in danger, but the doctors now hope that he will recover from his illness. His recovery is soon to come. The President hopes likewise, and his one request for those people who sit before him watching over his situation is : 'You keep heart. I have not yet lost mine.'

#### The Assassin

The assassin was apprehended and brought under guard. He had to be rescued from the great crowd which sought to tear him to pieces. The people were very bitter toward him. The sentence for the assassin will be determined by the law of the land. If the President dies, Guiteau will be hanged. If Garfield survives his illness, Guiteau will atone for his sin by being imprisoned in jail for ten years, because there is one law for taking the life of a poor person or for raising a hand against the President of the country.

This bloodguilty man is a Protestant Christian, a native of the country and a lawyer. He is about forty years old. He has been known as a scoundrel and a doer of crafty schemes since his youth. Many times he has defiled his hands with greed, oppression, fraud, and treachery. After General Garfield was elected President of the country, the wicked man requested that Garfield appoint him as consul general in one of the large cities in Europe - Vienna, Berlin, Paris, or at least Marseilles, which is in France. The President did not pay attention to the nasty words or stop this

character whom he did not even know personally. He did not respond to him at all because he thought the man was crazy or foul or possessed an evil spirit. Therefore, this crafty scoundrel planned to take the President's life in order to take revenge against him.

In the letter which was found in the assassin's hand, it said that he is one of the stalwarts of the Republican Party opposed to the President's program....Because of this, he left his position and, following the advice of Vice President Chester A. Arthur, resolved, for the welfare of the country, to remove Garfield. Mr. Arthur would succeed Garfield as President of the United States. Behold, there was some truth to this plan, a plan which is a disgrace and an eternal insult to the American people who delight in the Republic and in freedom of choice....But according to the investigations and the many inquiries, it has been proven that Guiteau alone desired this opportunity for himself. The essence of his intention was his private hatred for the President who did not appoint him to a position or give him responsibilities. There is also proven evidence that he is a crazy and possessed man....It is clear that he committed the murderous act by himself and that no other man had a part in it. Therefore, there is no need at all to fear, even if the President dies, for, as Mr. Garfield himself said upon the assassination of President Lincoln in 1865, 'The Lord rules in heaven, and the government in Washington still lives.'

#### President Garfield, The Man

The incident of the attack created great commotion in all the streets of the United States. Every heart melted upon hearing this report, and all hands became weak....Mr. Garfield is loved, favored, and esteemed by all the people of America, even though they separate into parties and factions in the interest of politics, but that did not prevent them from honoring him for his good merits and his personal characteristics which were praise-

worthy....He is a son beloved by his mother who is about eighty years old, a loving husband to his wife, and a good father to his small children. By his wisdom and his honesty he was worthy to ascend to the top to be the head of this great and exalted Republic.

#### Public Response to the Assassination Attempt

People of every city and state and royalty from all the countries of Europe hurried to send him and his household letters of comfort over the tragedy which occurred to him and to tell them that everyone joins in their trouble and [condemns] the evil deed of the assassin which defiled the honor of this land....In all the houses of worship, the children of all people gathered, according to their religions, to offer supplication and prayer to the Lord, asking that He send complete healing to the President of the country. The Jews in Washington were the first to offer up singing and prayers in his behalf during the morning service on Shabbat immediately after the President was attacked.

In the first days during which the President's illness intensified, the doctors announced the status of the illness every half hour, and the wires of the telegraph were heard throughout our spacious country. Now they will announce it only three times a day - morning, noon, and evening, in addition to specific information. The newspapers are published for the tens of thousands many times each day because all the people crave news and want to know of his welfare, as well as everything that was done to him. They speak of his illness day and night.

#### Charity for the President's Family

According to the suggestion of Cyrus W. Field...\$250,000 were collected in our city [New York] for charity for the wife of the President and his children, for the sake of quieting the heart of the sick man so that he will not have to worry about his wife and his children should they become, God forbid, widow and orphans.

President Garfield, despite all his wisdom and knowledge, did not learn how to save money during his life. In several days \$150,000 were collected and, undoubtedly, they will collect the desired amount. Jews also donated money to this charity.

May the Healer of all flesh heal the President of our country, Garfield. May he recover and may he live. Amen!

Ha-Meliz, August 23, 1881

The health of American President Garfield worsened during these past few days, and it is worse than it was in the beginning. The patient is unable to digest his food, so he just swallows it and vomits. The doctors are not hopeful about saving his life.

Ha-Meliz, August 30, 1881

A bad report came concerning the status of Garfield's health. His eyes weaken daily and the muscles of his stomach swell. The doctors fear greatly for his life.

The murderer, Guiteau, tried to kill the prison warden in the jail in which he is incarcerated, but he did not succeed. - If Garfield recovers from his illness, there will be no death penalty for the assassin, only hard labor for eight years. This is the law of the land of America. There is no difference whether the assassinated man is a common man or whether he is the President of the Republic.

Ha-Zefirah, August 30, 1881

The news coming from America says that President Garfield is in great danger. He is on the point of death from his illness. All the doctors have lost hope. If he dies, all the officials will resign from their positions since their minds will not be at ease once Vice President Arthur assumes the reins of the government of his country.

Ha-Meliz, September 6, 1881

Garfield, President of the United States, turns in his illness upon his bed. It has been two months since he was shot, and it still is not known whether he will recover from his illness or whether he will die. If Garfield had died suddenly or during the first days of his illness, there would have been great danger hovering over the land of America. Undoubtedly, a fire would have erupted, a civil war with each man against his brothers, because Vice President Arthur, who will succeed [Garfield] if he dies, is a member of the Democratic Party, which is opposed to the Republican Party of which Garfield is a part. But in the continuing days of Garfield's illness this danger passed because the opponents of the President, as well as his supporters, saw all the evil coming upon this innocent and honest man. The imminent danger from evil was obliterated....Senator Conkling, head of the dissidents, resigned from his position and left the Senate. In addition, Vice President Arthur began to separate himself from his supporters and resolved to engage faithfully in the needs of the state and to do that which the general good sought from him. This is the Americans' comfort in their helplessness and their sadness over the President's tragedy.

Ha-Meliz, September 13, 1881

President Garfield of America, about whom the doctors had little hope for his recovery, was saved by way of a miracle from the danger which hovered over him. His health is improving and his strength is renewed. His strength has returned a little at a time until now there is no more doubt that he will recover from his illness.

On August 25, at eight o'clock in the morning, the doctors brought him from Washington to Baltimore, a seven and a half hour trip by train, so that he could lie in peace and tranquility, far away from the bustle of the city and far away from the troubles of the government. The doctors advised government officials to hand

the matters of the government over to Arthur, the Vice President, for three months, so that Garfield could rest in complete tranquillity without any disturbance or bother.

Ha-Meliz, September 20, 1881

The health of Garfield, who dwells at this time in his beautiful home in Long Branch, improves. He already arose from his bed and sat in a chair for a half hour. The people of his nation hope that he will live and not be taken from their head.

The military strengthened the guard in the prison in which Guiteau, Garfield's assassin, is imprisoned....Their hearts ached for the life of Garfield, who turns in pain on his bed. They cast lots, and the lot fell on one named Mason. It came to pass that when Mason was standing guard, he noticed that Guiteau looked suspicious and he shot him in order to kill him, but he missed the target and the bullet grazed Guiteau's face, wounding only his right ear. The guard, Mason, was seized, and Guiteau was transferred to another room in which they no longer will be able to lie in ambush for him.

Ha-Meliz, September 27, 1881

On Monday of the week of September 19, at 10:50 in the evening, James, son of Abraham, Garfield, the President of the United States of America, expired and was gathered unto his people.

For two months and seventeen days, this upright man turned in pain on his bed....His strong nature and his great strength helped him to continue to live and to wrestle with the bitterness of death during all these many days. The eyes of all the inhabitants of the world were upon him and their ears were attentive to hear reports of his welfare and what was happening to him....They counted his breaths and his heartbeats. During all those days, all the states of America were anxious and their hearts fluctuated between hope and fear. The chief physician kept watch over the

sick man day and night. They tried wholeheartedly to save him from the grave. His wife and children surrounded him with tremendous love and they supported him with great affection. All the people of the country prayed in houses of worship and asked for mercy on behalf of this righteous one. All this was to no avail. On the day of his passing, the wisdom of the doctors vanished, the prayers of the masses were rejected, and the love of his wife and his children did not save him from dying.

On the morning of the day of his death, it seemed to the doctors that he might live....But in the evening, at the end of the tenth hour, he fell asleep and slept restfully for a quarter of an hour. It seemed to Dr. Bliss, who was watching over him, that [Garfield] would sleep all night, and he felt relieved. However, after a quarter of an hour had passed, Garfield awoke from his sleep in severe pain, and the hour of death began. In another half hour, his breath returned to God who gave it. At 11:30, forty minutes after the departure of his soul, all the officials of the government gathered at the house in Long Branch and announced to Vice President Arthur in New York that Garfield had died and that the position [of President] now was his responsibility. That night, two Supreme Court justices came to Arthur's house to administer the oath to preserve and uphold the Constitution. That night, bells tolled from the steeples in all the houses of worship, and all the inhabitants of America knew that their President had died. The following day, at noon, Arthur also came to Long Branch and gathered unto himself all the officials of the government. They appointed him chief and leader. Thus, Arthur is now the President of the United States until 1885, at which time there will be a new election. On September 24, Arthur issued an order to the Senators, who are recessed, to meet on October 10.

#### Worldwide Reaction to Garfield's Demise

All the kings of Europe hurried to express to Garfield's widow and to all the people of America their sorrow over the loss of



the dear man and righteous ruler. Queen Victoria observed mourning for seven days following Garfield's death. According to the 'Times,' this is the first time that mourning has been observed in the royal court for a person who was not royalty.

#### Garfield's Biography

This is the history of Garfield. Garfield is the son of a German man who came to live in America. His father, Abraham Garfield, came to America in 1830 and acquired a piece of land on the shore of the sea...in the vicinity ...of Ohio. He cultivated his land and turned virgin soil into fruitful land. On November 19, 1831, a son was born to him. This is James. Three years after Abraham Garfield settled on his land, a brush fire in the forest near his home destroyed and consumed his corn and wheat fields. He dug a ditch around his field to save his harvest. As a result of this work, Abraham Garfield fell ill and died in his middle years. Remaining were his widow and four children, orphaned and without anything. This woman was a woman of valor. When her husband died...she decided to work the land with her own hands and raise her children by herself. Her small sons helped her in her work. During the summer and harvest season they worked the fields, and during the winter they attended the village school....The young James Garfield began to attend school when he was three years old....When he grew a little, he helped his mother with her work. He worked in the house of a foreign man as a daily worker and as a wagoner. The day came when James devoted himself to cutting trees in a forest on the bank of Lake Erie...for a wage of \$15. It came to pass in his felling trees on the bank of the Lake that he saw ships on the Lake. He decided to work on one of the ships as a sailor. He approached an acquaintance who had a ship which carried cargo to Cleveland, and the man [hired] him. For three months, James [worked as a canal boatman], but one day he became ill when a fever seized him. He was ill for five months, and when he recovered, he went to one of the tailors to learn how to sew.

He was not cut out for this type of work either, so he listened to his mother's advice and entered Geauga Academy [in Chester, Ohio]. At the time, he was seventeen years old.

#### Garfield, the Scholar

In school, James was diligent in his studies and read all the books which he found there. His knowledge increased and he established a name for himself among the school's pupils. During his vacations, he taught other students in order to earn his livelihood. If he could not find students to teach, he worked in the field. James attended the school for eight years. In 1855, he was graduated from there, crowned with the honorable title 'doctor.' In 1856, he was appointed professor of early languages and English in a school in Ohio. Although Garfield was only twenty-six years old at the time, he was, nevertheless, intelligent, and he found favor in the eyes of all who knew him. His students loved him and held him dear. His colleagues chose him as head teacher in their university. There Garfield tried to write and publish scholarly articles. He acquired a name for himself as an expositor and as an intelligent and wise man. In 1858, he was elected to the Ohio Senate. Although he was the youngest Senator, at just twenty-eight years old, his opinion was heard in the assembly of the elders and he became head of the Republican Party. He helped the government officials who, at that time, tried to set the slaves free.

#### Garfield, the Soldier

In 1862, when the war between the inhabitants of the North and the South broke out, Garfield left his seat in the Senate and became a Union soldier. There too he succeeded because of his wisdom and his diligence. He helped many northern soldiers prevail over southern soldiers. Therefore, the government honored him by promoting him to the rank of [brigadier] general. In 1863, he was elected to Congress, which is in Washington. At that time, Lincoln was the President of the country, and he recognized [Gar-

field's] importance among the rest of the congressional representatives. He saw that [Garfield] was an intelligent man and that he succeeded in everything he did. In 1869, [Garfield] was appointed head of the Banking and Currency committee, which was instituted to improve the state treasury which had dwindled and dried up during the war. Thus, Garfield made a good name for himself and last November 4, was elected President of the country.

#### Garfield, the Man

In addition, Garfield was a magnificent speaker who captivated the hearts of his audience with the sweetness of his lips. He was also a hater of greed....He was a healthy and sturdy man. Wisdom illuminated his face, and all who saw him loved him.

When he was a student in school, he loved a girl, the daughter of Germans in America. Her name was Lucretia Rudolph. When he finished his studies, he married her, and she bore him four sons and one daughter. His mother was still alive. She is now eighty years old. When he walked in innocence and love in the midst of his house, then he was his mother's beloved son....He wrote her letters of consolation, that she should not worry about him because he would arise and recover from his illness.

#### Garfield, the President

When he became President, Garfield decided to remove the office-holders who were lovers of bribes and pursuers of rewards....One of these lawbreakers was the murderer Guiteau who lay in wait for [Garfield] and extinguished his life. Thus, James Garfield died not on account of his own sin but rather, by the device of a crafty man, simply because he desired to remove the evil from the midst of his country and do good for his people. This honest man would have brought much good and blessing to his country had not the days of his life been cut short.

For five days Garfield's body lay in state in the Capitol, which is in Washington (after the doctors embalmed him)...for viewing by all the inhabitants of the country. On Monday, September 26, they buried him...like Lincoln...who also was slain by the hands of a scoundrel because he desired to do good and justice for the people and for his native land. Garfield did not accumulate wealth during his lifetime. After his death, his compatriots, who hold dear his memory, pledged donations to sustain his household. The sum collected is \$200,000, which is like 300,000 rubles.

Ha-Zefirah, September 28, 1881

On Tuesday of last week, the news of the telegraph was heard in all the countries beyond the Atlantic Ocean saying : 'President Garfield of the United States has died.' These few words stretched their wings to all the ends of the earth and to the faraway islands. They aroused sadness and deep sorrow in all people worldwide. But even the death of this exalted man did not come suddenly. It came after three months during which he turned in his bed from pains caused by the wounds which were inflicted on him by the assassin, a bloodguilty man, Guiteau, on July 2. The facts of the murder are known to our readers of Ha-Zefirah, no. 26. Since that time, there arrived daily, via the telegraph, news of the condition of the sick man who lay on his sick bed in the White House, the presidential residence in Washington. Three weeks ago, the sick man expressed a desire to be carried to Long Branch.... At first the doctors did not want to fulfill his desire, but later they announced that rolling and light movement might benefit him and obliterate his pain. Fourteen days ago, they took him by train from Washington to Baltimore. From all the ends of the earth, thousands of Americans streamed to express feelings of honor and respect to the sick man, who drew to himself all the people of the earth. A large group gathered around the President's carriage. Silent grief and the like ruled wherever they went. All the people stood with uncovered heads and showed honor and respect without

uttering a word. The doctors had ordered that they not irritate or frighten the sick man. Thus, neither the sound of bells ringing, the call of the trumpet, nor the whistle of locomotives was heard the entire way. The powerful President of the Republic travelled until he came to his country home near the Atlantic Ocean. During his first days here, the doctors thought that his condition had improved, but now we see that there was no hope to restore him to life. He expired and died on September 20, the man who was beloved by Americans, the man in whom they trusted, for his hand had healed them from the stripes with which the nation was stricken during the last ten years. But from the time when the scoundrel Guiteau sent his murderous hand against the President, even the hearts of his opponents...and all his enemies were ashamed. Vice President Arthur hurried to cleanse himself from the terrible suspicion directed against him, which was that he secretly had joined company with the murderer. Now the Americans are convinced that it was not the Vice President's doing that the President was murdered.

#### The Line of Succession

According to the American Constitution, when the President dies, the Vice President assumes the office of President until the completion of four years from the day of the [last presidential] election. Last Tuesday, the Vice President took the oath of faith to the Republic. He will be the President and the ruler of the American people until the beginning of 1885.

#### Garfield, the Man

President Garfield was born in 1831. He was about fifty years old at the time of his death. He was of strong build. The events of the days of his life are very interesting. This President, like President Lincoln, was taken from the farm to be a ruler in the land, embracing the arms of the world, and these two exemplary men were plucked before their time because of evildoers.

In his youth, the first was a tree cutter and the second was a tiller of the soil. Garfield's father was an unfortunate land tenant and a farmer.

In the summer, Garfield did his work, and in the winter he chopped trees from the forest and cared for mules....When his family saved a little money, Garfield went to school where he excelled in his studies. Afterward, he was a teacher, a lawyer, and a master of many things. His luck increased, and he was elected to the state legislature. He fought in the [Civil War] and was promoted to [brigadier] general.

President Chester A. Arthur

According to the last news that came from Washington, the capital city, Vice President Arthur was called to the Capitol on September 22, where he swore the oath of loyalty to the Constitution of the American Republic. In attendance were all the officials, the Senators, the heads of the army, and the great judges of the country. During the ceremony the new President read...admonitions expressing the deep sorrow of all people over the terrible murder which was committed against this exemplary man, the chosen one of the citizens of the Republic. After reading the entire description of the assault, the importance of the deceased, and that which he did for the good and freedom of humanity, President Arthur promised that the life of Garfield and his ways would influence him in executing his political policy. He would not deviate to the right or to the left. He knows well the great responsibility which he took upon himself today, and he will put his trust in God, in the salvation of the Lord, and in the righteousness of the free people who dwell in the blessed land with the blessing of liberty which is crowned with glory and praise and in which is found all the life of his spirit. On that day he gathered all the government officials, confirmed them, and reappointed them to their positions to stand before him as they stood before the dead President.

In all the cities of America, pledges for the benefit of Garfield's widow and household were raised, and the amount of money for the offering is approximately \$200,000. On September 23, a bulletin went out to all the people of America announcing that the body of the President was brought to the Capitol in Washington.... When the body will be brought to its grave, all the people of the country will mourn for the elected one who was taken from their head.

On September 16, 1881, James Abraham Garfield was buried in Cleveland, Ohio. In January, 1882, the fate of his assassin was reported by Ha-Meliz :

Ha-Meliz, January 24, 1882

On Wednesday, [January] 13, the deliberation ended in the courthouse in Washington in which Guiteau was judged for the murder of President Garfield. The presiding judges announced their verdict that Guiteau is guilty of the death of Garfield. Even at this point the deliberation has not ended, for they did not explain what will be done to him.

On February 7, Ha-Meliz reported :

Ha-Meliz, February 7, 1882

I have seen an end to every purpose (Ps. 119:96).

The end also has come to the sentencing of Guiteau, Garfield's murderer. We already announced that in the first court a verdict of guilty was announced by the presiding judges, but the defense appealed to the Supreme Court, which appointed other judges and investigators. Last Shabbat, January 23, the Supreme Court dismissed the defense's plea and approved of Guiteau's sentence to be death by hanging. The hanging will take place on June 30, because in America, they are impatient about delaying the execution of a capital sentence. Those who are sentenced to death are killed on the day that they sinned.

During the next six months, Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah published only a few articles about the new President of the United States, Chester A. Arthur. Perhaps this lack of attention was due to the fact that in the United States, Arthur was not a very popular man. Since his election as Vice President, he had been noted for nothing but his presiding at dinners, attending meetings, and criticizing Garfield and the administration of which he was a part.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, upon his succession to the presidency, Ha-Meliz reported that Arthur laid to rest the worst fears of his opponents. He showed a sound awareness of what behavior was and was not appropriate for the President of the United States.<sup>10</sup> "Sensitive to the fact that he had been the symbol of the abuse of patronage, he did not replace the members of Garfield's cabinet with appointees from his own wing of the party."<sup>11</sup> An example of this new found sense of responsibility was evident in the following article :

Ha-Meliz, November 1, 1881

In America, the renowned merchant, Morgan, was appointed treasurer. The people of the United States see in this a good sign. They had feared lest President Arthur put the federal treasury in Conkling's hands, for in the past Arthur had benefitted from Conkling's goodness and mercy. Conkling is not acceptable to the majority of the people because he is the head and the protector of government officials who love gain and pursue bribes, as announced previously. Now Arthur appears to know that in order to rise to greatness he cannot surround himself with personal friends. Thus, he has decided to suppress his will in favor of the will of the people. Previously, Morgan was Governor of the state of New York. He is one of the more prominent and wealthy men in America, and he is known as an honest and clean handed man.



The description of Mr. Morgan as "honest and clean handed" made him seem like an oddity. In reality, the government of the United States was as insecure under President Arthur as it had been under President Garfield. Despite his apparent change in behavior, President Arthur continued to cause anxiety among many people. Ha-Meliz reported that in December, 1881, he caused great anxiety among American Jews when, in his speech to Congress, he posited two opposing views about the treatment of Jews in Russia :

Ha-Meliz, December 13, 1881

It is proper to strengthen the bonds of love with the land of Russia in order to defend peacefully the welfare of the people of America who travel there, specifically the Jews who will be oppressed there. On their account, the government of the United States already took strong words with the government of that land....

The Jewish people (children of the ancient land who are still undomesticated and unsettled) need to behave in the measures of honesty and love in order to mitigate the oppressive law upon them, to distribute fields among themselves, and to establish schools.

President Arthur's remarks about the United States' relations with Russia revealed a double standard. Apparently, he felt that the tsarist regime's ill-treatment of American citizens was uncalled for. American Jews were, after all, residents of the most enlightened country in the world. Undoubtedly, the ideals of America influenced its citizens. With regard to Russian Jews, President Arthur did not attack the Russians. His comments about the "undomesticated and unsettled" Jews indicated that he believed that the Jews brought persecution and oppression upon themselves. The article also indicated that his solution

to the problem was not for Russia to change its ways, but for Jews to discard their old habits and customs and to become civilized people. Unfortunately, the newspaper did not mention whether the Jews of the United States took offense at President Arthur's words and challenged him, or whether they secretly agreed with him and let the matter pass. However, Ha-Meliz did report that in May, 1882, American Jews lobbied in Washington in support of their brethren in Eastern Europe :

Ha-Meliz, May 2, 1882

From Washington came the report in all the Russian newspapers that...some people came before President Arthur of the United States of America, and they requested that he speak eloquently about the Jews in Russia. Arthur promised to do all that he could to awaken the spirit of the Russian government concerning the Jews,...in order to bring them true deliverance. The American consul in St. Petersburg already has been instructed as to what he should do concerning this matter. The Jewish citizens of America who dwell in Russia asked the government to shelter and protect them. The 'Times' commented that the consul pleading on behalf of the Jews before the government of Russia will be fulfilling the desire of America and the desire of all of Europe.

The American ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice must have pulled at the heartstrings of Jews living in Eastern Europe, especially those living under the repressive political regime of Tsar Alexander III. On October 25, 1881, Ha-Meliz published an article which praised freedom. The article described the United States' centennial celebration of its independence from Great Britain :

Ha-Meliz, October 25, 1881

Last Wednesday...there was a big festival for the inhabitants of the United States of America - the festival of the anniversary of one-hundred years from the day it became independent. In 1876,

when people gathered from everywhere to see the industrial exhibition in Philadelphia, they also celebrated this festival of their freedom. It had been one-hundred years since the time the Americans decided to publish an open letter to all the people that they had decided, once and for all, to break off the yoke of Britain. After this resolution there continued for about another five years hard fighting and war with England....Only with the defeat of the English army on October 7, 1781, when General Washington of the American army struck the British army, under Cornwallis, a final blow near Yorktown, in the state of Virginia, and the general of the English army and his prisoners fell captive in the hands of the Americans, was America free and its Union established on a firm and strong basis.

#### The Celebration

In memory of the great victory, the American government decided to erect a magnificent monument on the site where the battle was near Yorktown. The treasury gave \$140,000 for that day to be celebrated properly. Delegates from France and Germany were sent to bless the peace and health of the American people. The new President of the United States, Chester A. Arthur, honorably welcomed these guests in the Capitol, which is in the city of Washington. All the notables of the country and the officials of the states attended. Afterward, the guests came to the Senate, and the Senate received them with honor. In their honor, [the Senate] cancelled its session that day. That evening, people paraded through the streets of Washington with candles.

Britain did not send its representatives to this festive day since to it [this day] is like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes. In order to put this spirit [of animosity] to rest, Arthur ordered all the American ships to sound and to welcome with a blast the English ships in all the harbors on the shores of America.

The fact that American freedom was born from war and destruction probably brought comfort to the East European readers of Ha-Meliz.

Perhaps it inspired them to hope that redemption would come, that oppression would end and equality would be granted them. Both Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah's articles about the land of liberty and freedom and their stress on its democratic government emphasized the vast political differences between the United States and the countries of Eastern Europe. In 1882, the forthcoming congressional election produced several new articles about the make-up of Congress, the election process, and, in light of the recent assassination of President Garfield, the presidential line of succession :

Ha-Meliz, July 18, 1882

This year, there will be new elections for representatives in the United States of America [to decide] who will sit in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. According to the law established in this country, all representatives are renewed every two years, and the men who were chosen once cannot be chosen again from anew. This is contrary to what is customary in other countries where they certainly will elect representatives for several terms.

#### Congressional Representatives

When the Union of the United States was founded more than one-hundred years ago, there were only sixty-five representatives in the House of Representatives, one for every 30,000 residents in the thirteen states which were then in the Union. Because the number of residents began to increase very quickly, due to the number of immigrants coming here from all the ends of the earth to settle in this free land blessed by the Lord, they determined that every ten years they would take a census of the people and, according to the number of people, they, little by little, would increase the number of elected representatives.

In 1792, one man was elected from every 30,000 inhabitants, and the number of elected representatives was 106. In 1802, [the num-

ber was] 141. In 1812, one man from every 35,000 was elected, and in 1832, one from 47,000. In 1812, the number of elected representatives rose to 181, and in 1832, to 240. In 1872, the number of elected representatives rose to 293, and this year 325 men will be chosen as representatives.

#### Presidential Line of Succession

Also, in the matter of the appointment of the President, a new law will be made. Until now, a President and his Vice President would be elected according to the majority vote, but they would not check the qualifications of the vice presidential candidate as they did that of the presidential candidate....[The Vice President] must be a worthy and honorable man....[This is the line of succession] : the Vice President...the Secretary of the Treasury... the Secretary of the Interior...the Secretary of Justice...the Secretary of State...the Secretary of Education, and then the remainder.

In 1882, Ha-Zefirah reported that the "Jewish question" was a campaign issue. At its national convention, the Republican Party declared :

Ha-Zefirah, July 4, 1882

We decided to cry out against all the injustice and the violence and the evil abominations done to the Jews in Rumania. Behold, we agree with the action taken by the government in Washington, and to this day, we endorse and respect the action which it undertook for the good of the oppressed people there. Our desire and the request of our heart is that our government will continue to try with all its strength and with all its ability to publicize the plight of the oppressed people and save them from the hand of their powerful oppressors.

This statement by the Republican Party was an apparent contradiction of what President Arthur, a Republican, had said in his speech to

Congress. It might have been an attempt to regain Jewish support for the Republican Party, an acknowledgement of the Party's awareness of the increase of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, or a statement of the government's willingness to continue to aid oppressed people.

The articles in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah about the government of the United States served to emphasize the difference between democracy in America and autocracy in Eastern Europe. At a time when anti-Semitism was increasing in Eastern Europe, these detailed reports not only provided information about American leadership, but also may have served as the impetus for immigration to the United States. The plethora of articles about the American government, its presidency, electoral process, Congress, Jewish officials, and minorities indicated that for both Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah the United States was not a foreign country, but rather, an object of primary interest and concern.

## Chapter Five

### The American Jewish Community

The last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed an influx of East European Jews to the United States. Fearful that these newcomers would interfere with "their headlong drive to achieve middle-class respectability,"<sup>1</sup> American Jews greeted the immigrants with something less than a friendly welcome. American Jews were anxious that by their very presence the new immigrants would arouse nativism which would manifest itself in the form of anti-Semitism.

According to one historian, "social anti-Semitism was virtually unknown in the United States until the 1870s and 1880s. American Jews had always constituted an economic, intellectual and, to a lesser extent, political elite....The Jewish and non-Jewish elites were inextricably intermeshed, a fact which made the religious and cultural differences between the two groups comparatively unimportant."<sup>2</sup> Both Reconstruction and the mass immigration of East European Jews to the United States significantly altered the social, economic, and cultural status of American Jewry, while Populism aroused anti-Jewish prejudices.

One of the first incidents of "genteel" anti-Semitism reported by Ha-Meliz in 1879 had occurred two years earlier when Joseph Seligman, a renowned American banker of German Jewish ancestry, was denied admittance to an exclusive summer resort, the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga, New York. According to one historian, Saratoga, in 1877, was no longer the unrivaled summer capital of the United States. Rather, it had become "a flashy resort of the nouveaux riches."<sup>3</sup> In an obvious

attempt to improve its social rating, the hotel imposed a ban on Jews in 1877. The exclusion of Joseph Seligman from this hotel was recounted in the East European Hebrew press not only in 1879, but again in 1880 :

Ha-Meliz, November 4, 1880

Anti-Semitism has also come to America. It has spread across the sea. For example, one man built an exquisite hotel in New York. At its grand opening, he announced publicly that Jews may not stay at the hotel. When one Jewish man arrived at the hotel, he was turned away. He was told that there were no vacancies. The unfortunate person appealed to a judge and demanded that the owner of the hotel pay him \$5,000 as compensation for his shame. The result of this incident was that the hotel received a bad reputation. It is now closed.

According to Ha-Zefirah, a similar incident happened to a Mrs. Jacoby who, in the spring of 1880, desired to rent a hotel room on Staten Island. The manager of the hotel refused to comply with her request simply because she was married to a Jew. He did not care that Mrs. Jacoby herself was a Christian. The matter was investigated, and a conclusion was reached that in general, discrimination against Jews stemmed from Christians' jealousy of Jews' rapid social and economic advancement following the Civil War. Ha-Zefirah also noted that the manager of the hotel excluded Mrs. Jacoby because he thought his behavior would attract publicity and therefore have a favorable impact on business. Ha-Zefirah's correspondent advised Jews to keep silent about this matter. He hoped that this lack of attention would discourage other individuals from ostracizing Jews.<sup>4</sup>

American Jews were neither indifferent to nor tolerant of discrimination. Many had assumed that other Americans would distinguish



between them and the East European newcomers. However, incidents of anti-Semitism indicated that all Jews were being tarred by the same brush. Convinced that the immigrants were to blame for the seeming loss of good will toward them, established American Jews advocated that if the newcomers did the "right" things, if they maintained proper middle-class values and decorum, anti-Semitism would vanish. "The sooner the immigrants would give up their cultural characteristics and melt into the undifferentiated mass, the sooner anti-Semitism would disappear."<sup>5</sup>

In 1881, Ha-Meliz reported that a Jewish Senator convinced the legislature in Albany to pass a law preventing hotel owners from barring Jews on their premises. The law stated that "every innkeeper who closed the doors of his hotel to any guest for reason of his religion and ancestry would be fined a sum of \$25 and upward."<sup>6</sup> This enactment indicated that the state of New York would not tolerate religious bigotry. It would no longer suffer acts of discrimination, such as the exclusion of Jews from Coney Island, which had occurred in 1879. Ha-Zefirah described this incident :

Ha-Zefirah, September 2, 1879

Many people come [to Coney Island] from our nearby city [New York] to cool themselves from the oppressive heat. Several weeks ago, an anti-Semite announced that he would not allow Jews to visit his hotel or cool off there on the seashore. He considers Jews detestable and contaminated....But in truth, he is powerless to prevent Jews from coming to this public beach solely because of their religion. It is illegal to do so. Thus, the Jews do not and will not listen to him despite his intention.

Nevertheless, the matter created much commotion. It is unthinkable to hear of something like this in the nineteenth century, especially under the government of the Republic. The newspapers wrote bitter things about [the hotel owner]. They decried his wickedness and prophesied that his end would be bitter. Also, Christian preachers spoke against him in their houses of worship. They said that there no longer is a time or a place for this stupidity....The Christian ministers, who used to incite religious hatred against the Jews, altered their position and changed us from enemies to friends. They now testify publicly of our righteousness. Surely, the ways of the time are wonderful.

This article might have indicated to the East European Jewish readers that in the United States, some people did not support discrimination against Jews. Although the article could not measure the extent of this feeling, there were other indications that in America, Jews and non-Jews fared peacefully. In August, 1881, Ha-Meliz described the relationship between Jews and non-Jews in Baton Rouge, Louisiana :

Ha-Meliz, August 23, 1881

In the city of Baton Rouge, in the state of Louisiana, a congregation of Christians has no special house of worship. Therefore, the Christians come to the Jews' synagogue on Sundays to pray. On Shabbat, that house is a house of worship for the Jews, but on the following day, Sunday, it is a house of worship for the Christians. When the Jews enter their house of worship during the day, they see and read, mounted on the walls of their synagogue, announcements that tomorrow, at such and such a time, Christian worship services will commence. The Jews do not consider this profanation of the holy.

How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together. Who is like them, who establish the words of the prophesy, 'For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.'

The situation of Jews in the United States was described in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah not only in news accounts, but also in features. In 1881, Judah David Eisenstein reviewed a play for Ha-Zefirah which portrayed a compassionate, caring Jewish merchant concerned with the economic welfare of all people. Eisenstein contrasted him to Shylock in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice :

Ha-Zefirah, June 7, 1881

On one of the stages in our city, the dramatic comedy 'Samuel of Posen, the Commercial Drummer' was performed....This play described the Jewish characteristic, but not like that which the poet Shakespeare presented in his play 'The Merchant of Venice,' in which the Jews were portrayed as cruel and vengeful. The present story created for us the life of the Jewish peddler, Samuel, who came from Posen to live in this country. His first job was to sell cheap things, but slowly, in his honest and faithful way, he advanced until he became the proprietor of a great shop of precious stones in the city of Milwaukee. In this play, all the ways of the Jew were revealed....The nature of the Jew was not hidden from us. Samuel's dealings were presented to us, and we learned that his was an honest trade. He earned money, but he did not desire to become rich in money alone. When he discovered that someone lost \$400, he hurried to return the money to him. With the honest he was honest, and with the crooked he was crooked.... He would not drink to drunkenness. He was satisfied with a little, yet he was not a tightwad.

In the third scene we saw Samuel of Posen at his loan house.... A drunkard, who previously had been a soldier, came there. He wanted to borrow \$10, but Samuel gave him only eighty cents in exchange for his goods. But when a widow who had five children came and asked to borrow twenty-five cents in exchange for clothing, he returned the pledge to her, and from his own money he gave her \$1. He also gave her all types of food and household neces-

seties as gifts. From this, we could see the attributes of compassion and favor which are implanted in the hearts of the Jews.

Also, the young woman, Rebecca, who was engaged [to Samuel] likewise reflected the patience of the daughters of Israel and the compassion, righteousness, and desire to help other people with what she possessed, even if they did not desire her help.

This extraordinary play will bring honor and praise to the Jews.

To Eisenstein, Samuel of Posen was a model of the American Jewish community. Imbued with the concept of helping the poor and the stranger, Samuel, as an individual, endeavored to relieve human suffering in his midst. On a larger scale, the American Jewish community, in the late 1800s, sponsored a number of communal-welfare agencies which served the specialized needs of Jews as a group.<sup>7</sup> Between 1879-1882, Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah identified a number of these organizations and attempted to describe the goal and financial situation of each one. Perhaps the newspapers' motive for describing these agencies was not only to publicize their importance, but also to describe to the East European Jewish readers the complex organizational structure of the American Jewish community.

One American Jewish communal-welfare agency described in Ha-Zefirah was Deborah Nursery, a society of distinguished Jewish women whose goal was to feed and clothe neglected children. According to Ha-Zefirah, it cared, in its first year, for approximately seventy children and spent a total of \$4,500. Its members numbered 700, and it was supported by members' dues of \$1 per capita annually, in addition to generous financial contributions.<sup>8</sup>

Another communal-welfare society was the Hebrew Orphans' Asylum, which had branches in New York and other states. On April 27, 1879, Ha-Zefirah reported that at the annual meeting of the trustees of the Hebrew Orphans' Asylum, Jesse Seligman was elected president of the association and that the asylum supported 296 orphans. Its income for 1878 was \$77,169, and its expenses were \$65,481. At the time, it had a balance of \$113,689 in its treasury.<sup>9</sup>

Ha-Zefirah also announced that on September 7, 1879, a home for Jewish foundlings was dedicated on 51st Street in New York City. The home accommodated fifty-five children, but at the time of its founding it housed only thirty-five children, ages two through ten. The president of the association spoke these words at the opening ceremony :

Ha-Zefirah, November 4, 1879

It is our responsibility to gather the abandoned children of our people and to care for them by ourselves without waiting for them to be gathered...by the Christians, because the Jewish child, by reason of his faith, cannot be raised by other people. Take Pharaoh's daughter who found Moses in the Nile. When she found out that he was a Hebrew child, she immediately sent for a Hebrew nursemaid.

An interesting anecdote about the establishment of a home for Jewish foundlings and orphans was related in Ha-Meliz in 1881 :

Ha-Meliz, July 26, 1881

A Jewish woman from the Marcus family in Philadelphia became ill, and the doctors decided to amputate her hand. On the day scheduled for this surgery, the woman's children bought a nine acre field and gave it to charity for an orphans' home to be built upon it.

Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah paid significant attention to institutions which cared for Jewish orphans. Perhaps this concern stemmed from the

fact that, as one article related, American Jews were fearful lest, like Edgar Mortara, an Italian Jewish boy who was converted to Christianity by his nurse, their children fall into the hands of Christian missionaries. Another reason why the American Jewish community felt the pressing need to care for its orphans might have stemmed from the fact that there were many children without parents at the time. The arduous journey to the United States must have claimed numerous lives and left countless children alone in a strange, new country. Cognizant of the fact that someone had to look after them and eager to Americanize them, the American Jewish community assumed the responsibility of extending care to its orphans.

Overseeing most American Jewish communal-welfare agencies was the United Hebrew Charities. In 1869, such a federation of philanthropic societies was founded in Philadelphia. Five years later, the United Hebrew Charities of New York came into existence.<sup>10</sup> Like the reports of other Jewish organizations, the 1878 annual report of the United Hebrew Charities in New York, which was published in Ha-Zefirah, focused on the society's income and expenses for 1878. It also reported that the society distributed aid, in the form of money, food, clothing, and coal, to 719 different households.<sup>11</sup> The annual report for 1879 included almost verbatim the same information contained in the report of the previous year.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to communal-welfare organizations, Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah reported the existence of American Jewish cultural and fraternal societies. One national cultural association which was active during this period was Shohre Sfath Eber, Seekers After the Hebrew Language.

Founded in order to disseminate and broaden the knowledge of Hebrew among New York Jewry through the establishment of libraries filled with Hebrew literature, books, newspapers, and journals,<sup>13</sup> the organization boasted one-hundred dues paying members in 1880. Its success was reported by Judah David Eisenstein in the following article :

Ha-Zefirah, March 22, 1880

The association Shohre Sfath Eber in our city is successful. Members of the association rented two spacious rooms from the association of Jewish Free Schools. The school is located at 105 Broadway. It contains all the things needed for a library.

On the second day of Passover the house was dedicated. About 200 people attended, and distinguished men spoke in Hebrew, English, and German. They declared the need for this association and its usefulness. Some friends pledged money to support the association, and approximately 300 books [were donated].

The meeting house is open every evening from 6:30-10:00...and on Sunday from 2:00-10:00pm. The number of members now exceeds one-hundred....The following men were elected as leaders of the association : Mr. Moses Aaron Shreiber, Mr. Myer Reuben Levi, Mr. Tzvi [Henry] Bernstein, Mr. J. D. Eisenstein, Mr. Dov Kramer, and Mr. Moses Silver. From among them Mr. Levi was elected treasurer and Mr. Kramer was elected secretary....

Once a month, renowned people will lecture to the members. In the coming months Rabbi [H. P.] Mendes, Rabbi Dr. [Aaron] Wise, and Dr. [S. M.] Isaacs will speak.

The first annual report of Shohre Sfath Eber, which appeared in Ha-Zefirah, announced that by the end of the year, membership had risen to a total of 148 and that the library contained twenty-three different

publications. The report also publicized one of the society's future goals :

Ha-Zefirah, June 7, 1881

Last year, sixteen distinguished people spoke to the club. They spoke about Hebrew literary odes and matters of wisdom and science in Hebrew, English, and German. The members donated 427 books and monetary gifts of \$97. In all, the annual income was \$520.75, and the expenses were \$516.20.

Mr. Moses Aaron Shreiber, Mr. Shabbtai Nicklesberg, Mr. Sarasohn, and Mr. Israel Kaplan were elected by a majority vote as officers of the association for the second year, and J. D. Eisenstein was elected president and treasurer.

The association published [four] issues, one for each season of the year, entitled 'The Literary Organ in the New Land.' In the future, the activities of the association and articles about Hebrew literature will be described. The first issue already appeared during the month of Nisan. The income from the publications will be deposited in the association's treasury.

Ha-Zefirah's articles about Shohre Sfath Eber indicated to the East European readers that Hebrew culture had made its imprint on the American shore. Unlike some other possessions which emigrants had left behind in Eastern Europe, the Hebrew literary heritage had been successfully transferred to the United States and was making a significant impact on American Jewish Hebraists.

Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah also published detailed reports about American Jewish social, fraternal, and recreational societies. In March, 1879, Tzvi Henry Gersoni, a writer for Ha-Meliz, described one Jewish fraternal order, B'nai B'rith. According to Gersoni, B'nai



B'rith was not a makeshift men's club, but a complex organization with a structured leadership and well defined rules :

Ha-Meliz, March 25, 1879

In almost every city and district in which Jews live there is a branch of B'nai B'rith. The members of each branch are like a special association because they are concerned specifically with local matters. They aid their poor brethren with whatever resources they have. Occasionally, they gather to deliberate the concerns of the order and to discuss the needs of the public. This they do according to the general rules of the order. Also, they elect their president and leaders from among the members of their own order. If they are concerned with the general good and welfare, they will appoint high-minded men who will not transgress the rules of the general group. These high-minded men are the leaders of the Grand Lodge. Each district branch sends one member from each of its district orders to attend the Grand Lodge's meeting. Branch leaders are required to visit each and every branch, to teach their brethren the rules of the order, and to watch over the affairs of the district in general.

#### Mutual Aid

If a member from a certain city dies, the secretary of his branch sends word to the leaders of the Grand Lodge, who announce in all the districts that brother 'Ploni' died, and a sum of \$1,000 is paid to his widow or his heirs. For this purpose, each district branch must contribute a sum of money according to its number of members.

#### Dismissal from the Order

If one member disobeys the rules of the lodge, his action is announced to the district lodge. The leaders determine whether or not he sinned and whether or not he is guilty. They announce the matter to all the branches of the order throughout the country, saying : 'Brother Ploni from branch Ploni sinned and is guilty.'

He has been expelled.' In this way, the transgressor no longer is able to attend B'nai B'rith meetings, no matter where he is.

### Elections

When the members of a branch elect new officers, the officers of the Grand Lodge come to the district lodge, instruct them in the rules of the order, and invest them in their position of judging their brethren justly.

There are 313 B'nai B'rith lodges throughout the country. They are divided into seven districts. Each year, the officers of both the large and small branches are elected anew. Even if one officer finds favor in the eyes of his brethren who desire that he retain his position, they still must reelect him. They may not pass the election day without doing something.

### National Conventions

Once every five years the general council meets in one of the large cities to discuss the status of the order and to enact new ordinances according to the needs of the time. Each lodge sends one representative to this meeting. A large meeting like this was held last week in Philadelphia. Three-hundred thirteen brothers gathered there, one for each lodge, to review the matters of the order....I regret that I cannot reveal to you all the matters discussed at this meeting, but for the sake of announcing the rules of the order and its undertakings, I shall describe that which I shall be able to describe :

### The Three Degrees

Until the last convention, there was a rule that each brother of B'nai B'rith had to learn the order's rules in three degrees. In the first degree, the ways of a life of action were revealed to him, and in the second degree, he learned knowledge of spiritual self-praise. In the third degree, he learned knowledge of the goal of the life of man....Undoubtedly, all this knowledge

had a great influence in the heart of the learner who never had learned the ways of his religion.

When the order began to pay \$1,000 to the widows of its members, it was obligated to accept many members in order to bear this burden. It closed its eyes to the attainment of spiritual knowledge and accepted anyone who desired to become a member of the order. The order combined all the degrees into one degree....Let the reader not think that the spiritual knowledge of which I spoke referred to exalted notions which the mind of the average man could not explore. This is not it, but rather, the instruction which a man would hear in the synagogue from the mouths of teachers of religion. I joked about this satirically last year when I wrote in one of the English newspapers that if knowledge of God decreases according to the value of a man's religion, it would be better if people never learned the ways of religion. However, this no longer is of concern to B'nai B'rith because at the last convention in Philadelphia it resolved to put an end to the three degrees and combine them into one degree, simply because the study of the ethical ways made it easier for the brethren to increase their ranks. - Thus, this distinguished association fell seven degrees backward in matters of ethics and knowledge, but in charitable deeds it continued to support widows and orphans....

#### Affiliation with B'nai B'rith

A member pays approximately \$18 annually to the treasury of the order. In exchange for this he receives about \$5 a week if he becomes sick and is unable to work, and his widow or heirs receive \$1,000 after his death....The readers of Ha-Meliz ask me : Is it not true that while matters of the order do not contribute to the field of knowledge, that they also do not harm it, and that acts of charity are as good as knowledge? My answer is that acts of charity and unity among members of B'nai B'rith are much better in countries in which the spirit of our faith prevails, but no harm will come to the status of Judaism in our country.

Let the reader imagine a small Jewish congregation with about ten or fifteen members in it. When these people feel that they need a place in which to meet, they must choose between a branch of a large lodge or a synagogue in which to worship. They will either employ a teacher for their sons and hire themselves a rabbi or insure themselves an income should they become sick or ill. Between these two choices, will they not choose the one which is better for this life? Hence, the branches [of B'nai B'rith] grow daily and the congregations for Torah study and worship decrease.

In the United States, B'nai B'rith has 23,000 affiliated members. They are divided into 313 branches and have seven districts and seven Grand Lodges. Other actions which the order undertook as a result of the meeting in Philadelphia are recorded in my newspaper, Jewish Advance.

An important issue which Gersoni mentioned was that of Jewish fraternal vs. Jewish religious life in America. Founded in 1843 by German Jewish immigrants, B'nai B'rith aimed "to ameliorate the deplorable condition of the Jews in this [their] newly adopted country."<sup>14</sup> The goal was Americanization, not sectarianism. It is interesting, therefore, that in 1879, the issue again was raised in the Jewish community, but this time by East European Jewish immigrants. The question, according to Gersoni, was whether to affiliate with a synagogue and maintain one's ancestral traditions, or to seek membership in a Jewish fraternal order and forego some knowledge of one's heritage.

Like other organizations, B'nai B'rith experienced some internal problems. One problem arose in Chicago when some German Jewish members of B'nai B'rith denied a charter to Polish immigrants because they

considered the latter unfit to be members of their august organization. The incident was reported by B. Gordon in Ha-Zefirah. Gordon's article demonstrated that even in the land of freedom and liberty, not all Jews could live together peacefully :

Ha-Zefirah, March 2, 1881

Eight years have passed since an association of brethren from Russia and Poland, called Bikur Holim, was established here in Chicago. The goal of this society is to perform good deeds and acts of lovingkindness for its members. When one of its members is ill, two members must visit him daily, sustain him, and report his condition to the president [of the association]. He will receive \$5 a week during the time he is ill. If he or a member of his household dies, he is buried in a grave belonging to the association, and all the funeral expenses are paid by the association. In addition, medical attention and drugs are free. The goal of this association is to help a man and his companions when they are in distress. Each member must pay \$10 a year [for these services].

#### The Incident

Last September, our association had to visit a distinguished brother, one of the members of B'nai B'rith....He liked us and assured us that he would attempt, on our behalf, to have B'nai B'rith grant us a charter. The advantage of our affiliating with B'nai B'rith is that B'nai B'rith pays a widow \$1,000. But why will our portion be less, and why shall we, sons of Russia and Poland, not be accorded the same status as the German members? The man promised us that in another two weeks he would come to us and fulfill his promise. Meanwhile, two other men and some people of high standing in Chicago came to us and announced that the deeds of the sons of Russia and Poland are upright. It is our sincere desire that in another month the flag of B'nai B'rith will flutter over our society.

### The B'nai B'rith Meeting

In another few days there will be a general meeting with representatives from each city and district in Chicago. Last month, representatives from all the branches of B'nai B'rith came to Chicago. The president of the order presented a petition from the Jews of Russia and Poland to the officers of B'nai B'rith, who are called the Grand Lodge, requesting that a charter be issued. The matter was discussed and the decision was reached not to issue a charter to the Jews of Russia and Poland because they are contemptible and lowly. [The Jews of Russia and Poland are not acculturated.] They do not attend the theater. The Law of the Lord is still in their mouths. They observe the Sabbath and refrain from profaning the festivals of the Lord....They make the name of Israel reproachable.

In order to stop this slander and hatred against the Jews from Russia and Poland, the leaders of the order published announcements in English that on a specific day, at one of the elite meeting houses here, called Oriental Hall, there would be a meeting. All the good and great men of our people came to hear the merit of the Jews from Russia and Poland and to remove from them the shame of those who disgraced and scorned them.

### Speakers at the B'nai B'rith Meeting

Mr. Harrison, the Mayor of the city, was the first person to ascend the stage. In wisdom, he spoke words of kindness, love, and ethics. This is the gist of his speech : It really gladdens my heart when I see the Children of Israel, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, assembled into one association to work for the good and the right and to give a helping hand to establish [the words] : 'The life of your brother is with you.' This idea reminds me of a vision when 1,000 years ago, the sons of Russia and Poland stood before the mountain of God! This time I shall see the drama of God in the splendor of your brethren in Chicago. There is not one [Jew] in jail. Hard sentences and terrible things like murder

and theft I see daily, but there, Israel will not be remembered. Israel will not be punished for these things! Our German brethren greatly abused these holy people, our brethren....He concluded by saying that he strongly hoped that there would not be schisms between brothers. All the people applauded and nodded their heads. He thanked the president and, with honor, left the meeting.

Afterward, Tzvi [Henry] Gersoni, a publisher and native of Vilna, ascended the platform and spoke in English. Who are the Lithuanians and the Poles, feared by the Germans? He listed some enlightened men, rabbis, scribes, doctors...hospitals, etc. Do you know to whom this entire camp belongs? To Lithuania, to the city of Vilna, the Jerusalem of Lithuania, your child....[He said that] the people who despise the Jews of Russia and Poland are a shameful thing.

After him, a native of Kovno spoke in German. He directed his anger against those people who slander others secretly and openly.... All the people applauded without stopping. Even the members of B'nai B'rith who stood on the left across from us answered : Amen.

#### Reporting the Meeting

During the speeches, four people sat before the dais. They are the reporters who hear and see everything and do not add or subtract anything. Daily, they transmit things for publication. In the morning, the events were reported in the newspapers of every language. Dear readers! Do not worry about the hatred of the sons of Ham against the sons of Shem in Germany, for even in America, the land of freedom and liberty which does not differentiate among peoples, even there there is hatred between brothers. Hatred between German and Russian Jews prevails strongly, and it is devastating.

Gordon's article highlighted the "native" American Jews' unwillingness to integrate the newcomers and bridge the gap between the "downtown"

and the "uptown" wings of the Jewish community. On the one hand, the "native" American Jews wanted to help the immigrants become good Americans, but on the other hand, they felt so threatened by the newcomers' strange appearance and behavior that they wanted nothing to do with them.

One American Jewish fraternal organization whose goal was to unite American Jews, "to join the hearts of the young and to increase among them knowledge of Hebrew literature," was the Young Men's Hebrew Association which had been founded in New York in 1874. According to one newspaper description, young Jewish men would gather together on winter nights and listen to Jewish and non-Jewish lecturers speak learnedly about science and the history of Israel. In 1879, the members of the Young Men's Hebrew Association numbered 1,000. Among them were Rabbi [H. P.] Mendes from Shearith Israel, Rabbi D. Jacobs from B'nai Jeshurun, and the president of the association, Mr. Isaacs, publisher of The Messenger.<sup>15</sup> In December, 1879, the Young Men's Hebrew Association produced a Hanukkah play entitled, "This Is Hanukkah." A review of this production appeared in Ha-Zefirah :

Ha-Zefirah, January 8, 1880

This magnificent play, which has not appeared here before, made a great impact among the Christians, and in the Jewish hearts it awakened national love and honor for the religion of Israel.... The house was packed. After the expenses were deducted, the income exceeded \$2,000, which testifies to the goodness of the community whose goal was to plant in the heart of Jewish youth the knowledge of Hebrew literature.



### The Play

At eight o'clock in the evening, the doors of the [music] academy opened, and the chorus began to sing. Next, one-hundred children from the Hebrew Orphans' Asylum ascended the stage and sang Adon Olam. Afterward, the curtain went up. The first scene described the situation of the Children of Israel in the days of Antiochus, who burdened [the Jews] with his hard yoke and desired to revoke the laws of their religion. He commanded them to bow down to Greek gods. In response, the children from the orphans' asylum sang in a loud voice Ein Keiloheinu, There Is None Like Our God.

In the second scene, the god Jupiter appeared on the altar in the midst of the city of Modi'in, the place in which Mattathias, the high priest, dwelled. Before us stood the Greek idol priest. He offered sacrifices to himself....The crowned prince Apollo stood with soldiers and commanded Mattathias, who stood on his left, to bow down. The priest drew his sword from his sheath, and his five sons surrounded him. Behind them was the community of the congregation of Israel, men and women, and above them were engraved the words, 'You shall have no other gods before Me.'

In the third scene, we saw the idol smashed, the altar demolished, and the central fire extinguished. Mattathias the elder brought the tip of his sword to the heart of the soft-hearted Jew who came to offer up sacrifices to a god. Mattathias' five sons fought with success against the Greek prince. The children in the choir sang Yigdal Elohim Hai, We Praise the Living God.

In the fourth scene, Mattathias the priest lay on his deathbed. As his spirit returned to God, he gathered unto himself the children of his household and the heads of the congregation of Israel and warned them to keep the commandments of the Lord and to fight God's wars valiantly. He chose his son Judah the Maccabee to lead the army. The children answered with the song Maoz Tsur Yeshuati,

O God, My Saving Stronghold [Rock of Ages].

The fifth scene depicted Israel's victory, Judah's defeat of his enemies. They went up to the holy city, Jerusalem, carrying flags upon which was written Mi Chamocha Ba'elim, Adonai? - Who Is Like You Among the Gods? In their honor, approximately 200 women wearing headdresses came out with drums, dancing and singing holy songs before them.

The dedication of the altar appeared in the last scene. This scene drew everyone's attention. They forgot where they were and felt that they were standing in the Temple which the Hasmonean priests had purified. They kindled the menorah and approached the altar. The Levites praised the Lord with the harp and rejoiced in song and praise.

The play finished at midnight. Afterward, the actors entered the stage dancing, and they danced and celebrated until morning. It is the community's intention to do things like this annually.

Apparently, Hanukkah was not celebrated in such a grandiose way in Eastern Europe. Ha-Zefirah's inclusion of this lengthy article about a minor Jewish holiday demonstrated the importance which the Festival of Lights assumed in the United States. Perhaps this production paralleled the Christmas pageants produced by Christian groups during the same season. Nevertheless, the writer of this article seemed very proud that the play was so well attended and accepted by the non-Jews.

Another sphere of American Jewish communal activity reported in the East European Hebrew press was Jewish education. Articles in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah focused primarily on the schools' finances and curricula, rather than on the relation between Jewish education and

the perpetuation and enhancement of Jewish values, concepts, and behaviors. From 1879-1882, three types of Jewish schools were mentioned in the newspapers - Hebrew Free Schools, preparatory schools for the rabbinate, and rabbinic seminaries.

According to its annual report from 1878, published in Ha-Zefirah, the association of Hebrew Free Schools in New York employed seventeen teachers who, together, earned a yearly salary of \$4,575. The number of students enrolled that year was 1,045, and their average age was eight years old. The Hebrew Free Schools were supplementary educational institutions. Classes convened on weekdays from three o'clock in the afternoon until evening and almost all day on Saturday and Sunday. The curriculum included Hebrew, Bible, Jewish history, and translating the prayerbook and Hebrew Bible into English. Since no tuition was required of its students, the association of Hebrew Free Schools depended on financial contributions for its maintenance. The article in Ha-Zefirah also related that on December 12, 1878, Judge Henry Hilton donated \$500 to the Hebrew Free School "Mount Sinai." His gift, however, was not accepted because Hilton was known as a Jew hater. In 1877, he had closed "the doors of his great hotel in Saratoga in the face of a Jewish man and had prevented him from staying there. [The newspaper reported that] both he and his money were considered insignificant, as were his evil and his goodness, as the proverb says, 'None of your honey, none of your sting.'"<sup>16</sup>

Another type of American Jewish educational institution described in the East European Hebrew press was the preparatory school for the rabbinate. Temple Emanu-El in New York sponsored such a school. Accor-

ding to one report, its educational objective was "to raise our sons in the path of the Torah of our faith."<sup>17</sup> At the conclusion of each academic year, the school examined its students in Bible, Hebrew grammar, Mishna, Talmud, and the history of Israel. "It was a pleasure," said one observer, "to hear the children speak in pure, fresh Hebrew."<sup>18</sup> The school was directed by Dr. Gottheil, rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, and it fell under the supervision of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Other preparatory schools for the rabbinate were run elsewhere by Rabbis A. Huebsch, D. Einhorn, and Jacobs.<sup>19</sup>

The existence of these schools was indicative of American Jews' desire to educate their children in the heritage of their people. Their emphases on Bible, Mishna, Jewish history and Hebrew grammar demonstrated that their objective was to provide a traditional Jewish education. Despite the fact that these schools were supplementary, meeting for only a few hours a week, they seem, according to Ha-Zefirah, to have provided comprehensive religious training.

The third type of school was the rabbinic seminary, namely, Hebrew Union College, which had been founded in Cincinnati by Isaac Mayer Wise in 1875. A comprehensive article about this institution, its faculty, students, and curriculum appeared on October 7, 1880, in Ha-Meliz. The article indicated that Hebrew Union College was a school dedicated to Jewish scholarship, a seminary which offered general rabbinic instruction reconciled with the spirit of the age<sup>20</sup> :

Ha-Meliz, October 7, 1880

The rabbinic seminary in America, which is located in Cincinnati and stands under the auspices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, is called Hebrew Union College....The school, which

was founded in Cincinnati by Rabbi Dr. Wise, opened five years ago as a house of Torah study for Jewish youth. As a result of Dr. Wise's efforts, the school expanded and grew to such an extent that last year, a seminary also was opened. This is the rabbinic seminary. The seminary has about thirty students. Last July, the first examination of students was held. Through this, the value of the seminary became apparent. All those who witnessed the examination saw how greatly the students excelled in their studies.

#### The Faculty

The head of the seminary is Dr. Wise, and the professors are : Dr. Lilienthal, professor of Jewish history, and Dr. Mielziner, professor of Talmud who, last year, was summoned from New York to fill this position. They are assisted by Mr. Eppinger and Mr. Aufreeht.

#### The Campuses

The seminary houses a library which contains approximately 4,000 volumes of the finest selection of books pertaining to the wisdom and history of the people of Israel. A preparatory school for the rabbinate is located in New York. It is a school for high school and college students. The school was founded three years ago by Rabbis Gottheil and Adler at the expense of Temple Emanuel. From the day on which the Jews of New York and the other eastern states united to form the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, this preparatory school came under the supervision of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The leaders of the Union appointed discerning men to establish the curriculum for the two schools. These are the men who were appointed to this task : Dr. David Einhorn, Dr. G. Gottheil, Dr. I. M. Wise, Dr. M. Lilienthal, Dr. Mr. Jastrow, Dr. E. Hirsch, Dr. A. Moses, and Mr. M. Sulzberg.

#### The Curriculum

This is the curriculum which the committee fixed and established.

The leaders of the Union accepted it in their assembly last year :

A) The purpose of the schools, which stand under the auspices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, is to cultivate Judaic knowledge....In general, the schools will instruct youth in the ways of Torah and the commandments which are pleasing to God and good for men. In particular, the schools will train rabbis and religious teachers to act in accordance with the spirit of the religion and the spirit of the time.

B) This is what will be taught in the schools : 1) Bible with Targum and the major commentaries; 2) Talmud, Midrash, and Codes; 3) Jewish history; 4) Jewish philosophy; 5) Homiletics and Jewish liturgy; 6) Hebrew and Aramaic grammar; 7) German language and literature (for those students who do not have an adequate command of this language); 8) Pedagogy, which is required for all students training to be religious school teachers.

C) There are two types of schools : 1) a school for beginners; 2) a college.

#### The School for Beginners

Those who attend the school for beginners [the preparatory school] are obligated to read Hebrew fluently, copy passages from the Torah easily, and know Hebrew grammar. They also must possess a decent secular knowledge. A graduate from the school for beginners will know : 1) Torah with Rashi's commentaries; the early prophets; Jeremiah, Psalms, and the Book of Proverbs; 2) Hebrew and Aramaic grammar, according to the method of Samuel David Luzzatto; 3) Mishna, Pirke Avot, and several tractates of the order Mo'ed; 4) the Gemara of tractates B'rachot and Sanhedrin, along with their commentaries; 5) characteristic passages from Midrash Rabbah; 6) Jewish history prior to and after the destruction of the Temple, according to Dr. Cassel.

### The College : Admissions

He who attends the college needs to present a certificate that he completed his studies in the preparatory school, or he must prove advanced standing in these areas of study. He who desires to become a rabbi must present another certificate that he is qualified to attend the university, while the acceptance of him who desires to become a teacher depends on the discretion of the president of the seminary.

### The College : Academics

The seminary is divided into five grades. Twice a year, students select their courses. During the first four years, students attend the university and study at the seminary. On Sunday, the day on which university classes do not meet, students attend seminary classes for three and a half hours. On the other days of the week, they attend only two hours of seminary classes. By the fifth year, students have completed their university studies. Thus, they attend seminary classes thirty hours a week.

During the first year, students study : 1) Bible - the Torah with Targum Unkelos; Psalms; and the Twelve Minor Prophets; 2) Talmud - monetary laws from passages in tractates Baba Batra, Baba Metzia, and Megillah; 3) Jewish history - the Second Temple period, according to the writings of Josephus Flavius; 4) Hebrew composition and grammar, including the inflection of verbs and comparisons with Biblical and Talmudic Aramaic forms.

During the second year, students study : 1) Bible - Isaiah, chapters forty through sixty-six, in light of the events of Isaiah's day; 2) Talmud - tractate Hullin and comparable laws in the Mishna Torah of Rambam and in tractate Avodah Zarah of Yoreh De'ah; 3) Jewish history - from the end of the Second Temple period until the time of the sealing of the Talmud; 4) Hebrew grammar - the inflection of nouns and comparisons with Biblical and Talmudic Aramaic forms; Hebrew composition.

During the third year, students study : 1) Bible - the Book of Ezekiel, with an analysis of the book in light of the events of the prophet's day; the Book of Daniel with the commentary of Rabbi Saadya Gaon; the Book of Proverbs with the commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi; 2) Talmud - capital offenses from passages in tractates Sanhedrin and Maccoth and comparable laws in the Mishna Torah; 3) Jewish history - from the time of the sealing of the Talmud until the Spanish Inquisition; 4) higher criticism of the books of the Bible; 5) Jewish philosophy - selections from Ha-Ikkarim of Rabbi J. Albo and the halakhah of Rambam; 6) Midrash and the writings which arose in Israel after the Prophets; 7) Hebrew composition.

During the fourth year, students study : 1) Bible - the Book of Isaiah, chapters one through thirty-nine, with higher criticism; 2) Talmud - introduction to the Mishna and Talmud; the laws of marriage from passages in tractates Gittin and Kedushin; Even Ha-Ezer; 3) the Book of the Kuzari and eight sections of the Rambam; 4) Midrash; Hebrew liturgical poetry; 5) Biblical criticism; 6) Jewish history - from the Spanish Inquisition until the generation of Mendelssohn and the Haskalah; 7) public speaking; 8) Hebrew grammar - syntax, accentuation, and composition.

During the fifth year, students are free from university study, so they spend all their time engaged in Torah study. During this year they study : 1) Bible - the Books of Job, Ecclesiastes, and Chronicles; Biblical commentaries according to different traditions of the Rabbis; 2) Talmud and its interpretation; Codes; 3) Talmud - commentaries on different problems; 4) Jewish history - from the time of the patriarchs until the canonization of the Torah; 5) Jewish and secular philosophy; 6) Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed; 7) homiletics, liturgy, and preaching; 8) Apocrypha and New Testament writings; 9) pedagogy.



### Rabbinic Thesis

Students who desire to be ordained must complete these five years of study, without exception. During the last two years, each rabbinic candidate will write a thesis to demonstrate that he has not neglected Torah study. Students who complete only the first two years of study and are trained in the fields of pedagogy and liturgy may become religious school teachers and congregational prayer leaders.

Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah's articles indicated that Hebrew Union College, as well as the preparatory school for the rabbinate, fell within a specific component in the multidimensional matrix of American Jewish institutional life, namely, the sphere of religious-congregational activity. The newspapers' reports about other congregational activities testified to the vibrancy of Jewish religious life in the United States. On November 4, 1879, Ha-Zefirah reported the dedication of a new synagogue on 4th Street in New York City. Founded by Jews from Holland, the members of B'nai Israel desired to keep and observe the ancient religion.<sup>21</sup> In March, 1880, both Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah announced that Shearith Israel, the oldest congregation in New York, recently celebrated its one-hundred fiftieth anniversary. The article in Ha-Zefirah read :

Ha-Zefirah, March 22, 1880

Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City is the oldest in the country. Last Passover, it celebrated its one-hundred fiftieth anniversary. Members of the congregation are of Spanish descent. They have not adopted the Reform mode of worship. Shearith Israel's lofty house of worship is located on 19th Street. Dr. Mr. H. P. Mendes, its rabbi, serves honorably.

In honor of the congregation's triple golden anniversary, the ceremony of hakafof took place, accompanied with singing and dancing. Rabbi Mendes spoke about the earliest Jews in America in general and the Jews of Congregation Shearith Israel in particular. We learned that the first Jewish settlement in New York was established in 1655, and that the Jews did not have the right of citizenship until 1683. In 1696, the first Jewish house of worship was established in New York. Rabbis Samuel Baruch and Abraham DeLucena officiated there. We do not know what happened to this house of worship. For a long time, the Jews of America had only one house of worship, namely, Shearith Israel, which in 1730 was built on Mill Street in New York City.

A comparable article in Ha-Meliz identified the men who had served as rabbis of Shearith Israel :

Ha-Meliz, March 27, 1880

The first rabbi who officiated in the synagogue was Rabbi Saul Brown. After him were Rabbis Abraham DeLucena, Moses Fonseca, David Mendes Machado, Benjamin Pereira Mendes, Joseph ben Isaac, Judah Pinto, I. Mendes Seixas, and J. Lyons.

The articles in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah suggested that Jewish religious life in the United States was not dormant. The establishment of synagogues and, in the case of Shearith Israel, their continued existence indicated that American Jews were not willing to relinquish their ancestral heritage for the sake of assimilating. The New Land promised a new beginning for many immigrants and the Constitution of the United States of America guaranteed freedom to affiliate with and participate in one's religion. Apparently, American Jews took advantage of these opportunities.

American Jewish life was not confined to New York City. In an article in Ha-Meliz, one correspondent described how forty Jewish

families in Indiana had established a congregation :

Ha-Meliz, October 28, 1880

The Jewish Chronicle announced that in the city of LaPorte, Indiana, there dwell approximately forty Jewish families. At one time they did not have a synagogue, but they volunteered to build one for themselves. The banker, Weil, volunteered to lead them in prayer and to preach. He did so not out of the desire to receive a reward.

Ha-Zefirah revealed that even in Colorado, Jews joined together to establish a congregation. They asked Rabbi Holdheim to help them acquire a Torah :

Ha-Zefirah, November 21, 1882

In contrast to the unfortunate situation of the Jews in Paris... how good and how pleasant is the situation of the Jews in Colorado in America, who recently established their own congregation. After they took care of their material needs, they recalled that man does not live by bread alone. Thus, they now are anxious to acquire a Torah scroll. They asked Rabbi Holdheim in Berlin to aid them, as he had done when they had passed through Berlin on their way to America. Their letter of request was published in the newspapers. We are certain that the Orthodox Jews in Germany will not put off this mitzvah which has come into their hands, namely, to help other Jews improve themselves.

Despite reports that Judaism was maintaining its own in the United States, some skeptics in Eastern Europe feared that emigration from Eastern Europe to America meant the abandonment of all ties with Judaism. Reports that only a few Jews in each city knew Mishna and Talmud and that only a handful of pietists observed the laws of the Shulhan Arukh circulated among the Jews of Eastern Europe. A typical report read :

Ha-Meliz, August 1, 1882

The status of Judaism in America is very bad. Ritual slaughterers shave their beards with razors and wear earrings. On Shabbat, they prepare meat for Sunday so that on that day they, like their non-Jewish neighbors, can cease from work. This correspondent himself heard sermons by rabbis permitting Jews to eat pork. The synagogues are open once a week - on the Sabbath day. Young men and women sit together, the hazan prays with his head uncovered, and organ music is played. Only a few verses are read from the Torah, also with the head uncovered. The writer of this letter is an honest man who would not exaggerate at all concerning these measures.

The modification of existing practices of traditional Judaism and the adaptation of ancient ideas to modern forms alarmed skeptics who feared that these changes would obliterate the Jewish religion from the North American continent. Some of these modifications in religious practices led to the accusation that American Jews were heathens.

Intermarriage also appeared to be a problem on the American shore. The marriage of Isaac Mayer Wise's daughter to a non-Jew, which was announced in Ha-Zefirah, proved to some people the severity of the situation in America :

Ha-Zefirah, June 17, 1879

The daughter of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise from Cincinnati married a Christian man. The rabbi blessed the couple, saying mazel tov. At the reception, treif food was served. The couple will not observe the Sabbath or the Festivals. We fear that in the days to come they will be cut off from Judaism. Right now they are Jewish in name only.

On the whole, the East European Hebrew press tried to squelch these reports about the inauthenticity of American Judaism and American

Jewish life by publishing articles which testified that Jewish religious activity in America was strong and viable :

Ha-Zefirah, April 25, 1882

Almost all the Hebrew newspapers criticize the faults of America and publish slander about her, either maliciously or unintentionally. Therefore, I shall respond to their words so that readers will know that there is no truth in their outcry which they declare concerning America.

One will say that those who go to America will be lost from the Jewish community. This is not true because approximately 23,000 New York Jews are observant Orthodox Jews who keep the laws of the Shulhan Arukh and are strict in their observance of the commandments and customs which they brought with them from their native countries. They are more observant than Jews who dwell in Germany, France, England, and Italy. And if there are Reform congregations in our city, are there also not Reform congregations in the large cities in Russia? And the Reform rabbis and preachers, did they not come here from Europe? It certainly is not true that there is no fear of the Lord in America.

Another correspondent remarked that the situation of Judaism in the United States was not as bleak as some people were wont to believe. He noted that an ongoing dependency between rabbi and congregation insured the perpetuation of Jewish religious life in America :

Ha-Zefirah, June 17, 1879

Congregations and rabbis are well suited because each worries about the other. The rabbi fears that his community will vanish and that food will be cut off from his mouth. The community worries that its rabbi will disappear or convert to another religion.

In another article in Ha-Zefirah, B. Gordon stated that there was no need to fear that Torah would vanish from among the Jews in

America. He explained that American Judaism was characterized by denominationalism, religious diversity based on different ideological tenets and different levels of personal observance and patterns of worship.<sup>22</sup>

The East European Hebrew press indicated that the matrix of American Jewish life in the late nineteenth century included not only schools and congregations, but also religious organizations and institutions. One of these organizations was called the Association of Sabbath Observers. Dedicated to preserving the holiness of the Sabbath day, this association lobbied for a congressional bill which would entitle Jewish workers to abstain from work on Saturday and to work on Sunday instead. According to Ha-Zefirah, Senator Samuel Bruenhart, a Jew, introduced the bill to Congress, and the bill became law.<sup>23</sup> A few weeks later, however, Ha-Zefirah amended this article and stated that the aforementioned Senator had never existed. Instead of Senator Bruenhart, it had meant to print Senator Benjamin Franklin Jonas from Louisiana. It also mentioned that the bill never became law.<sup>24</sup>

Another American Jewish organization mentioned in Ha-Zefirah was the Union of American Hebrew Congregations which Isaac Mayer Wise helped to establish. The Union's goals, leadership, committees, and religious outlook were described in the following article :

Ha-Zefirah, August 19, 1879

It has been several years since the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was founded in this country. [It was founded in 1873.] Like its name, its goal is to unite into a strong bond the congregations of Jews in America, nationwide. The congregations affiliated with the Union are concerned about the material and spiritual welfare of Jews in this country.

### A Conference

On July 8, 1879, more than 200 delegates, including notables and rabbis from different parts of the twenty-three states of the country, attended a meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations which convened in our city over four consecutive days. The president of the Union is Mr. Moritz Loth from Cincinnati. The secretary of the Union, Mr. Lipman Levi, announced that 115 congregations are affiliated with the Union. Each congregant must pay the treasurer \$1 annually, or each congregation must pay \$50 annually. At present, there are \$7,654 in the treasury of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

This article also related that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations had committees appointed to oversee the rights of Jews in the United States and overseas and to train and resettle Jewish farmers on American agricultural colonies. The Union also had an educational committee, and it addressed questions of major importance to American Jews, such as whether the Jewish day of rest should be observed on Saturday or Sunday :

### Ha-Zefirah, August 19, 1879

The question about the Sabbath day came before the committee. A question like this certainly seems strange to European Jews, but to us, it is not strange because it has been uppermost in the mouths of Reform rabbis for some time.

The question is whether to observe the Sabbath on the seventh day, as was commanded, or to postpone the holy day to Sunday, the sabbath of the Christians. The reason for this debate is that in this country only a minority of Jews observe the Sabbath. Among the 200 Jewish lawyers in our city, there are only twenty who do not work on this day. Only 2% of the Jewish businessmen close their businesses on the Sabbath day. Most others do not because Saturday is customarily the day on which most people

are paid and do their weekly shopping. On Sunday, most businesses and professions are closed.

Thus, the Jewish houses of worship are practically empty on the Sabbath day, the day of action. On Sunday, some of our brethren attend the Christian houses of worship, not because they desire to pursue Christianity, but because they have nothing else to do.

#### Evaluation of the Problem

Some Jewish preachers who are concerned for the good of their people and who observed this phenomenon fear that in the near future, Jews will not attend the synagogue on the Sabbath day. As a result, rabbis' salaries will diminish from \$10,000 a year (Dr. Gottheil's salary). Therefore, rabbis have devised ways to make their houses of worship more attractive. Some have added an organ and female choir, while others have allowed men and women to sit together. In Temple Emanu-El, men are permitted to go bareheaded. Unfortunately, these innovations have had little effect. Therefore, new schemes now have been devised. One is to postpone the Sabbath to Sunday. Another is to make two Sabbaths, with Saturday and Sunday of equal sanctity. Through this, the rabbis hope to bring back their congregants who have been led astray.

#### Innovations

Rabbi Dr. K. Kohler of Congregation Har Sinai in Chicago already postponed the Sabbath day to Sunday. (This rabbi is the son-in-law of Rabbi Einhorn from Congregation Beth El in our city.) Rabbi Gottheil, of Temple Emanu-El, now wants to initiate this practice. Other rabbis will observe and follow his practice.

When this issue came before the leaders of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the committee decided not to solve



it, but to leave it for the generations who would come after them.

Ha-Zefirah reported that the leaders of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations were reluctant to break with tradition by sanctioning the postponement of Shabbat to Sunday. Although they realized the potential economic benefit to their congregants, they were hesitant about making such a radical change. However, according to Ha-Zefirah, tradition was broken by Felix Adler, founder of the Ethical Culture Society. Dedicated to the ethical improvement of society and the ethical growth of the individual, this new movement, which had been established in May, 1876, became "a vital organization spearheading social reforms and social reconstruction."<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Judah David Eisenstein reported that for the most part, Ethical Culture was not well received :

Ha-Zefirah, April 3, 1879

It appears that the epicurean heresy struck root in the midst of the land and planted a seed of heresy in the heart of the majority. Professor Felix Adler (a Jew), a teacher for the Ethical Culture Society, and Mr. Frothingham (a Christian) ignored all the tenets of their faith and paid heed only to the law of man.

To some people, the problems with Ethical Culture highlighted the benefits of Reform Judaism. Tzvi Henry Gersoni, a writer for Ha-Meliz, praised the Reform movement with these words :

Ha-Meliz, April 17, 1879

Since the party of radicals was established by Professor Felix Adler, the Reform movement changed its course for the better. Until now, their goal was to uproot that which had been planted. Now they desire to plant a seed of religious faith in the hearts of the youth and to observe Judaism according to more modern ways.

Reform signified change, and change came even to congregations which previously "flew the Orthodox flag."<sup>26</sup> The members of New York's Shaarei T'fillah, an Orthodox congregation on 44th Street, had never been interested in practicing anything but "the custom of their fathers." Ha-Zefirah reported otherwise :

Ha-Zefirah, January 14, 1879

This year, the spirit of Reform suddenly began to take root. Last month, members of Congregation Shaarei T'fillah expressed their desire to institute innovations - to destroy the mehizah of the women's section, to have mixed seating, and to introduce musical instruments, harp, flute, and alamoth. The congregants also want to shorten the prayerbook.

#### Justification for the Changes

The congregants justified these changes by stating that during the past years the congregation's debts had increased while its income had decreased because people were turned off from coming there to pray because of the ancient customs. Thus, they decided to heed the principle, 'Take a harp, improve a melody; increase song so that you will remember.' They hope that both men and women will now attend and that the changes, which foster sociability, will attract new members to the house of the Lord. They also hope that the congregation's income will blossom as in earlier days.

According to Ha-Zefirah, Shaarei T'fillah's religious reform was based not only on the desire to modernize existing forms of worship and give a new spirit to ancient ideas, but also on the desire to attract new members in order to augment the congregation's financial situation. Cognizant of the fact that the congregation was losing members, or at least not attracting new members, because of its tradi-

tional mode of worship, the leadership realized that the congregation's future depended on its popular appeal to the acculturated American Jewish laity. Thus, it modified its practices.

Prayerbook reform also accompanied changes in ritual practice. One newspaper observed that "almost every congregation had a special prayerbook, and that the number of prayerbooks was greater than the number of worshippers using them."<sup>27</sup>

Despite changes in some modes of worship, halakhic issues still interested American Jews. Two issues, conversion and cremation, were discussed in Ha-Zefirah :

Ha-Zefirah, January 8, 1880

The Jewish Advance, published in Chicago, announced that one Christian man converted to Judaism because he wanted to marry a Jewish woman. The woman refused to marry him if he did not convert. After he was circumcised, the man said to the mohel : 'Behold, I believe in one God, in the immortality of the soul, and in the future kingdom of Israel. However, it is beyond my comprehension how this covenant (circumcision) will make me better, but it is my responsibility to fulfill the request of my mother-in-law, whose desire was made known to me by my beloved.' About converts like these, the Rabbis correctly said that they are as hard to Israel as psoriasis.

Ha-Zefirah, March 25, 1880

Dr. Samuel Horn, an inhabitant of our city, requested prior to his death, which occurred this week, that his body be cremated. Thus, he was burned to ashes in a furnace in Washington, D.C. It seems to me that this is one of our brethren who, in our own time, has chosen to be cremated rather than buried.

The American Jewish community did not fail to mourn the passing of prominent Jews. The obituaries of Drs. David Einhorn and Max Lilien-

thal and Mr. Joseph Seligman were printed in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah :

Ha-Zefirah, December 9, 1879

Our Reform brethren in this city suffered a great loss on Sunday, November 2, 1879, with the death of Dr. David Einhorn who, until last July, served as the rabbi of Congregation Beth El. He retired at the age of seventy.

In 1809, David Einhorn was born in Dispeck, Bavaria. He served as a Reform rabbi in the city of Fuerth. Because of the insurrection in 1848, he was forced to leave his native land and travel to the United States. In [1855], he arrived in the city of Baltimore where he served as rabbi for seven and a half years. When the Civil War broke out, he expressed his opposition to slavery in the German newspaper 'Sinai.' His view cost him his job. In 1866, he came to our city where he merged Congregations Adath Jeshurun and Anshe Heseid, thereby creating Beth El. He edited two prayerbooks, Ha-Tamid and Ner Tamid, in the spirit of Reform Judaism, and he wrote 'Das Prinzip des Mosasmus.'

Ha-Meliz, May 16, 1882

On April 5, 1882, Dr. Max Lilienthal died in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Lilienthal was also renowned in our country because in the 1840s, the government sent him to establish schools in all the Jewish communities of Russia.

Dr. Lilienthal was born in 1815 in Munich, the capital of Bavaria. He completed his studies at the university there. In 1839, when he was twenty-four years old, the Jews in Riga called him to be their rabbi and preacher. He served in Riga for a number of years.... He preached to the people in a clear, crisp tongue. The government took notice of him and the minister of education, Uvarov, sent Dr. Lilienthal, in 1832, to all the large cities in Russia to establish modern schools for Jews. Lilienthal's actions were widely known. Many books and articles were written about him, but there is not enough space here to go into this at length.

### Lilienthal Migrated to the United States

Lilienthal despaired when he saw the difficulties experienced by leaders of the Jewish communities and their disdain for the Haskalah. He knew that there was no future for Judaism there. He foresaw bad times ahead for Israel. Thus, in 1845, he decided to leave his native country. Those who knew him then testified that Lilienthal, who was only thirty years old when he left Russia, appeared elderly. When Lilienthal arrived in America, he lived in New York for approximately ten years. During that time, he served as rabbi in one of the local congregations....Later, he went to Cincinnati where he served as rabbi and preacher until the day of his death. He was one of the founders of Hebrew Union College, the rabbinic seminary in Cincinnati. During the twenty-seven years he lived in Cincinnati, Lilienthal participated extensively in Jewish education. That which he did not accomplish in Russia he accomplished in America....

On April 5, 1882, Lilienthal died of a heart attack at the age of sixty-seven.

### Ha-Zefirah, June 17, 1880

New York. The Jewish banker Joseph Seligman died last month in the city of New Orleans. He was sixty years old at the time of his death, and he left an inheritance of \$25-million. Seligman founded the orphans' asylum in our city and participated in many other charitable acts. He was highly esteemed by both the citizens and the President of our country, General Grant. Seligman's body was brought to New York. Professor Adler and Dr. Gottheil eulogized him.

Articles in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah indicated that between 1879-1882, the American Jewish community was dynamic. Occasionally faced with incidents of anti-Semitism, it nevertheless succeeded in maintaining and fostering Jewish life through a variety of religious,

educational, fraternal, and communal-welfare activities. The articles also demonstrated that American Jews were not heathens, that American Judaism was not stagnant, and, most important, that American Jews cared about preserving the unity and heritage of their ancestors and adapting older customs to a new, Americanized way of life.

## Conclusion

The image of the United States of America as presented in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah between 1879-1882 is of great significance for the modern Jewish historian. A mosaic composed of innumerable descriptions by different correspondents, this image not only conveyed the impression that the United States was as close to utopia as one could get, but it also highlighted the vast differences between life in the United States and life in the countries of Eastern Europe.

Before describing this image, it is important to reiterate that neither Ha-Meliz nor Ha-Zefirah had a wide circulation. Intended for East European Jewish intelligentsia and costing five or six rubles a year for a subscription, which was the equivalent of five or six dollars, it is unlikely that either weekly was read by more than 3,000 or 4,000 of the approximate three-million Jews in Eastern Europe. Moreover, Hebrew was not the lingua franca of East European Jewry. Thus, from the outset, neither Ha-Meliz nor Ha-Zefirah was intended to speak directly to the masses. As a result, these periodicals cannot serve as barometers with which to measure the effect the articles had on various segments of East European Jewry or individuals' decisions to migrate to the United States.

Without actually comparing life in the United States to life in the countries of Eastern Europe, both Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah suggested numerous ways in which America was different. Concentrating primarily on political issues, Ha-Meliz presented the United States as a country infused with the spirit of modern liberalism. A country of

metropolitan centers, it portrayed the United States as the one place in which all people could find satisfaction. Concentrating on everything from bizarre human interest stories, such as the birth in Cincinnati of a boy with a fourteen inch tail, to sophisticated biographies, such as that of Sarah Bernhardt, Ha-Zefirah intimated that in the United States, anything was possible. A farmer could become the President, and a Jew could become a goy. Overall, religion was not a subject of jest to the correspondents who wrote for Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah. Often, they expressed their concern that the United States was no place for East European Jews. Anti-Jewish feelings created problems in many circles of society, American Reform Judaism made observant immigrants look like superstitious religious fanatics, and the prideful, self-assured superiority of American Jews of German descent made the situation for the Jews of Russian and Polish descent grim. In addition, many were the articles which tried to defend American Jewry against the onslaught from Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, both periodicals found satisfaction in the United States as a place for Jewish settlement. They reported, although erroneously, that American Jewish committees would provide money not only for travel, but also for resettlement in America. They hinted that these committees desired the mass emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe. Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah also published letters by immigrants which spoke about the friendly treatment they received upon their arrival. Only rarely did the articles suggest that the mass immigration of East European Jews was creating dire problems for American Jews.



From these articles, a modern Jewish historian also learns that American Jews distinguished themselves in philanthropic and communal-welfare activities. They participated as full United States citizens and suffered neither economic discrimination nor physical persecution at the hands of the government. American Jews nurtured liberalism and basked in the knowledge that the fusion of American and Jewish interests was possible.

While both Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah undoubtedly aimed at veracity, many of the articles about the United States, especially the ones about American industry and natural resources, were technically inaccurate and overtly exaggerated. Nevertheless, all the articles helped create a sense of K'lal Yisrael by bridging American and East European Jewries through the medium of highly impressionistic reports about Jewish and secular life in the New World. The articles also helped satisfy East European Jews' insatiable curiosity about the United States. At a time before technology made communication almost instantaneous and transportation relatively safe and swift, these articles served as a point of contact between the two disparate Jewries. Overall, the historical significance of these articles about the United States which appeared in Ha-Meliz and Ha-Zefirah between 1879-1882 lies in the wealth of information they provided about the spirit of the time and the experiences of the people in their daily lives.

## Footnotes

### Introduction

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<sup>3</sup>Dictionary of American History, Cochran, p. 412.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 412.

<sup>5</sup>Uri D. Herscher, Jewish Agricultural Utopias in America, 1880-1910 (Detroit : Wayne State University Press, 1981), p. 16.

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<sup>7</sup>John A. Garraty, The New Commonwealth, 1877-1890 (New York : Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), p. 89.

<sup>8</sup>Ha-Zefirah, May 13, 1880.

<sup>9</sup>Cashman, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup>Ha-Meliz, February 18, 1879.

<sup>11</sup>Dictionary of American History, Cochran, p. 411.

<sup>12</sup>Ha-Zefirah, February 28, 1881.

<sup>13</sup>Ha-Zefirah, September 9, 1879.

<sup>14</sup>Ha-Zefirah, March 26, 1879.

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<sup>1</sup>Herscher, pp. 53, 108.

<sup>2</sup>"Jews in American Agriculture," The History of Farming by Jews in the United States (Jewish Agricultural Society, Inc., 1954), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Herscher, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>"Jews in American Agriculture," p. 25.

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<sup>10</sup>Herscher, p. 10.

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<sup>12</sup>Herscher, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup>Peter Wiernik, History of the Jews in America (New York : The Jewish Press Publishing Company, 1912), p. 266.

<sup>14</sup>Ha-Zefirah, March 14, 1882.

<sup>15</sup>Herscher, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup>Wiernik, p. 266.

<sup>17</sup>Herscher, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup>Ha-Meliz, March 21, 1881.

<sup>19</sup>Herscher, p. 23.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 112-113.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

#### American Jewish Aid to East European Jewish Immigrants

<sup>1</sup>Eugene Lipman, "A History of Organized Synagogal Philanthropy in the United States" (Master's Thesis, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, 1943), p. 1.

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#### The American Government

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<sup>3</sup>Oscar I. Janowsky, The American Jew (New York : Harper & Row, Publishers, 1942), pp. 210, 278.

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<sup>11</sup>Harold Whitman Bradley, The United States From 1865 (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), p. 61.

### The American Jewish Community

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<sup>2</sup>Nathaniel Weyl, The Jew in American Politics (New Rochelle : Arlington House, 1968), p. 67.

<sup>3</sup>Higham, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup>Ha-Zefirah, June 17, 1880

<sup>5</sup>Feingold, p. 147.

<sup>6</sup>Ha-Meliz, September 6, 1881.

<sup>7</sup>Janowsky, p. 18.

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<sup>10</sup>Rufus Lears, The Jews in America : A History (New York : Ktav Publishing House, 1972), p. 132.

<sup>11</sup>Ha-Zefirah, July 22, 1879.

<sup>12</sup>Ha-Zefirah, June 17, 1880.

<sup>13</sup>Ha-Zefirah, March 25, 1880.

<sup>14</sup>Feingold, p. 101.

<sup>15</sup>Ha-Zefirah, April 3, 1879.

<sup>16</sup>Ha-Zefirah, January 14, 1879.

<sup>17</sup>Ha-Zefirah, July 22, 1879.

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<sup>20</sup>Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. 8, "Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion," by Stanley F. Chyet.

<sup>21</sup>Ha-Zefirah, November 4, 1879.

<sup>22</sup>Ha-Zefirah, June 7, 1879.

<sup>23</sup>Ha-Zefirah, April 22, 1880.

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<sup>27</sup>Ha-Zefirah, November 4, 1879.

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