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THE PEOPLE'S PREACHER

A Study of the Life and Writings of  
Zvi Hirsch Masliansky (1856-1943)

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1982

Referee, Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus

## ABSTRACT

Zvi Hirsch Masliansky (1856-1943) first gained recognition as an itinerant preacher for the fledgling Hovevei Zion movement in Russia during the last decade of the 19th century. Having been exiled from Russia as a subversive, Masliansky settled in New York City where his masterful Yiddish oratory made him a popular figure within the immigrant community. As a result of his reputation, Masliansky was invited to preach in various cities throughout the United States and Canada. His reputation among the immigrant masses enabled the preacher to acquire a permanent speaking position at the Educational Alliance in New York. He associated with prominent leaders of the American Jewish community and participated in various communal organizations. At the turn of the century, Masliansky was among the most renowned of the Eastern European immigrants.

Throughout his long career, the preacher remained an avid participant in the nationalist movement. Masliansky was both a pioneer Zionist and a contributor to the development of the Zionist movement in America. His devotion to the national ideal included a commitment to the rebirth of Hebrew as a modern language. In addition to his contribution to the world of Yiddish literature--he published a Yiddish

daily newspaper and wrote frequently for various Yiddish journals--Masliansky wrote articles for various Hebrew journals in Europe and America. He published collections of his best sermons in both Yiddish and Hebrew.

Masliansky's memoirs, which constitute a unique resource regarding Jewish life in Russia and the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, appeared both in Hebrew and Yiddish.

This thesis is a biographical and critical study of Masliansky: his writings, his preaching, and his contribution to the Jews of Eastern Europe who immigrated to the United States (1900-1920).

Chapter One deals with Masliansky's childhood in Russia and his beginnings as an itinerant orator for the Hibbat Zion movement.

Chapter Two covers the period immediately following the preacher's exile from Russia and his decision to immigrate to the United States.

Chapter Three describes Masliansky's work at the Educational Alliance and analyzes his attempt to publish a Yiddish newspaper: "The Jewish World" (1902-1904).

Chapter Four focuses upon the preacher's association with the Zionist movement of America and various communal organizations. This chapter also contains a precis of Masliansky's Hebrew and Yiddish publications.



Chapter Five probes the orator's last years; his attempt to settle in Palestine and his diminished sphere of communal activity.

The Epilogue attempts to evaluate the nature of Masliansky's career, and simultaneously place it in a historical perspective.

This work also includes an annotated English translation of a portion of Masliansky's Hebrew memoirs concerning his travels to various cities in the United States and Canada around the turn of the century. The translation is indexed.

This work is lovingly dedicated  
to the memory of  
ROY M. ZOLA ל"י  
who would have been  
very proud of his son.

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### AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Whatever success I have had in shedding new light on Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, and the world in which he lived and worked, is due in very large part to the help and guidance of many others.

I am compelled to say that, without the encouragement and confidence extended to me by so many of my teachers at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio, I would not have engaged myself in a project of this magnitude. In addition to bringing me closer to my people and their past, the College has given me a great treasure: The love of study.

Inevitably, there are those who must be singled out for special mention; in regard to this work, such mention is particularly appropriate.

The remnant of Masliansky's correspondence and documents is spread throughout the world. My deep gratitude goes to the following archives, libraries, and their directors for helping me reassemble, in part, these papers: The Archives of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; The Archives of the YIVO Institute, Mr. Marek Web; The Zionist Archives of America, Ms. Sylvia Landress; The Archives of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Dr. Moshe Nadav; The Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Ms. Rachel Ever-Ha-Dani; The American

Jewish Historical Society, Dr. Nathan M. Kaganoff; and The BUND Archives, Mr. Benjamin Nadel.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Abraham Peck, the Associate Director of The American Jewish Archives, and Ms. Fannie Zelcer, for their continuing interest in this study.

The steadfast concern and cooperation by Masliansky's grandchildren is, in and of itself, a testimony to the great impact he had on his family. He is remembered as an "affectionate, caring, charming, personable, loving, participating grampa" even after the passing of almost four decades. Special thanks go to Ms. Dorothy Biltchik, Mr. Lawrence Perskie, Mr. Isaac Schwartz, Mr. Edward Weinberg, Mr. James L. Weinberg, and Ms. Ruth Turberg for sharing scrapbooks, photographs, clippings, memorabilia, and wonderful memories about their "Grampa Masliansky". Mr. Marshall Weinberg, Masliansky's youngest grandson, merits special recognition for his singular devotion to this work and his tireless efforts to provide me with useful resources.

I am gratefully indebted to many scholars for the corrections and improvements which resulted from their proof readings. Dr. Ezra Spicehandler's contribution to the correctness of the translation (see Appendix) was invaluable. My appreciation to Drs. Michael A. Meyer, Ida Cohen Selavan, Azriel Eisenberg, Robert Katz, and Ben-Zion

Wacholder for their contributions. A special note of thanks to Dr. Herbert Paper, who unselfishly supported me through "Yiddish waters" too "deep" for me, and to Aryeh Azriel and Tali Azriel for their assistance in deciphering Hebrew manuscripts. It was Dr. Jonathan Sarna who first led me to Masliansky, and who has since that time aided me unceasingly. A sincere thank you to Mrs. Clarice Monahan, who has devoted much time and energy to the typing of this project.

Yet, I am most beholden to Professor Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, who took me under his knowledgeable wing and taught me so much about the realm of the past. His scholarship, warmth, and encouragement continues to inspire me. His life is a living witness to the rabbinic teaching:

עשה תורתך קבע אמור מעט

ועשה הרבה והיה מקבל את

כל האדם בטבר פנים יפות

(אבות 1:15)

Finally, I gratefully thank the Source of Life for providing me with the inspiration of all that I do: my love, Stefi. She has been a partner in this labor--quite literally--as she has prepared the index to the Appendix. Moreover, her countenance is infused into all that I create. For her, I give thanks.

## INTRODUCTION

From the time of the Second Temple, until the present day, the drasha (scriptural homily) has had a fundamental role in Jewish life. The darshan (preacher) has thereby been a pivotal influence on literally all aspects of the Jewish ethos. All along the road of Jewish history, the darshan has confronted the people--now rebuking and admonishing, now consoling and encouraging. The literary remnant of the darshan's work is so vast that it cannot be contained even within a hundred volumes, and in all its manifestations it continues to dazzle the imagination.

It almost goes without saying that the drasha has evolved over the centuries; ever-changing to meet the needs of the times in which the darshan was living. Every great event in the Jewish past has brought forth a new challenge for the preacher who has forged the drasha into a useful tool of the era. Each new epoch has been accompanied by the darshan's innovations aimed at vitalizing the Jewish spirit.<sup>1</sup>

During the last quarter of the 19th century, events in Jewish life gave birth to another type of preaching. In the 1880's, the Hibbat Zion movement gave rise to a new style of darshan. This new darshan, though firmly implanted within the historical continuum of the Jewish sermon, was called upon to promulgate the notion of a Jewish return to the



historic homeland as an immediate and attainable goal. This new type of preacher needed a distinguishing title; one which simultaneously joined hands with the "maggid" of the past while venturing down heretofore uncharted paths. That new designation was "Ha-Matif" ("The Preacher"), and one who called himself a "matif" was soon unmistakably identified with those who called themselves "Hovevei Zion" ("Lovers of Zion").<sup>2</sup>

Zvi Hirsch Masliansky (1856-1943), was not only the embodiment of the "matif", but he remains as the paradigmatic illustration of this interesting functionary in the nascency and early development of the modern Zionist movement. Had Masliansky spent his entire life in Russia--or even in the Yishuv of Palestine--the unique nature of his career and influence might not have been quite so identifiable. The fact that he elected to settle in the United States of America, together with over two million of his fellow Eastern European immigrants, enabled Masliansky to become much more than a "matif". During the years 1880 to 1940, the focal point of leadership for world Jewry moved from Europe to North America. As American Jewry gained hegemony over the international scene, it concomitantly exerted its influence in a variety of Jewish projects. Perhaps the most significant example of this influence can be demonstrated in the history of Zionism. As an "American" Zionist, Masliansky was able to transcend his function as an itinerant preacher and associate his work

with the elite powerbrokers of the American Jewish community.

Yet, Masliansky was not simply a Zionist preacher. He was a great communicator who served as a literal liaison between the immigrant Jew of America and the established leaders of American Jewry. During the almost fifty years that Masliansky lived and labored in the United States, he worked towards these two seemingly contradictory goals: the return of the Jewish people to their historic homeland in Eretz Yisrael (The Land of Israel), and the settlement and acclimation of the immigrant to life in the United States of America.

Masliansky's medium for his work was primarily the spoken word. While he dabbled in many ventures, his greatest impact came through his tremendous skill as a Yiddish orator. A man of intelligence and learning, Masliansky wrote articles, issued books, and undertook the ambitious publication of a Yiddish newspaper. As a community leader, Masliansky was affiliated directly or indirectly with almost every significant Jewish organization in New York City. His friends were counted among the Uptown and Downtown Jews. Yet, his special identity is repositied in the title he bore so proudly: "Ha-Matif Ha-Leumi" ("The National Preacher"). Ultimately, it was his oratorical skill which made Masliansky a significant figure to both the immigrant and the resident American Jew.

The Yiddish world which flourished in the United States

from 1900-1925 has all but vaporized. The renewed interest in the study of Yiddish language and culture in the United States will not bring back its glorious past. The staggering task of the student of the "Great Immigration" is to struggle to understand its impact on the lives of people who lived through it, and the ramifications it has had upon successive generations. The life of "Ha-Matif Ha-Leumi" Zvi Hirsch Masliansky sheds important light on that era.

## NOTES

### Introduction

1. Israel Bettan, Studies in Jewish Preaching, Cincinnati:  
HUC Press, 1939, pp. 3-48.
2. Simon J.H. Gliksberg, Ha-Drasha B'Yisrael, Tel Aviv:  
Rav Kook Press, 1930, pp. 471-477.

See also:

Hayim R. Rabinowitz, Portraits of Jewish Preachers  
(Hebrew), Jerusalem: Rubin Mass Publishers, 1967,  
pp. 389-395.

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS IN RUSSIA

#### CHILDHOOD

Zvi Hirsch Masliansky was born on May 16, 1856. He was the son of Chaim and Rebecca (Papok) Masliansky of Slutsk (a city in Minsk), Russia. His family background combined with the unique environment of the city in which he spent his boyhood years to lay the foundation for Masliansky's future skills and interests.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Slutsk was a city which teemed with Jewish life and learning. One of the oldest Jewish communities in Belorussia, Slutsk had a large Jewish population by the 1850's and it was a modest intellectual center. Slutsk was a great bastion of the "Mitnaggedim", and the end of the eighteenth century saw Hasidism totally routed out of the area. So dominant was the control of the "Mitnaggedim" that the Baal Shem Tov is reported to have declared: "When ten Hasidim live in Slutsk, we will know the messiah is coming."<sup>1</sup> While the nineteenth century generally saw a steady amelioration between the "Mitnaggedim" and the Hasidim, Slutsk remained devoid of Hasidic influence.

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1. Nahum Chinitz and Samson Nachmani, Slutsk and Vicinity Memorial Book, New York: Yizkor Book Committee, 1962, p. 11.

Indeed, Slutsk Jewry prided itself on its concern for Jewish learning and its organizations dedicated to Jewish life. The city had fine yeshivot, the most noted of which was the yeshivah for advanced students headed by Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer (1870-1953). The city proudly claimed outstanding talmudic scholars as its chief rabbis, including men such as Joseph Baer Soloveichik (1820-1892) and Jacob David Willowski (1845-1913). Yet, lest one think that Slutsk was simply a hotbed of talmudic orthodoxy, let it be recalled that the city was hospitable to the Haskalah movement. The writer Mendele Mocher Sefarim lived for a time in Slutsk, and his works were cherished there. Later generations of Hebraists gained their initial exposure to the language in Slutsk: Yitzhak Dov Berkowitz (1885-1967), Yaakov Cahan (1881-1960), and Ephraim E. Lisitzky (1885-1962). Despite the fact that the city had no Hebrew paper per se, and rarely saw copies of "Ha-Zefirah" or "Ha-Meliz", the city developed Hebrew-speaking societies which met regularly and attracted large numbers of young people.<sup>2</sup>

Just as Slutsk nurtured maskilim, so too were many of its citizens Zionists. More precisely, the Hibbat Zion movement which flowered in response to the oppressive policies instituted by the Tzarist government in the 1880's found many adherents in Slutsk. Intellectual clusters debated

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2. N. Chinitz and S. Nachmani; p. 47.

socialism, communism, and even atheism. The cultural environment of Slutsk has been described thusly: "...a community in which the modern spirit of the new era was fully alive side by side with ancient ideas and practices."<sup>3</sup>

Masliansky's own family life was a microcosm of this atmosphere. His father was a respected teacher of Talmud and a businessman of modest means. Since his father passed away when Masliansky was barely fourteen, he recollects his mother in much greater detail. She was a capable woman, the daughter of Rabbi Pinhas Papok who was a dayan (scholar-judge) in the city of Mir. Her mathematical abilities earned her the respect of the community which referred to her as "Rebecca the Wise".<sup>4</sup>

Masliansky's parents gave birth to seven children (six boys and one girl) prior to his birth. All of the other boys died as children. Four years after Masliansky's birth, his mother (already well past forty) had another son. Masliansky recalls being raised in a strictly traditional household: He studied Torah with his father and frequently accompanied him to the synagogue. He remembers the reverence with which his mother and older sister would prepare for the Sabbath and recite its blessings. He studied in a traditional bet midrash preparing to attend a yeshivah.<sup>5</sup>

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3. Ibid. p. XXVI (English section).

4. Ibid. p. 101.

5. Ibid. pp. 102-103.

When he was twelve, Masliansky was sent to study at the renowned Yeshivah of Mir. Two years later, he moved to the town of Paritz where he was tutored by Rabbi Yechiel M. Wolfson. Due to his father's death, he was forced to conclude his formal studies in order to work and support his mother and younger brother. Securing a position teaching Hebrew, Masliansky left Paritz for Pinsk. During this period, Masliansky married Henrietta Rubinstein (March 3, 1875). He remained in Pinsk fourteen years; raising a family and teaching Hebrew at various Jewish schools.<sup>6</sup>

This childhood environment exerted an unmistakeable mark on Masliansky's later values and attitudes. Slutsk was a city which provided an exposure to serious talmudic study with an aversion to superstition and mere rote learning. The fact that he developed an early fluency in Hebrew studies is borne out by his appointment to a teaching position at the age of sixteen. Simultaneously, the city was the hub of a potpourri of modernist ideologies. Unlike so many towns scattered throughout the Pale of Settlement, Slutsk brimmed with Jews who advocated "radical" philosophies. An early example of such a Jew was Zvi Hirsch Dainow (1832-1877). Dainow was deeply influenced by the spirit of the Haskalah. Convinced that there must be a confluence between Torah and Haskalah, Dainow preached ardently on behalf of educational

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6. Joseph Massel and Moses Zablotski, "Ha-Yitzhari" (Hebrew), Manchester, 1895, pp. 7-8.



reforms. Dainow discarded the singsong style of the traditional maggid and spoke passionately in Yiddish. Known as "the maggid of Slutsk", Dainow was unwelcome in many synagogues because of his unorthodox views. He even went so far as to preach a sermon in praise of Tzar Alexander II and his reforms entitled "Kevod Melekh" (1869), and this surely would have been considered strange by most traditional Jews.<sup>7</sup> Masliansky and Dainow were related, and the youngster observed and admired the great maggid's style on numerous occasions.<sup>8</sup>

This combination of influences continued to bombard the young Masliansky after his arrival in Pinsk in 1871. Pinsk was an economic trade center for southwest Russia. As such, it was among the first Russian cities to experience some modest industrialization. The combination of trade and industrialization in the nineteenth century brought an influx of new philosophies to the Jewish proletariat. The impact of the Haskalah began to be felt as early as the 1850's. Jewish children in Pinsk began attending the government school in 1853. In the 1860's, several Talmud Torah schools were established there and in neighboring Karlin. These Talmud Torah schools included Hebrew and Russian language instruction, arithmetic, and religious education. Masliansky taught in such a school. Following the repressions of

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7. N. Chinitz and S. Nachmani; p. 100.

8. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Zichronot, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1929, p. 6.

1881-82, Pinsk quickly became a Hovevei Zion center and, later, a Bundist center.

The values which guided Masliansky throughout his career grew naturally out of this childhood environment. Always a devout Jew who admired and respected Jewish learning and scholarship, he was also a special sort of modernist. The great problems of the Jewish people demanded a modern response and for Masliansky the concept of national rebirth was to be that response. Yet, he never perceived any conflict between the philosophy of Hibbat Zion and traditional Jewish life. They were, in his mind, completely complimentary values, and from his earliest involvement with Hibbat Zion until his death, he adhered to their inseparability. In a real sense, his advocacy for a return to the Land of Israel grew naturally out of a religious love of Zion. Similarly, his love of Hebrew as a living and vital tongue developed from his religious love for it as "the holy tongue", the language of his ancestors.

#### FROM TEACHER TO PREACHER

Masliansky's rise to prominence as a Zionist "matif" remains shrouded in legend--much of which is due to the orator's own conflicting accounts. It was clear that he was moved to preach following the anti-Jewish pogroms which came on the heels of the assassination of Alexander II in 1881.

It is more difficult to discern precisely when his interest in public speaking first began.

As a child, Masliansky claims to have been intrigued by the itinerant maggidim who spoke in Slutsk. In his memoirs, he recalls playing a "new game" when he was only seven years old. Using a white tablecloth for a talit, he gathered his friends about him and preached on the tragedy of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. So moved were his little listeners that their wailing and crying awoke Masliansky's father who had been taking a Sabbath afternoon nap. Masliansky claims to have been "irresistibly drawn to the pulpit", and that friends and relatives (including Zvi Hirsch Dainow, the "Maggid of Slutsk") long predicted he would someday become a great preacher.<sup>9</sup>

Despite these recollections, there is no substantial evidence to verify Masliansky's assertions that he displayed a marked oratorical talent during his youth. In fact, in his old age, he wrote that until he was five years old he could not speak at all. According to this testimony, he was totally mute until one day when he suddenly stunned his parents by saying, "Mother, may I attend cheder with all the other children?"<sup>10</sup> In all likelihood, it was the Hibbat

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9. Ibid. pp. 5-6.

10. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Ben V'Eym Nifgashu, "Ha-Doar", No. 39, October 1, 1937, p. 669.

Zion movement which sparked an impassioned conviction within Masliansky to take to the preaching circuit, just as it did with many others.

Masliansky had already been teaching Hebrew for quite some time when the tragic events of 1881-1882 began to unfold. The reactionary response of Alexander III's government to the assassination of Alexander II came as an emotional blow to all Jews, and particularly those who believed that enlightenment would eventually cleanse Russia of its anti-Jewishness. Bitter reprisals against Jews left the communities in disarray, and the passion with which anti-Jewish sentiment was pursued (even by the revolutionary movements) was disheartening.<sup>11</sup>

The dramatic and cathartic effect which the anti-Jewish fervor of the 1880's had upon the Jewish intelligentsia almost defies overemphasis. Peretz Smolenskin (1842-1885), Moshe Leib Lilienblum (1843-1910), and Leo Pinsker (1821-1891) are well-known examples of intellectuals who were so profoundly affected by the nature of the anti-Jewish activities that they turned to a philosophy of national rebirth literally overnight.<sup>12</sup> Arthur Hertzberg has correctly pointed out that

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11. Yehuda Slutsky, "May Laws" article in Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 11, cols. 1147-1148;

Ismar Elbogen, A Century of Jewish Life, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966, pp. 210-220.

Arthur Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966, pp. 42-43.

12. A. Hertzberg, pp. 141-154, 166-198.

the vast extent to which the anti-Jewish sentiment spread throughout Russian society in the 1880's (i.e., leading newspaper editors, intellectuals, men of education) served to dissuade Jews from retaining any hope that the Haskalah could ameliorate their disadvantaged status.<sup>13</sup>

Masliansky claims to have been equally affected by the events of 1881-1882. According to his own testimony, Masliansky was deeply moved by the reports of vicious anti-Jewish pogroms in the city of Yelizavetgrad (today Kirovograd) in April, 1881. Overcome by emotion, he ran to the synagogue and implored the rabbi to permit him to address the congregation:

"I ascended the pulpit and delivered a passionate speech on Zion and Eretz Yisrael. The Haftarah of that week was 'But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me'<sup>14</sup> and it served as the keynote of my sermon. I preached with such passion that the whole congregation was moved to tears..."<sup>15</sup>

Masliansky claims that this address was the beginning of his fiery oratory, but his rise to prominence was not quite meteoric. Evidently, he had not been completely satisfied with his work as a Hebrew instructor for quite some time. He began preaching regularly on the Psalms even before the oppressions of the 1880's and he may also have tried his

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13. Ibid. p. 180.

14. Isaiah 49:14.

15. Z. H. Masliansky, p. 6.

hand at farming.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, his speaking was confined to Pinsk and its suburbs for almost five years following his "debut" as a Zionist preacher. He continued teaching Hebrew, and he fell under the influence of Rabbi David Ben Samuel Friedmann (1828-1917).

Friedmann was the rabbi in Karlin (a city neighboring Pinsk), and he influenced many religiously observant Jews to join the Hibbat Zion movement. Friedmann believed that national rebirth was essential to a strictly religious revival. (He eventually disassociated himself from the movement when Hovevei Zion groups allowed secular education to be part of their training programs.) Friedmann helped organize a Hovevei Zion group in Pinsk shortly after the events of 1881-1882. He was also a delegate to the Kattowitz Conference of 1884. This conference, the first successful attempt at centralizing the fledgling Hibbat Zion movement, resulted in some definite plans regarding the promotion of resettlement in Palestine and the establishment of new Hibbat Zion groups throughout Russia. Upon his return from this conference, Friedmann took steps to realize the conference's program. Aharon E. Eisenberg (1863-1931) was sent from Pinsk to settle in Palestine in 1886. Similarly, Masliansky was sent to Yekaterinoslav (today Dnepropetrovsk) to help

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16. Ibid.

cf., Arthur Hertzberg, "Zvi Hrisch Masliansky", Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement 3, 1941-1945, p. 513.

establish Hibbat Zion groups in that city in 1887. Five years after his first speech in Pinsk, Masliansky was not yet a recognized "matif", but rather a devoted man of the Hibbat Zion cause whose commitment was such that he would move his family to another city for the movement's sake.<sup>17</sup>

In Yekaterinoslav, Masliansky worked with men like Lev O. Levanda (1835-1888) and Simon Judah Stanislavsky (1849-1921) to establish a Hovevei Zion group in that city. Levanda and Stanislavsky were both acculturated Jews who approached the concept of national rebirth from a secular viewpoint. It is worthwhile to bear in mind that Masliansky's orientation was much more akin to that of Friedmann and Rabbi Samuel Mohilewer (1824-1898). However, like Mohilewer (and unlike Friedmann), Masliansky was prepared to work with the secularists. This attitude remained with him through the rest of his long career despite his personal affinity for religious Zionism.

It is difficult to say with assuredness what precisely was Masliansky's attitude vis à vis Zionism prior to the early 1880's. Clearly, he was not a secularist like Pinsker,

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17. In Yekaterinoslav, Masliansky had stationery printed which bore his name and the words "מְסִיף וּמוֹרֶה ש"ע" (Preacher and Teacher of Codes). Evidently he had not yet achieved enough renown as a preacher that he could rely entirely upon his oratory for income. cf., Zvi Hirsch Masliansky to Abraham and Friedel Masliansky, 1887-1892, Zvi Hirsch Masliansky Papers, Jewish Theological Seminary Library (JTSL), New York.

Lilienblum, or even Smolenskin. Yet, he valued secular scholarship and read the Hebrew journals "Ha-Shahar" and "Ha-Meliz". Although he was sympathetic to the acquisition of secular knowledge and certain ideals of the Haskalah, he always remained a devout Jew. Masliansky was not an iconoclast, and never disassociated himself from religious faith as did Lilienblum. Perhaps this explains, in part, why this passionate adherence to Hibbat Zion came when it did. As a religious Jew who was also sympathetic to the Haskalah, Masliansky would have been eager to follow the lead of men like Mohilewer and Friedmann. These were men whose religious credentials were flawless, yet who simultaneously recognized the desperate need to respond to the existential crisis (to use the 20th century nomenclature) of the Jewish people. They advocated an ideology perfectly suited to Masliansky. Indeed, it was the leadership of rabbis such as Mohilewer and Friedmann that enabled devout Jews with liberal intellectual sympathies to commit their souls to Hibbat Zion.

One of the first to advocate sending special preachers around the country to convince Jews to join Hibbat Zion groups was Rabbi Mordecai Eliasberg of Bauska (1817-1889).<sup>18</sup> In his memoirs, Menachem M. Ussishkin (1863-1941) described his efforts to convince fellow Hovevei Zion members that the movement desperately needed a travelling preacher.

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18. Simon J.H. Glikberg, Ha-Drasha B'Yisrael, Tel Aviv: Rav Kook Press, 1930, p. 473.



According to Ussishkin, as early as 1885 he tried to persuade Hibbat Zion leaders to engage such a preacher to reach out to the Jewish masses in Moscow. His suggestion met with general disapproval. These opponents were concerned with:

- 1) the great expense they would incur by hiring such a man;
- 2) the fact that most Orthodox Jews would have nothing to do with the secular nationalism advocated by men like Lilienblum and others; and 3) the difficulty they would have finding a nationalist preacher who could relate to traditional Jews. In the end, Ussishkin prevailed. He convinced the members to establish a small budget to provide for the preacher's family, and to answer their other two objections, he found a preacher who was a nationalist, a traditionalist, and able to relate to traditional Jews. This man was Yehuda Zvi Yevzerov (1855-1934). As a result of his devotion to traditional Judaism, Yevzerov established for himself an outstanding reputation throughout the Pale of Settlement.<sup>19</sup>

Other early preachers for the movement were Rabbi Natan Friedland (1808-1883) and Hayyim Zundel Maccoby (1858-1916), who had been a professional maggid before he was hired specifically to preach on behalf of the Hibbat Zion movement

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19. Menahem Mendel Ussishkin, Devarim Aharonim, Jerusalem, 1946, p. 202. See also, S. J.H. Glikberg, p. 475. For more information on Yevzerov and other early preachers in the Hibbat Zion movement, see Harry I. Wohlberg's interesting doctoral thesis: The Zionist Idea in Homiletic Literature in the Period Preceding the Rise of Political Zionism, Yeshiva University, 1961.

throughout Russia in 1883. Between the years 1883-1890, Maccoby helped establish over 300 Hibbat Zion chapters throughout the Pale of Settlement. Due to his ability to speak English, Maccoby was sent to England in 1890 to help build the movement there.<sup>20</sup> The great success of these early preachers demonstrated the value of having speakers who could attract new adherents to the movement and travel about the countryside. With Maccoby's departure, there was a need for a suitable replacement.

In 1891, Masliansky (then only 35 years old) set off on his first tour as a "nationalist preacher".<sup>21</sup> According

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20. S. J.H. Gliksberg, p. 475.

21. At this point in time, Masliansky does not refer to himself as "Matif Leumi" (National Preacher), but simply as a "matif". Eventually, Masliansky became quite fond of the title "Matif Leumi", but it is impossible to identify with certainty the origins of this term. As noted above (cf., Introduction, supra), the term "matif" referred specifically to a preacher who advocated nationalism for the Hibbat Zion movement. Evidently, Masliansky began calling himself a "Matif Leumi" between the years 1891-1895. Upon his arrival in the United States in 1895, he had stationery printed with the title "Matif Leumi" under his name. The earliest document which specifically refers to Masliansky as the "Matif Leumi" is a letter of introduction written for the orator by Rabbi Samuel Mohilewer in 1893 (cf., Massel and Zablotski, p. 15). This title was also bestowed upon other nationalist preachers from time to time (cf., S. J.H. Gliksberg, p. 475). The Hebrew journals were prone to endowing magniloquent titles on various people, and perhaps Masliansky's meteoric acclaim on the Hibbat Zion speaking circuit earned him this honorary title in the pages of these journals. Nonetheless, Masliansky clearly adopted the phrase "Matif Leumi" as his own, and he was not pleased when the title was usurped by others (cf., Eliezar R. Malachi, Iqrot Sofrim, New York: Miller Press, 1931, p. 128). Eventually the phrase became exclusively associated with Masliansky.

to Masliansky, his associates in Yekaterinoslav urged him to go on tour.<sup>22</sup> It was probably no accident that his first stop was Odessa. Odessa was, in a very real sense, a kind of testing ground. As one of the largest Jewish communities in all of Russia (second only to Warsaw), and due to its strong "Western" character and cosmopolitan nature, Odessa would be the place where a preacher would have to prove himself to others. Odessa supported a host of Jewish institutions, and among them the Hibbat Zion movement was quite prominent. In 1890, the "Society for the Support of Jewish Farmers and Artisans in Syria and Palestine", known simply as the Odessa Committee was established. The Odessa Committee was for many years a powerful body which guided the Hibbat Zion movement throughout Russia. Great Zionist leaders like Leon Pinsker, Abraham Grunberg (1841-1906), and Menachem M. Ussishkin served as chairmen of the Odessa Committee. It is reasonable to expect that a young aspiring "matif" who hoped to represent the Hibbat Zion movement throughout the Pale of Settlement would have to demonstrate his appeal and ability to communicate to all sectors of the Jewish community. There was no place better for a trial exposure than Odessa. It was the de facto central command of the movement, and if one could appeal to the various types of Jews in Odessa, one could be counted on to make an appeal almost anywhere.

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22. Z. H. Masliansky, p. 7.

Evidently, Masliansky proved himself a success in Odessa. He stayed in Odessa several weeks and preached in seventeen synagogues. Eventually, Masliansky was exiled by the Russian police from Odessa. His speeches on Zion were attracting such huge crowds that the Russian newspapers began to carry articles on him and on his addresses. The publicity in Russia brought his preaching to the attention of the police authorities who had him expelled from the city.<sup>23</sup>

The decision to become a circuit preacher for the Hibbat Zion was made in Odessa. In his memoirs, Masliansky remains unclear as to the precise nature and timing of this decision. Other biographies give Moshe Lilienblum credit for actually persuading him to leave teaching altogether and become a "matif".<sup>24</sup> Even though Masliansky seems to have had doubts and reservations regarding his own adequacy for the task, he soon found that he was a successful "matif" and his efforts bore fruit.<sup>25</sup> His decision to undertake the risks involved must have come from a combination of factors: a desire to leave teaching, a strong interest in preaching and public speaking, and (perhaps most significant) his profound belief in the Hibbat Zion movement. Nonetheless, Masliansky was a great success as a "matif". The impact of his oratory was

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23. Ibid. pp. 8-9.

24. J. Massel and M. Zablotski, p. 9.

25. Z. H. Masliansky, p. 11, also p. 123.

such that in numerous cities the Russian authorities had him expelled. His reputation grew so rapidly and dramatically that inside of four years Masliansky was exiled from Russia altogether.

#### HIBBAT ZION'S ITINERANT SPOKESMAN<sup>26</sup>

In the pre-telecommunication era, oratory played an essential role in the dissemination of an idea. Consequently, Masliansky's effective preaching was certainly a key factor in the movement's growth. He visited over fifty cities and towns in the Pale of Settlement during a period of just over three and a half years. From Odessa he travelled throughout the province of Bessarabia, on the Russian-Rumanian border. From Bessarabia, Masliansky travelled east to Yelizavetgrad and Yekaterinoslav. By boat, he moved up the river Dnieper to Kiev. From Kiev he went to Berdichev, Zhitomir, Slutsk, Minsk, Grodno, Vilna, Bialystok, Warsaw, Lodz, Kovno, Dvinsk, Gomel, and many adjoining towns. He covered the entire length and width of the Pale. His memoirs record his impressions of each of these cities, as well as a detailed description of the Jewish life in these places. (These memoirs are

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26. In addition to Masliansky's published memoirs, data on this period in Russia may be found in Zvi Hirsch Masliansky letters to family, 1887-1894, JTSL; and Zvi Hirsch Masliansky Travel Diary, Microfilm, American Jewish Archives (AJAr), Cincinnati, Ohio.

an invaluable document describing Jewish life in the Pale during the years 1891-1894.)

Masliansky's early success guaranteed that his reputation would precede him. The fact that the Russian authorities saw fit to expel him from some of the first few cities he visited (i.e., Kishinev, Minsk, and Libau) guaranteed that his fame would quickly spread. As he moved from city to city, the crowds increased as did the "matif's" reputation.

In the city of Kharkov, Masliansky was invited to become a member of the secret "Benei Moshe" Society. The "Benei Moshe" was a secret society composed of an elite leadership from the Hibbat Zion movement. Established in 1889, the "Benei Moshe" was comprised mainly of people who adhered to Ahad Ha-am's Zionist philosophy as enunciated in his soon-to-be-published article "Lo Zeh Ha-Derekh".<sup>27</sup>

It is important to note that Masliansky's joining the "Benei Moshe" should not be construed to be an affirmation of Ahad Ha-am's Zionist position. Masliansky was not a

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27. Ahad Ha-am's (Asher Zvi Ginsberg, 1856-1927) viewpoint was that a return to Zion would not succeed unless it was preceded by a cultural revival and concomitant modernization of the Jewish people. This process would take time and care and must be executed by an elite leadership specially trained to undertake the task. Ahad Ha-am's Zionist ideology was attacked by those who wanted to encourage mass immigration (Lilienblum), as well as by the religious Zionists who resented his agnostic views (cf., A. Hertzberg, pp. 249-277). For more information on the "Benei Moshe" Society, see Yehoshua Barzili, "Benei Moshe", "Ha-Toren", New York: Achiever Press, Vol. II, Jan.-June, 1914. pp. 113-120, 172-175.

strict ideologue. Although he was always most comfortable within a religious Zionist atmosphere (ala Mohilewer), he admired and was friendly with all varieties of Zionists including Moshe Lilienblum, Ahad Ha-am, and Theodor Herzl. This cordial tone remained with him throughout his career, and he was much more concerned that Jews be interested in returning to their historic homeland than he was in arguing a particular Zionist outlook. His openmindedness enabled him to establish contacts with many types of Zionist thinkers, and in turn he was warmly embraced in all Zionist circles.

From 1891 to 1894 Masliansky toured the Pale of Settlement. Reports of his success and impact began to appear in the European Hebrew journals, and various memoirs attest to his influence. In his fascinating autobiography, Israel Kasovich recollects Masliansky's visit to his little village of Proschepina, in the province of Bessarabia. Kasovich recalls that Masliansky was asked to speak in his little town after someone had heard him preach in a neighboring city. Masliansky arrived in Proschepina on the very day that Kasovich's son was being circumcised in 1891, and the guest was asked to speak at the occasion. Kasovich describes how the guest preacher captivated the hearts of those who were assembled. He goes on to say that Masliansky was so very successful that people begged him to return on other occasions--even after his fame was such that he only visited

large metropolises.<sup>28</sup>

Kasovich's account seems to confirm the fact that Masliansky's reputation grew in a short period of time, but only after he had actually gone on the circuit. This notion is further supported by Abraham A. Feinstein who reports that although Masliansky lived in Pinsk for many years, his reputation as a great nationalist preacher grew out of his appearances as a Hibbat Zion speaker and not when he resided in the city working as a teacher.<sup>29</sup>

The matter of when Masliansky's influence truly began to be felt is also reflected in the interesting material regarding the early relationship between the preacher and Chaim Weizmann. Masliansky frequently claimed that Weizmann was a student of his when he taught in Pinsk, and that Weizmann served as his Russian translator when he began preaching.<sup>30</sup> In his autobiography, Weizmann portrays a

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28. Israel I. Kasovich, Sheeshim Shanot Hayim, Jerusalem: Dvir Press, 1923, pp. 183-184. Kasovich's autobiography is a unique history which offers an interesting perspective on Jewish life in the Russian Pale of Settlement during the last two decades of the 19th century and on immigrant life in America during the early part of the 20th century. See also, Isaac Nissenbaum, Alei Cheldi, Warsaw: Grafia Press, 1929, pp. 91-93; and Masliansky's own recollections of Proschepina in his Zichronot, p. 25. For other documents praising Masliansky's oratorical talent during his speaking tour of the Pale, see Massel and Zablotski.

29. Abraham A. Feinstein, Meqilat Puraniyot, Tel Aviv: Ha-aretz Press, 1929, p. 9.

30. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, An Open Letter to Dr. Weizmann, "Ha-Doar", March 18, 1938, No. 19, p. 306. This letter appeared in some English journals as well. Also, numerous biographical sketches and necrologies state that Weizmann was Masliansky's pupil (cf., "The New York Times", January 12, 1943, p. 24, col. 2).



slightly different relationship. Weizmann confirms the fact that he knew Masliansky as a teacher in Pinsk, but it remains unclear as to whether or not Masliansky was actually his teacher. Furthermore, Weizmann does not seem to recall having a close relationship with the orator when he was a child,<sup>31</sup> and makes no mention of his assisting the preacher. Instead, he recalls how the young people enjoyed listening to Masliansky's oratory when he came to preach.<sup>32</sup> This would suggest that even if Masliansky did in fact teach Weizmann Hebrew (and there is no reason to doubt that assertion), Masliansky's impact was felt after he began his preaching tour, and not while he was working as a teacher in Pinsk.

It is important to bear in mind that Masliansky's overwhelming acclaim was not simply due to the preacher's call for national renewal. Masliansky preached a love of Judaism and a pride in Jewish peoplehood. Jews who had little faith in a return to the land of their ancestors hungrily devoured Masliansky's words all the same. The preacher created a vision of pride, of home, and of destiny. When he spoke,

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31. In the biographical sketch of her grandfather, Sulamith Schwartz Nardi claims that Weizmann, in a letter to Louis Robison, did in fact attribute his "Zionist foundations" to Masliansky. She does not note the letter, and we have not seen it. (cf., Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Sermons, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1960, p. XXI.

32. Chaim Weizmann, Trial and Error, London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1955, pp. 39, 41-47.

there was something there for each and every Jew. As Weizmann put it, "Our Jewishness and our Zionism were interchangeable; you could not destroy the second without destroying the first".<sup>33</sup> For the Jews living under the oppressive Tzarist rule, Masliansky's words brought renewal to their despairing hearts. As word of Masliansky's skill spread throughout the Pale of Settlement, still larger crowds turned out to hear him.

In 1894, at the pinnacle of his success, Masliansky's world was pulled out from under him. After delivering an address in the city of Suwalk, Masliansky was arrested and informed that he was to be hereby banished from Russia. He was given one month to get his private matters together and to leave Russia. Shortly before his departure from Russia, Masliansky went back to Bialystok where the heads of the Russian Hibbat Zion had gathered to bid him farewell. Rabbi Samuel Mohilewer pleaded with him to continue his work as a Zionist orator and bring the word of national renewal to the Jews of the West.<sup>34</sup>

In leaving Russia, Masliansky left a familiar audience. He continued to speak for national renewal, but his message would soon adapt to the needs of a new audience.

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33. Ibid. pp. 41-42.

34. Z. H. Masliansky, pp. 121-122.

## CHAPTER II

### BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

#### TRANSVERSING THE WEST

On November 1, 1894, Alexander III died. One month earlier, he had signed a document banishing Zvi Hirsch Masliansky from Russia. On the day the Tzar died, the preacher was arriving in Königsberg, Prussia. Hardly any time had passed before he felt the change of environment. He met Orthodox Jews who were bitterly opposed to the movement to resettle in Palestine. He also realized how different the Jews themselves were: they nursed different hopes, expectations, and attitudes. He perceived that the Jews of the West looked down upon him, as they looked down upon all Russian co-religionists. He spoke infrequently, and in some cities not at all.<sup>1</sup>

Proceeding directly to Berlin, Masliansky found his reception to be not too different from that which he received in Königsberg. He was surprised to discover that, unlike the religious community of Russia, the religious Jews of the West knew very little about the Hibbat Zion

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1. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Zichronot, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1929, pp. 125-129. The only place in which Masliansky recalls receiving a cordial reception was Memel.

movement. He went to visit the prominent Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer (1820-1899) and was dismayed to learn that he knew nothing about the nationalist movement. The sage took Masliansky to visit the rabbinical seminary he established, and he found the students to be every bit as knowledgeable as those in Russia--but not nearly as hospitable!<sup>2</sup>

His memoirs on his visit to the capital cities of Western Europe reflect the orator's feelings of disorientation. While memoirs of his travels throughout Russia highlight the nature of the Jewish community in each city, and the impact his preachings had upon the communities, recollections of his visit to the capitals of the West dwell on his impressions of the governments and cultural differences. In Western Europe, unlike in Russia, the preacher was not the center of attention, and his memoirs reflect an aimlessness. He describes his first visit to a vegetarian restaurant, and his impressions as the Prussians celebrated the Kaiser's birthday. His words reveal a man who felt out of his element, a man searching for something to which he could relate.

One need but consider briefly the tenuousness of the situation to comprehend Masliansky's frustrations. One month earlier, he was the toast of the Russian Jewish community. He was admired, respected, and in high demand.

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2. Z. H. Masliansky, p. 127. (Translation by Isaac Schwartz.)

Now, banished from his admirers along with his homeland, Masliansky searched for a place to reclaim his self-worth. He quickly understood that there was no demand for what he had to offer in Western Europe. He perceived that the Jews of the West were not interested in coming to hear an Eastern European Jew speak to them in Yiddish. Furthermore, the Western Jew knew almost nothing of this movement called Hibbat Zion. In this year of 1894, Dreyfus was being court-martialed but the effect that affair had upon a young journalist named Herzl was as yet unknown. How could an "Ostjude" hope to conquer the hearts of Western Jews? Masliansky quickly concluded that there was no place for him in the Western continent:

"The Jews of Germany are as distant from the Jews of Russia as the West from the East. They have no understanding of the Russian Jew's life--wishes, hopes and expectations, sadness and joy. They look down upon the Jews of Russia as they would upon heathen Chinese and Japanese. They are completely convinced that the Russian Jews are a benighted group. Could they but read the letter, the letter of God engraved in the wrinkles on the foreheads of the Jews of Russia, they would be aware of their error of judgement."<sup>3</sup>

Searching for a new place to settle, Masliansky proceeded directly to England.

#### DISAPPOINTMENT IN ENGLAND

After leaving Russia, Masliansky made his way to London

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3. Ibid. p. 125.

without delay. There is no way of knowing for certain why he decided to go to London. Evidently he hoped to stay in England for awhile and perhaps he even considered settling there. England did provide some attractions which might have given Masliansky reason to remain there. Many Russian emigrants were heading to England during this period, and their arrival changed the face of British Jewry. Perhaps Masliansky hoped he would find an audience among his Russian brethren there. Also, there were Jews of great prominence in England. Some of these Jewish powerbrokers stood firmly against Jewish nationalism (vis., Samuel Montagu (1832-1911) and Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild (1840-1915) ). Yet, there were other powerful English Jews like Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), his nephew Francis Abraham Montefiore, and most notably Colonel Albert Edward Williamson Goldsmid (1846-1904), a prominent member of the English Hovevei Zion, who offered leadership and hope to the beleaguered Jewish nationalists of Russia. Perhaps Masliansky sought guidance from these Jews.

Whatever his expectations were, Masliansky was bitterly disappointed in England. In his memoirs, he described London as being "very depressing". Although he admired the English spirit of freedom, he found life in that country unbearable. He decried the impoverished conditions of the Jews living on the East End, and the drunkenness which he claimed pervaded the poor Gentile community. Despite these criticisms, it seems that his biggest disappointment came

from what he perceived to be his total incompatibility with the Jewish community of England.<sup>4</sup>

According to Masliansky's description, the Jewish community of London was laden with misfits. He complained that those who were deeply religious souls in Russia were complete apostates in England, and those who were radicals and free-thinkers in Russia posed as religious devotees. He severely berated the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Hermann (Naphtali) Adler (1839-1911), as a man who "showed little love for the Jews of Russia and their rabbis". Masliansky derided Adler by comparing him to a Government Rabbi of Russia, and "not even the best of them". In addition, he complained that the state of Jewish education was pathetic in London as was interest in the Hebrew language. He depicted the nationalist movement as being sickly and in complete disarray. And with regard to England being a fortress of support for Jewish brethren who were less fortunate, Masliansky wrote vituperatively:

"...there are no big brothers here, no sages of Israel, no sons loyal to their people, but haughty assimilationists, strutting about like peacocks, who looked down upon their immigrant brothers and regarded them as savages. They would find no true Judaism here..."<sup>5</sup>

There is reason to suspect that Masliansky felt some

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4. Ibid. PP. 130-146.

5. Ibid. p. 135.

personal rebuff in England which contributed to his anger. His complaints about the poor quality of the Jewish community may have stemmed from personal attacks he suffered at the hands of the "anarchists". In his memoirs, Masliansky mentions an incident in which a group of "anarchists" came and asked him to engage in a debate with one of their members.<sup>6</sup> He refused to participate with them. It is likely that the tension between Masliansky and these radicals was exacerbated further by a series of articles parodying Masliansky and his oratory. In Israel Davidson's work, Parody in Jewish Literature, he indicates that there were several pamphlets published by anarchist groups in England which belittled Masliansky.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the most informative source regarding the orator's hostility toward England is the small publication Ha-Yitzhari.<sup>8</sup> This pamphlet is a fascinating remnant of Masliansky's stay in England. Printed in Manchester in 1895, the pamphlet contains a brief biographical sketch and a series of poems and letters praising Masliansky and his

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6. Ibid. p. 131.

7. Israel Davidson, Parody in Jewish Literature, New York: Columbia University Press, 1907, pp. 257, 260.

8. The word "היצהרי" comes from a biblical usage meaning "oil" (cf., Hosea 2:10). The editors of this book tell us that the name Masliansky in Russian means "oil". However, the Hebrew word has a related meaning of "an anointed one" or "one who is specially elected" (cf., Zechariah 4:14). The ancient rabbis understood the latter phrase to refer to scholars (cf., Sanhedrin 24a).



work. While many of the accolades came from unknowns, several letters of praise were included from men like Samuel Mohilewer, David Friedmann, Isaac Rabinowitz ("Ish Kovno"), and Isaac J. Weissberg. Almost all of the letters and poems included came from people who had heard him preach during his trips throughout the Pale of Settlement.

Throughout his memoirs, Masliansky time and again mentions gifts and tokens of esteem which were given him during his many years of travel. It is interesting to note that Masliansky refrains from mentioning either this book of tribute or its two editors, Moses Zablotski and Joseph Massel, in his later writings. Masliansky's propensity for mentioning every act of kindness and every courtesy accorded him stands in stark contradiction to his absolute silence regarding this fine book of praises published by "two of his numerous admirers".<sup>9</sup>

There are two possible explanations for such behavior: 1) Masliansky never knew the booklet was published; or 2) He was not particularly proud of or pleased with it. It is almost unfathomable that he did not know of its existence because almost all of the material included in the pamphlet would have certainly been in Masliansky's personal possession, and had to have been given willingly to the editors. The

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9. Moses Zablotski and Joseph Massel, Ha-Yitzhari, Manchester, 1895, p. 3.

only plausible explanation is that the orator was not proud of the booklet. But why?

A possible answer might be found in the editor's forward to the pamphlet. In it, the editors cite three reasons they are publishing the booklet: 1) Many of the readers already know of Masliansky, and will want to be frequently reminded of the tremendous impact his words had upon them; 2) Due to Masliansky's unique role as a preacher in Israel, it is only fitting that these words of praise be written in a book so that his memory may be properly preserved; and 3) Just as readers will benefit from the contents of this book spiritually, it was hoped that Masliansky would benefit monetarily from its publication. The editors went on to praise the Jewish people for their customary generosity, and to remind them of their obligation to provide for Jewish preachers so that they may live comfortably. This third explanation seems to indicate that Masliansky's pocketbook began to suffer along with his self-esteem after leaving Russia.<sup>10</sup>

Whether Masliansky initiated this publication or not, the materials contained therein leave no doubt that he collaborated in the effort. Perhaps the orator needed more work, perhaps he needed cash to live on, or perhaps he needed some extra funds to finance bringing his family out

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10. Ibid. p. 6.

of Russia. Whatever the actual reason was can not be known assuredly. It is logical to assume, however, that Masliansky's virulent recollections of England might very well be due, in part, to his inability to maintain an income he was accustomed to having in Russia.

It is impossible to determine whether the orator came to England with the hope of settling there, or whether he needed a place to spend a few months and collect funds needed to travel to America. Whatever his reasons originally were for coming to England, he was profoundly disappointed and hostilely disposed by the time he left. In a letter to some friends in the Yishuv (near Jaffa), Masliansky summarily concludes "Ahad Ha-am was wrong when he wrote...if there is hope for us it will come from our brethren in England..."<sup>11</sup>

#### TO THE LAND OF FREEDOM

After leaving England, Masliansky went to Paris by way of Antwerp and Amsterdam. He apparently had arranged to leave for the United States from France and was on his way to the point of departure, but this remains unclear. What does seem evident is that after leaving England he had no intention of touring Europe any longer, but rather had decided to go directly to America.

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11. Letter from Zvi Hirsch Masliansky to members of the Yishuv in Jaffo, Passover, 1895, pp. 3-4, Jewish National Library Archives, Jerusalem.

Masliansky was enamored with America, but by his own testimony this love affair began after his arrival in the new land. His reasons for coming to the United States in the first place remain obscure. It seems likely that a determining factor was that he had a brother and a son living in New York. Masliansky's situation was a precarious one. Here was a man who had achieved a modest measure of success and renown as an orator, only to be separated from his admirers. At almost forty years of age, what was this man capable of doing to support himself and his family? He had an adequate religious education and experience in teaching Hebrew. Yet, to return to the lifestyle of a teacher would surely have seemed a step down for a man who had acquired such status as a "matif". Surely, Masliansky preferred to continue in his role as a preacher if at all possible. In order to enable himself to remain one, he had to find an environment which would not only desire a "matif" but would be prepared to support one. Western Europe, he came to realize, was not such a place. Undoubtedly, he knew many people who had emigrated from his home in Russia to the United States.

In addition, it is fair to assume that his brother and son informed him about the ever-growing Yiddish population in New York. The burgeoning immigrant community on the Lower East Side contained many of the same elements he had known in Russia. This was a time when the Yiddish community

of New York was calling upon the great leaders from Europe to come over and lead them. When Yiddish theatre was forbidden by law in Russia, New York's immigrant community eagerly welcomed Abraham Goldfaden, Sigmund (Zelig) Mogulesco, Jacob Adler, and scores of others to entertain them. Rabbi Jacob Joseph was called to New York to be the "Chief Rabbi". Menachem Dolitzki was called to bring the renewal of Hebrew to the American shores. Nahum Shaikevich was persuaded to come to the United States to write for the Yiddish stage. In almost every facet of life, Jews of New York's ghetto sought to import the very best of Jewish life in Russia. Undoubtedly, there were thousands of Yiddish speakers longing to hear a great "maggid" from the old country. Masliansky's reputation made his intended arrival an exciting event.

For the forty-year-old Yiddish orator, New York was not merely the best alternative, but in a certain sense it was his only alternative.

### CHAPTER III

#### YEARS OF ACTIVITY

##### ACCLIMATION TO AMERICA

Masliansky fell in love with America instantly. The morning after his arrival, his brother and son took him to the Lower East Side. Of that morning, he later wrote "I realized immediately that I was in my element".<sup>1</sup> Unlike some older immigrants who could never adapt themselves to their new world, Masliansky found himself in a new environment which was very similar to the one he left. He heard Yiddish in the street, he saw signs in Yiddish script, and, most importantly, he found an audience that wanted to hear the great Yiddish "matif": Zvi Hirsch Masliansky.

The Yiddish press heralded his arrival, and when he gave his first sermon on July 13, 1895, thousands of Jews thronged the synagogue in which he was speaking. Immediately, he received invitations to speak to Jewish communities throughout the country, and his reception everywhere befitted that of a roving dignitary. By his own account, and by the account of others, Masliansky could not have

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1. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Zichronot, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1929, p. 162.

wished for a warmer reception.<sup>2</sup>

Masliansky's openmindedness helped him adjust to his new home in America. Upon his arrival in the United States, the preacher wore a full beard and a large skull cap. Within a short time, his full beard was trimmed to a more modern van dyke style, and he covered his head only when inside a synagogue. He dressed fashionably, too, looking the part of a dignified American gentleman. Although he remained a devoted traditional Jew, he adjusted easily to America's modern spirit. This flexibility typified Masliansky's approach to life. He was a man of principle, but he also knew how to compromise. It was this adaptability that permitted him to cooperate with men who held Zionist ideologies contrary to his own. His flexibility enabled him to cooperate with all types of Jews, even those who lived lives much different than his own. Masliansky was always guided by one overriding principle: a love of Jewish people and a love of Jewish nationhood.

Masliansky's modern practices were, at times, the source of complaints and curiosity. Disregarding the prohibition against wearing his gold watch and chain on the Sabbath (as that would be considered a form of labor), Masliansky was once sarcastically challenged by a passerby: "Reverend

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2. Max Raisin, Great Jews I Have Known, New York: Philosophical Library, 1952, pp. 121-122.

Masliansky, isn't that watch a bit heavy to carry on the Sabbath?"<sup>3</sup> From time to time, Masliansky's dramatic gestures would result in his skull cap falling off. The next day gossips would whisper that Masliansky preached bare-headed in the synagogue!<sup>4</sup>

Masliansky altered his style of preaching in order to be more modern. The traditional "maggid" of the old country used biblical and rabbinic references in order to rebuke his erring congregation. He would speak of eternal damnation and punishment for those Jews who dared break God's laws. Masliansky, however, never threatened Jews with the fire of Hell. He spoke on Jewish nationalism, and in doing so he developed a new style of preaching.

His preaching emphasized Jewish pride and peoplehood. Although his main message was to convey the importance of national reclamation, he simultaneously reinforced the idea of hope and restoration of dignity. Masliansky did not rely extensively on quotations from the Bible and rabbinic literature, but he drew heavily from the daily experiences shared by all. He would cite a biblical event, and demon-

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3. Telephone interview with Marshall Weinberg, Masliansky's youngest grandson, October 20, 1981.

4. Leon Spitz, A Great Maggid Remembered, "Brooklyn Jewish Center Review", 1955, p. 14.



strate its modern relevance by delving deeply into its contests.<sup>5</sup>

Masliansky's delivery was spellbinding. His voice was a full tenor, and his movements were startling and dramatic. He thundered and whispered--captivating his listeners for up to two hours. In Russia, he developed a special chant for his sermons (which was a custom of the traditional "maggid"). In the United States, he eventually discontinued using the chant, again, to be more modern.<sup>6</sup> Those who came to hear this great speaker went away with the memory of an unforgettable experience.<sup>7</sup>

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5. Hayim R. Rabinowitz, Portraits of Jewish Preachers (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Rubin Mass Publisher, 1967, pp. 393-394. See also: Hillel Malachovsky, Kitvei Hillel Malachovsky, New York: Shulsinger Brothers Publishing, 1939, pp. 139-146. For a detailed description of the contents of Masliansky's sermons, and the impact they had on their listeners, see: Isaac Nissenbaum, Aley Cheldi, Warsaw: Grafia Press, 1929, pp. 91-93.

6. L. Spitz, p. 13.

7. Many famous Jews have attested to the tremendous impact that Masliansky's preaching had upon them including Charles Angoff, Chaim Weizmann, Louis Lipsky, Barnett R. Brickner, and Abba Hillel Silver. Brickner and Silver grew up on the Lower East Side, and they frequented the Educational Alliance where Masliansky preached. Silver's own tremendous oratory was certainly influenced by Masliansky's.

cf., Barnett R. Brickner to Mrs. Z. H. Masliansky, 26 January, 1943, Zvi Hirsch Masliansky Papers, JTSL.

For descriptions of Masliansky's delivery, see: Charles Angoff, "Memories of Boston", The Menorah Journal (Autumn-Winter 1962) pp. 138-139.

Israel H. Levinthal, The Message of Israel, New York: Lex Printing Company, 1973, p. 132.

Louis Lipsky, Memoirs in Profile, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1975, pp. 238-239.

M. Raisin, p. 121-122.

L. Spitz, p. 13.

Jews living in all parts of the United States greeted Masliansky's arrival jubilantly. He received invitations to come and speak to synagogues and Hovevei Zion groups in many cities, and he spent his first few years visiting Jewish communities throughout the country. From 1895-1899, Masliansky visited different Jewish communities and he became acquainted with prominent Jews in every major city.<sup>8</sup> The relationships he established during his visits served him well over the years. In fact, with the help of two significant communal leaders of New York City, Masliansky found a permanent speaking position at the Educational Alliance in New York. For over twenty-five years, the Educational Alliance served as the preacher's home base, and although he continued to travel the circuit, his name came to be closely associated with that institution.

#### FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURES AT THE EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE

In his memoirs, Masliansky recalls meeting Adolf Radin on the street in front of the Educational Alliance Building. According to this account, Radin recognized the orator from having seen him preach on an earlier occasion, and asked him to speak in the People's Synagogue of the Educational

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8. Masliansky kept notes on the Jewish communities that he visited from 1895 to 1899 and they served as the basis for a section of his memoirs which he later published in Yiddish and Hebrew. (See Appendix.)

Alliance. Masliansky felt at home in the Educational Alliance and he rented the hall there for his preaching appearances. He began preaching in the Educational Alliance Building shortly after his arrival in America in 1895, but the precise date is not known.<sup>9</sup>

David Blaustein was appointed the Director of the Educational Alliance in 1898. While Masliansky first established ties with the Educational Alliance because of Radin's invitation to speak, Blaustein's arrival in New York was also a boon for the orator. Blaustein and Masliansky met one another in Providence shortly after the preacher began to tour American cities. Prior to coming to the Educational Alliance, Blaustein taught at Brown University and simultaneously served as rabbi of a Providence Reform congregation. Born near Vilna, Blaustein came to the United States in 1886 to complete his studies at Harvard after having been denied domicile in Germany where he had begun his studies. While at Harvard, Blaustein met Jesse Straus, the son of the philanthropist and communal leader Isidor Straus. Isidor Straus was a founder and President of the Educational Alliance, and Blaustein impressed Straus enough to obtain a position at the Educational Alliance.<sup>10</sup>

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9. Z. H. Masliansky, pp. 200-201.

10. Ibid. p. 202.

Both Radin and Blaustein were highly educated men who cared deeply about the lives and welfare of the Eastern European immigrants. Unlike the Jewish "establishment" of that era (most of whom were of German origin), Radin and Blaustein understood the nature of the new immigrants and were sensitive to their needs. These two men sensed the powerful impact Masliansky had upon his audiences, and they understood the immigrants' excitement upon his arrival. He was not simply a Yiddish "maggid" to them, but a dynamic, impressive orator able to contribute a great deal to the lives of the immigrants. They introduced the preacher to the wealthy trustees of the Educational Alliance, and they convinced men like Isidor Straus, Jacob Schiff, Samuel Greenbaum, and Louis Marshall that Masliansky could serve a useful purpose in assimilating the Eastern European Jews into American life.

During the course of the year 1899, at the request of Blaustein, Masliansky gave several lectures at the Educational Alliance. Blaustein saw to it that the wealthy trustees attended one of these lectures so they could observe Masliansky at first hand. What they saw was impressive. Louis Marshall gave the Board of Directors an enthusiastic report:

"...these lectures were given in Yiddish, and this had rather tended to give them a greater influence among the residents of the neighborhood whose almost exclusive idiom it is; as to the lectures themselves,

they consisted of talks on pressing moral questions of the day; that the lecturer himself was one of the most eloquent and forceful (Marshall) had ever heard, and that his audiences had been very large, attentive, and highly enthusiastic..."<sup>11</sup>

Masliansky's lectures left no doubt that he truly spoke to the immigrant's heart. The Uptown Jews believed that this great communicator could aid them in "Americanizing" the Eastern European Jews. If the orator was willing to cooperate, the Board of Directors was prepared to provide him with a permanent lecturn.

Masliansky claims responsibility for developing a program of "Americanization" for his lectures at the Educational Alliance, but it is more likely that Louis Marshall developed the program and Masliansky agreed to it. This program, as Masliansky records it, was in effect a credo by which the orator shaped his addresses at the Educational Alliance. According to this program, the preacher's sermons had a twofold purpose: 1) to help immigrant Jews become better Americans, and 2) to help the Jews of the younger generation identify with their Jewish tradition. At that time, Marshall was convinced that Yiddish could be an invaluable tool in the "Americanization" process. In later years, Marshall retreated from his desire to "Americanize" these people, but at the turn of the century he believed Yiddish to be a

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11. The Educational Alliance minutes of meetings of Board of Directors, meeting of 8 January 1900, AJAr.

perfect vehicle for teaching immigrants citizenship and patriotism.<sup>12</sup>

Yet such a program would not have been too difficult for Masliansky to accept because he quickly became a devoted patriot. The liberty he found in America, which enabled him to travel without restriction and preach his mind freely, captured his enduring gratitude. Masliansky's loyalty to his adopted country was so strong that he wanted to convince his Russian brethren that they should appreciate their new home. Consequently, he willingly agreed to Marshall's program.<sup>13</sup>

On January 8, 1900, Marshall (who was at that time the chairman of the Committee on Religious and Moral Work) asked that Masliansky be engaged for a series of fifteen Friday evening lectures at the cost of \$300.00. Marshall's suggestion was adopted, and thus began Masliansky's twenty-eight year tenure with the Educational Alliance.

The orator was an immediate success. The Uptown Jews took pride in the large crowds he drew and in the enthusiastic response he received. Isidor Singer, an editor of the Jewish Encyclopedia, lavished praise on the "young

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12. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, "Louis Marshall's Yiddish Newspaper, The Jewish World: A Study in Contrasts", Jewish Social Studies, April 1963, p. 108. This excellent article is thorough and accurate, but it focuses primarily on Marshall and not Masliansky.

13. Ibid.  
(cf., Z. H. Masliansky, p. 204).

Russian giant" in an article about Masliansky which appeared in The Menorah.<sup>14</sup> Isidor Straus declared that the Masliansky lectures which began as an experiment had become one of the most important features of the Educational Alliance. Straus boasted that the average attendance for a Masliansky lecture was 1,000 people, and that "nothing we have done has paved the way for a more thorough understanding between us and those whom we aim to reach than Mr. Masliansky's lectures."<sup>15</sup>

Over the years, Masliansky maintained a cordial relationship with the Uptown leadership of the Educational Alliance. His contact with these influential men gave him an entree into the high levels of communal leadership, and he served as the honorary representative of the immigrant population on the boards of numerous Jewish organizations. His post at the Educational Alliance, together with his regular speaking engagements for various Zionist organizations and community groups, gave Masliansky a high degree of visibility. When the Yiddish press advertised the banner: "Masliansky Yedaber" (Masliansky will speak), an impressive audience would inevitably gather. He was asked to raise funds for numerous Zionist and welfare organizations, and his potency as a fund-raiser would ultimately earn him an honorary trusteeship on the boards of the Hebrew Immigrant

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14. Isidor Singer, "Hirsch Masliansky--The Tribune of the Russian-American Jews", The Menorah, August 1901, p. 116.

15. Ibid. pp. 118-119.

Aid Society, The Keren Hayesod Fund, and The Kehillah of New York City.

As time went on, the size of the crowds at the Educational Alliance slowly diminished. By 1911, the average attendance was 700, and the crowd sizes continued to decline toward the end of that decade. Masliansky's popularity as a preacher dimmed in proportion to his advance in years and the decrease in Jewish immigration. When the preacher celebrated his 60th birthday in 1917, 2,000 well-wishers filled Carnegie Hall.<sup>16</sup> However, ten years later, only 500 people gathered to celebrate his 70th year.<sup>17</sup> In 1926, after twenty-six years of Friday evening lectures, Masliansky asked for, and received, a sabbatical year. Upon his return in 1927, Masliansky worked for one additional year and then resigned. In his resignation letter to the Board of Directors, he wrote:

"It grieves me very deeply to have to inform you that I shall not return to the Educational Alliance. I am now 72 years old, and have been advised, for the sake of my health, to stop public lecturing... This resignation puts an end, too, to an epoch in my life, and it is not the least of the griefs I now feel, to have to say farewell to the audience I have learned to love..."<sup>18</sup>

The Board graciously accepted Masliansky's resignation by naming him "Lecturer Emeritus" of the Educational Alliance.

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16. New York Times, 10 June 1917, p. 8, col. 4.

17. New York Times, 26 May 1926, p. 3, col. 5.

18. The Educational Alliance minutes of the Committee on Religious and Moral Works, meeting of 9 October 1928, AJAr.



As such, he was to receive a salary of \$500.00 a year.<sup>19</sup> (It is interesting to note that in 1901, the Educational Alliance paid Masliansky \$1,200.00 a year for his services. In 1912, his salary was raised to \$1,500.00 a year, which he received until his retirement.)<sup>20</sup> The Board voted to replace Masliansky if a suitable speaker could be found, but no action was ever taken on this decision.<sup>21</sup>

When Masliansky died fifteen years later, no mention of his death is to be found in the minutes of the Educational Alliance.

The Educational Alliance was an important factor in the lives of the immigrants living in the Jewish ghetto of New York's East Side. As early as 1891, the Educational Alliance was housed in a large five-story building at the corner of Jefferson Street and East Broadway, and it buzzed with programs and activities designed to improve the immigrants' lives. Like many "educational" endeavors in the ghetto, the main program of the Educational Alliance was "Americanization", and, consequently, the official language of its programs was English. Despite the fact that immigrants resented its attempts at reshaping their lives, the

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19. Ibid. meeting of 12 November 1928, AJAr.

20. Ibid. minutes of the Board of Directors, meetings of 20 May 1901; 1 December 1912, AJAr.

21. Ibid. minutes of the Committee on Religious and Moral Works, meeting of 12 November 1928, AJAr.

Educational Alliance was still a dynamic factor in the East Side. Children benefitted from a myriad of classes and activities. Yet the adults, too, enjoyed the facilities, even if the insistence upon English tended to be oppressive. They made use of the building's gymnasium, shower baths, roof garden, and library. When Yiddish somehow managed to find a place in the Educational Alliance, the response was overwhelming. For example, when Blaustein opened a reading room which provided over a hundred Hebrew, Russian, and Yiddish journals, large crowds filled the room on a daily basis.<sup>22</sup> One can only imagine that Masliansky's lectures were like a cold glass of water to immigrants who thirsted for their familiar language in the English desert of the Educational Alliance.

In a very real sense, Masliansky served as a Yiddish "oasis" for the immigrant masses searching for intellectual fulfillment through their mother tongue. He was their beau ideal—a man who spoke Yiddish as they were accustomed to hearing it. He told them about their past, and he inspired them with a vision of the future. He helped them envision the reality of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and he taught them about the American past and its commitment to liberty. He made them laugh and cry. Abba Hillel Silver,

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22. Moses Rischin, The Promised City: New York's Jews 1870-1914, Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1977, pp. 102-103.

one of the many immigrant children who frequented the Educational Alliance, later recalled: "Those who came to hear Masliansky's lectures came with their hearts bleeding and their lips parched".<sup>23</sup>

Masliansky's Friday evening lectures became a sort of staple for the Eastern European Jews in the Lower East Side. Over the many years of his association there, thousands upon thousands heard his words. In America, his title "Matif Leumi" (National Preacher) took on a new dimension. In Russia, he preached Jewish nationalism and he emphasized the importance of the Jewish reclamation of Palestine. At the Educational Alliance, he preached Jewish peoplehood and he emphasized the importance of Jewish life and Jewish pride.

#### LOUIS MARSHALL AND "THE JEWISH WORLD"<sup>24</sup>

In 1900, as Masliansky approached age 45, he became weary from his persistent travelling.<sup>25</sup> His appointment as lecturer at the Educational Alliance enabled him to remain in New York, but since the position there was part-time, he needed to find a way to supplement his income while maintaining his flexibility to speak at the Educational Alliance

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23. Marshall Weinberg (Masliansky's grandson), interview held on October 20, 1981.

24. See supra, note 12.

25. Z. H. Masliansky, p. 198.

weekly and continue to make his other speaking appearances. When the Yiddish paper "Abendblatt" ceased publication in 1901 and put its printing facilities up for sale, Masliansky saw an opportunity for which he had been looking.

Lucy S. Dawidowicz has suggested that David Blaustein prompted Masliansky to purchase the Lebanon Publishing and Printing Company because of Blaustein's strong conviction that the Yiddish press could serve well as an "Americanizing" agent.<sup>26</sup> While Blaustein surely was in favor of Masliansky purchasing the press and publishing a paper, the orator clearly had a strong desire to try his hand at publishing.<sup>27</sup> Yet, Blaustein played a critical role by encouraging Louis Marshall and some other wealthy Uptown Jews to support the venture financially.

The American Jewish "establishment" resented the proliferation of Yiddish in America. These Jews regarded Yiddish as a jargon—a corruption of German. The prevailing attitude among the Jewish "establishment" at that time was

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26. L. S. Dawidowicz, pp. 103-104.

27. Masliansky attests to his own interest in publishing (cf., Z. H. Masliansky, p. 198), and he had contributed frequently to the Hebrew press in America and Europe (cf., Eliezer R. Malachi, Igrot Sofrim (Hebrew), New York: Miller Press, 1931, pp. 121-129). Furthermore, Masliansky and his partners (Isaac Brody and Israel I. Wolf) invested \$9,000.00 of their own money. It would seem highly unlikely that Blaustein could have prompted him to invest so large an amount of personal sums unless Masliansky was committed to the idea as well.

to seek the elimination of Yiddish by encouraging the use of English, or at least correct German.<sup>28</sup> Blaustein rejected this point of view and he supported the use of Yiddish, maintaining that it was an excellent medium through which the elements of citizenship, duty, and pride toward America could be fostered. Three events occurred simultaneously in 1901 which enabled Blaustein to convince Marshall that a Yiddish paper could actually be a benefit to the Eastern European Jews.

First, Blaustein had introduced Masliansky to Marshall a few months earlier when Blaustein invited the orator to speak at the Educational Alliance. Marshall and Masliansky had had the opportunity to discuss their ideologies, and to agree upon a method of "Americanization" via the Yiddish medium. Marshall attended some of Masliansky's addresses, and was clearly impressed with their content and their effect upon the listeners (cf., supra, note #11). Undoubtedly, Masliansky's instantaneous acclaim pleased and impressed Marshall. Second, Marshall was piqued by the fact that in the 1901 election all of the existing Yiddish papers refused to endorse the Republican mayoral candidate, Seth Low. Marshall, along with other wealthy Jews, was trying to dislodge Tammany Hall's grip on government.<sup>29</sup> He wanted

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28. Charles A. Madison, Jewish Publishing in America, New York: Sanhedrin Press, 1976, p. 105-106.

29. L. S. Dawidowicz, pp. 104, 118-119.

to gain influence through a Yiddish paper in order to get his political message across. Finally, the failure of the socialist "Abendblatt" in 1901 made available for purchase a publishing house and an experienced staff at precisely the right moment in time. Masliansky was interested in taking on the work, and Marshall (with Blaustein's persuasion) was ready to supply the money.

"The Jewish World" first appeared in June, 1902. At the paper's inception, there were no financial difficulties. Between Masliansky's original investment and Marshall's private backing, the paper was easily solvent.<sup>30</sup> That very same month, Marshall solicited financial support from several wealthy Jews, including Frederick Stein, Cyrus Sulzberger, Isidor Lewi, and his brother-in-law, Paul M. Herzog. Marshall explained his reasons for wanting to support this venture, and he assured his friends that they were not being asked to make a donation, but rather an investment. He told them that Masliansky and his associates were men of the highest calibre, but they had limited financial means. Marshall claimed that they could have turned to politicians for financial assistance, but that they treasured their political independence. Instead, he wrote, they turned to Marshall for "guidance". He assured them that Masliansky and his staff were "willing

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30. Z. H. Masliansky, p. 206.

to surrender control of the newspaper to those who shall subscribe for the necessary amount of stock, allowing the latter to dictate the policy of the paper, which it is understood, however, must be politically independent".<sup>31</sup> (Underlines are the author's.)

Despite Marshall's assurances, the paper's staff was apparently not so willing to surrender control. As Dawidowicz has clearly illustrated, the paper was riddled with dichotomies. Although Marshall attempted to minimize his profile and the involvement of the other Uptowners, "The Jewish World" was immediately branded the paper of the "Yahudim".<sup>32</sup> Tensions between Marshall and the paper's staff began to crop up almost immediately.

Marshall kept a sharp eye on the paper, and made his desires clear in a steady flow of missives to the editorial office.<sup>33</sup> He hoped the paper would: 1) help "Americanize" Jewish immigrants, and 2) encourage East Siders to vote Republican. Masliansky, on the other hand, was concerned that the paper relate to the needs of the people. He

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31. Louis Marshall to Investors, 5 June 1902, Louis Marshall Collection, AJAr.

32. L. S. Dawidowicz, pp. 106-107.

33. Marshall even complained that the editorial staff was not investigating their advertisements carefully. Marshall received a letter from a reader who almost invested money in a land deal advertised in "The Jewish World" until he discovered in the nick of time that the whole thing was a fraud. cf., Louis Marshall to Editorial Staff of "The Jewish World", AJAr.

apparently had an understanding with Marshall that Zionism would be advocated in the new paper. Yet, Marshall complained when Zionism appeared in the English section. Marshall expected the paper to be pro-Republican, but frequently Masliansky saw to it that Democratic candidates who were beloved on the East Side received equal coverage. When the Tzarist government executed 22-year-old Hirsh Lekert for shooting and wounding Vilna governor Victor Von Wahl, the entire front page of "The Jewish World" was devoted to an expression of Jewish outrage. Again, Marshall protested. In fact, throughout its brief two and a half year existence, "The Jewish World" was peppered with controversy between the editorial staff and Marshall.<sup>34</sup>

Happy to be relieved of its burden, Marshall sold "The Jewish World" to Ezekiel Sarasohn of "The Yidishes Tageblatt" on May 11, 1904. Masliansky blamed the paper's demise on a lack of funds and the inability of the Uptown and Downtown Jews to work together.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the tension between these two groups did not help the paper. However, it was a writer's strike, and not money, which finally struck down "The Jewish World".<sup>36</sup> Yet, even without the strike, it is doubtful that

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34. L. S. Dawidowicz, p. 77 et passim.

35. Z. H. Masliansky, p. 210.

36. L. S. Dawidowicz, pp. 122-123.

See also: Louis Marshall to Isidor Lewi, 14 October 1903, Louis Marshall Collection, AJAr. In this letter, Marshall told Lewi that the paper's finances were not as serious a problem as the writer's strike.



the paper could have labored on much longer. Aside from the tensions between Marshall and the staff, the paper was simply not popular.<sup>37</sup>

For Masliansky, though, the paper was not a total failure, but a moral success. The orator had a profound love for the Yiddish language, and he was proud of the paper's literary quality. Indeed, "The Jewish World" carried articles and stories by an amazing potpourri of fine Yiddishists. The paper advocated Zionism and carried numerous articles of fine intellectual quality. It was, however, too stodgy and intellectual to appeal to the immigrant worker and to compete with the stinging, venomous sensationalism of the competition.

Despite the tension between Marshall and the editorial staff, the personal relationship between Marshall and Masliansky always remained cordial.<sup>38</sup> Marshall happily consented

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37. L. S. Dawidowicz, pp. 106-107.

38. There was one brief incident which temporarily disrupted the cordial relationship between Marshall and Masliansky: On February 4, 1910, Marshall read an article in the "Jewish Tribune" of Portland, Oregon, in which Masliansky was quoted to have said some unkind words about some "shining lights" in the Jewish community. Believing Masliansky was referring to him, Marshall dashed off an angry letter demanding that the preacher state his complaints clearly. In the course of several exchanges, Masliansky was finally able to persuade Marshall that the article had been a gross misquote. (cf., Louis Marshall to Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, 9 February 1910; 17 February 1910; 24 February 1910; and Zvi Hirsch Masliansky to Louis Marshall, 13 February 1910; 21 February 1910; 25 February 1910, Louis Marshall Collection, AJAr).

to speak at occasions honoring the orator, and on the occasion of Masliansky's 70th birthday, reflected:

"Of few men can it be truthfully said what must be said of you, that in the thousands of addresses which you have delivered upon every imaginable occasion, you have never made a remark which should be regretted, that you have never indulged in bitter personalities or vituperation or said aught which was intended to wound the feelings of any human being..."<sup>39</sup>

The role Masliansky played in the publication of "The Jewish World" was a significant one, especially in regard to the contact he had with Marshall. Masliansky's work at the Educational Alliance (which was viewed with contempt by many immigrants who saw him as the puppet of the "Yahudim"), and his association with Marshall on "The Jewish World" made him a target of criticism. He was depicted as a sort of lackey for the Uptown Jews in the Yiddish press.<sup>40</sup> In the long run, however, Masliansky's loyalty to the immigrant can be seen in his independence from Marshall and in the influence his ideas had over Marshall.

Dawidowicz has shown that Masliansky did not defer to Marshall on every matter. Contrarily, much of what Masliansky printed annoyed Marshall (viz., matters of Zionism and political independence). However, Masliansky did reach certain goals which he considered to be significant: a

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39. Louis Marshall to Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, 24 May 1926, Louis Marshall Collection, AJAr.

40. L. S. Dawidowicz, p. 107.

Yiddish paper which maintained a high literary standard; advocacy of Zionism; respectable pay scales for the contributing authors; and an amazing collection of poetry and literature by numerous Yiddishists from around the world.

Yet, perhaps even more significant was the lesson Marshall learned from his contact with men like Masliansky and Blaustein. Like most of the other Uptown Jews at that time, Marshall had little or no understanding of or appreciation for the needs of the immigrant population. Yiddish was seen as a deficit, a barnacle which had to be removed from the environment. Blaustein did not share this view and he tried to persuade his directors that more progress could be effected by employing Yiddish rather than trying to stamp it out. Masliansky was the most powerful proof that Blaustein might be correct. The impact that the preacher had upon his audiences and the effect that a Yiddish paper could have upon the community slowly became evident to Marshall. Eventually, Marshall came to realize the error of his methods. Reflecting back upon the Uptown Jews and their early work at the Educational Alliance, he later wrote:

"They held themselves aloof from the people. They did not associate with them socially, religiously, or otherwise. They acted as Lords and Ladies Bountiful bringing gifts to people who did not seek for gifts. They frankly avowed the purpose of bettering those among whom they labored and of dealing with them as a problem, and the work was done in such a manner as not only to give offense,

but to arouse suspicion of the motives which inspired the action contemplated."<sup>41</sup>

As Marshall began to associate with Russian Jews like Masliansky, Blaustein, and others, he began to realize that there was, in the Yiddish world, something of value. Marshall was impressed by the orator; his ability, his intelligence, and his humanity.<sup>42</sup> Marshall's continuing association with Masliansky gave him a better appreciation of his East European co-religionist. In this sense, "The Jewish World" was not a failure. It was an admirable literary attempt, and it was a project which, in some small way, helped the Uptown Jews understand the Downtowners a little better.

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41. Louis Marshall to Samuel Greenbaum, 3 February 1919, Louis Marshall Collection, AJAr.

42. After the demise of "The Jewish World", Marshall and Masliansky maintained a friendly relationship. Marshall would ask the preacher to speak to a group as a personal favor, and Masliansky sent Marshall complimentary copies of his books. When Marshall's mother died in 1910, Masliansky sent him a letter he had received and saved from Marshall's mother a few years earlier. This gesture touched Marshall deeply.

cf., Louis Marshall to Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, 2 October 1906, and 1 June 1910. See also, Zvi Hirsch Masliansky to Louis Marshall, 9 October 1908, Louis Marshall Collection, AJAr.

CHAPTER IV  
THE TRIBUNE OF JEWISH NEW YORK

FROM HOVEVEI ZION "MATIF"  
TO ZIONIST SPOKESMAN

Throughout the course of his career in America, Masliansky assiduously avoided controversy and endeavored never to alienate other Jews. He had a clear conception of "Klal Yisrael" (the peoplehood of Judaism), and he persistently conducted himself so that he could cooperate with the greatest number of his fellow Jews. He had a distaste for schisms, and he took pride in his efforts which resulted in bringing together Jews of differing ideologies. His preoccupation with Jewish welfare organizations came, in part, from the knowledge that all Jews--both Uptown and Downtown--supported their work. He prided himself on his role as a "bridge" between immigrant and "establishment" Jewry. This can be clearly understood from the pride he had in "The Jewish World".

Similarly, Masliansky saw nationalism as an ideology which could unite Jews and need not contribute to further factionalism. The preacher stood first and foremost for unity and cooperation, and only then did a personal

philosophy matter. His lifelong association with the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ), and later with the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), again underscores the orator's personal emphasis on unity as an ideal.

Prior to his work on "The Jewish World" in 1902, Masliansky spoke primarily to Zionist groups. The preacher's reputation was, of course, established by his nationalist oratory. When he first arrived in the United States, Herzlian Zionism had not yet come to be. At that time, the Jewish nationalist movement in America consisted of a number of Hovevei Zion chapters in the large cities. Until 1897, much of Masliansky's preaching took place under the aegis of these small organizations.<sup>1</sup>

On August 29, 1897, Theodor Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel. The activities of the Congress received wide attention in the general, the Anglo-Jewish, and the Yiddish press of New York. After the Congress,

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1. Historians do not agree on the vitality of the Hovevei Zion movement in America in the 1890's. Marnin Feinstein maintains the groups were vital and active (cf., Marnin Feinstein, American Zionism 1884-1904, New York: Shulsinger Brothers, 1965, p. 55). Others have noted the distinct lethargy that characterized these Hovevei Zion chapters (cf., Melvin I. Urofsky, American Zionism From Herzl to the Holocaust, New York: Anchor Press, 1975, p. 84). See also: Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Zichronot, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1929, pp. 161-197.

many new "Zionist" chapters (as opposed to Hovevei Zion chapters) came into being in support of Herzl's program. Most of the existing Hovevei Zion chapters quickly threw their support behind Herzlian Zionism.<sup>2</sup>

"Matif Leumi" Masliansky was but one of the many Hovevei Zionists who eagerly fell in line behind Herzl and his Zionist ideal. When Zionist leaders began to call for unity within the movement, Masliansky naturally aligned himself with such calls. Local Hibbat Zion and Zionist chapters began to band together and form larger federations. Yet these new federations were tenuous, and their existence rested upon the continued cooperation of its member groups. The first strife within these young Zionist federations was between two elements dear to the orator's heart: traditional Judaism and Zionism.

On July 4, 1898, the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ) was established. It was made up of several Zionist federations from around the nation. Masliansky was chosen to be the vice president of this newly formed amalgamation. It is significant that the orator was selected to be an officer because of the sensitive issues which surrounded the establishment of the FAZ.

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2. M. Feinstein, pp. 124-126.  
 cf., Bernard A. Rosenblatt, Two Generations of Zionism,  
 New York: Shengold Publishers, 1967, p. 21.

One year earlier, the Federation of Zionist Societies of Greater New York and Vicinity had been established. This new local federation had elected Richard Gottheil (1862-1936) as its president. Gottheil, the son of Reform Rabbi Gustav Gottheil, was immediately faced with the task of bringing the Orthodox Zionists into the Federation. The Orthodox Zionists resented the fact that the new Federation's leadership was composed entirely of non-Orthodox individuals. Gottheil was temporarily able to reunite the two groups in the New York Federation, and when the FAZ was established in 1898 it was clear to all that if there was to be unity the traditional Jews needed to be represented in the FAZ leadership. Masliansky was selected to represent the traditional elements in the new federation along with Isaac J. Bluestone (1860-1934). His election as one of the vice presidents of the newly formed FAZ attests to Masliansky's popularity, as well as his ability to work with the non-Orthodox Zionists like Gottheil who was elected first president of the FAZ.<sup>3</sup>

The FAZ was a feeble organization right from the start and the schism between the liberal and Orthodox Jews never disappeared entirely. In fact, numerous Hibbat Zion chapters (comprised of traditional Jews) continued to resent

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3. M. Feinstein, pp. 124-133.



Gottheil and the liberal leadership.<sup>4</sup> The tensions between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews eventually resulted in a split in the Zionist movement. I. J. Bluestone left the FAZ, and together with Orthodox Rabbi Philip Klein (1849-1926) formed another federation: United Zionists. It is interesting to note that Masliansky never abandoned the FAZ despite his close personal association with the religious Zionists.

Masliansky did not want to be associated with any group or organization which, by definition, stood for factionalism. Masliansky was a devout Jew, and he often expressed admiration for numerous Orthodox rabbis and the need for religious observances. During his lifetime, he remained a traditional Jew in practice, and he valued this observance.

Yet, by splitting off from the non-religious Zionists and establishing a federation for religious Zionists only, Klein and Bluestone were moving against Masliansky's instincts.

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4. An example of the disorganization which permeated the FAZ in those early years is illuminated in a letter written to Stephen S. Wise by Masliansky in 1898. In this letter, which Masliansky wrote while he was visiting Cleveland, Ohio, he politely scolds Wise and Gottheil for not keeping in touch with the Hovevei Zion groups in Cleveland. Upon his arrival in Cleveland, FAZ Vice President Masliansky was hit with a barrage of complaints against Gottheil and the FAZ's lack of communication vis a vis the local chapters. Masliansky politely requested Wise (the secretary of the FAZ) to contact these people and respond to their questions (cf., Zvi Hirsch Masliansky to Stephen S. Wise, 9 November 1898, Zionist Archives of America, New York, p. 134, Box 123-1).

In Zionism, as in every element of the Jewish community, Masliansky sought cooperation. He preferred to stay with the FAZ and prove that all Jews could unite together rather than join a separate religious Zionist organization which, by definition, excluded some. Not only did he remain involved with the FAZ, but he continued to serve as an officer. Moreover, when the FAZ was attacked by religious Zionists, he defended the organization as the body which best represented the movement's interests. To defend unity, Masliansky would engage in battle. In fact, he did take up the defense of the FAZ when another famous orator challenged this organization's right to federate the various Zionist factions.

In September, 1899, Herzl wrote a letter to FAZ President Gottheil, informing him that "Reverend" Jacob Zeff (1864-1919) was being sent to the United States to work at Gottheil's disposal. Zeff, an abrasive personality, had established himself as an exceptional orator in Europe. The Russian-born rabbi was an extremely intelligent individual who, in addition to having acquired a traditional yeshivah education, taught himself to speak several languages. Zeff attended the First Zionist Congress where he became acquainted with Herzl who engaged him to work for the new organization in Europe. Before long, Zeff had antagonized so many of the European Zionists that Herzl decided to send him off to the

United States.<sup>5</sup>

Zeff arrived in America in October, 1899. His magnificent impassioned addresses--in several tongues--netted him substantial praise. Not much time elapsed, however, before Zeff's personality began to cause difficulties again. To begin with, Gottheil was not delighted with Zeff's arrival since he resented the burden placed upon the American organization by the European leadership.<sup>6</sup> Zeff's tactless mannerisms quickly aggravated the situation and he was soon at loggerheads with the Federation's leadership. Masliansky undertook to defend the FAZ, and the two orators became embroiled in the controversy for several months. Zeff, who was jealous of Masliansky's popularity, took up with socialist and Zionist groups opposed to the FAZ, while Masliansky spoke in its defense.<sup>7</sup> By the beginning of 1901, Zeff had so completely disassociated himself with the movement that he ceased to be a significant factor in Zionist activities.<sup>8</sup>

Masliansky remained associated with the FAZ even at times when its vitality and influence ebbed.<sup>9</sup> He continued

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5. M. Feinstein, p. 164.

6. Ibid. p. 168.

7. of., Louis Lipsky, Memoirs in Profile, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1975, pp. 247-251.

8. Avyatar Friesel, The Zionist Movement in the United States, 1897-1914, Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing, 1970, pp. 38-39.

9. Ibid. p. 144.

to believe that the FAZ was capable of unifying all the Zionists. As long as Uptown and Downtown Jews, religious and non-religious Jews could work together, Masliansky continued to support the federation. There was one period, however, in which the preacher's enthusiasm and participation was curtailed: the Brandeis years.

Unlike Jews such as Marshall, Schiff, and Greenbaum, Brandeis did not involve himself directly with the welfare of the Jewish immigrant. As a result of his prominence and his Zionist sympathies, Brandeis was catapulted into the leadership of the American Zionist movement. During the Brandeis years, the Eastern European Zionists were treated with a kind of benign neglect. The Eastern Europeans, many of whom had been "Zionists" long before Herzl, resented the fact that Brandeis excluded them from the decision-making process of the movement. Masliansky was among the many Eastern Europeans who felt disenfranchised by the Brandeis leadership. In despair, Abraham Goldberg (1883-1942), Masliansky's friend and fellow veteran Zionist complained:

"...it is the opinion in Russian-Polish circles that no matter how able and even ingenious one may be, he stands little or no chance to be treated as an equal, and accepted in the good company of the leaders, if he should happen to be of Russian-Jewish parentage..."<sup>10</sup>

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10. Abraham Goldberg to Julian Mack, 26 March 1921, quoted in Yonathan Shapiro, Leadership of the American Zionist Organization 1897-1930, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971, pp. 106-107.

The tension between the Brandeis faction and the Eastern European faction eventually came to a head in the famous Brandeis-Weizmann controversy of 1920-1921.<sup>11</sup> Like so many of his fellow Eastern Europeans, Masliansky was drawn into natural alignment with Weizmann. Not only did Masliansky consider Weizmann to be his pupil, but the two men shared a similar conception of Jewish nationalism.<sup>12</sup>

The Keren Hayesod was established at the World Zionist Congress in July, 1920. The issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, and the San Remo agreement in 1920 gave new vitality to the movement and heightened the need to raise funds to rebuild the homeland. Weizmann supported the establishment of the Keren Hayesod which would solicit funds from all people (rich or poor), and would be controlled by the World Zionist Organization. Brandeis, however, was opposed to the fund for two fundamental reasons: 1) It

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11. For a description of the Brandeis-Weizmann controversy, cf., M. I. Urofsky, pp. 246-298 and Y. Shapiro, pp. 135-179.

12. The nature of the struggle between Brandeis and Weizmann is complex, and it is not within the scope of this work to describe it fully. Suffice it to say that Brandeis' concern with problems of finance, organization, and leadership in the World Zionist movement undoubtedly lacked the Jewish coloration which the orator could best relate to. In addition to the fact that he and Weizmann knew each other from Pinsk, Masliansky identified with the European leadership's conception of Jewish nationalism: cultural, educational, and economic development to enrich the concept of Zion in Palestine and the Diaspora (cf., Y. Shapiro, pp. 161-162).

seemed unsavory to Brandeis that Zionists should seek out "penny and dime" donations from the masses. He maintained that each chapter of the World Zionist Organization should raise funds by approaching wealthy donators. 2) Brandeis disliked the fact that the fund would be controlled by the European leadership. It soon became clear that Brandeis would oppose the imposition of the Keren Hayesod on the American organization. From July, 1920 until June, 1921, there was constant strife between the Weizmann supporters who wanted the Americans to adopt the Keren Hayesod plan, and the Brandeis supporters who resisted it. Despite Brandeis' efforts to the contrary, the funding agency was adopted at the Cleveland convention of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA)<sup>13</sup> in June, 1921. Upon the passage of the resolution, Brandeis resigned from the leadership of the ZOA along with scores of his supporters.

Throughout the year preceding the Cleveland convention, Masliansky had worked to collect funds for the Keren Hayesod although he was aware of Brandeis' strong opposition. Together with men like Abraham Goldberg, Reuben Brainin (1862-1939), and Louis Lipsky (1876-1963), Masliansky helped

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13. The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) was established in 1918. It was essentially a merger of the FAZ, various other Zionist Federations, and Brandeis' Provisional Committee. Brandeis engineered the formation of the ZOA as he had been displeased with the lack of organization and unity in American Zionism up to that time. (cf., M. I. Urofsky, pp. 155-163).

solicit \$250,000.00 for the Keren Hayesod, a sum which seemed to dispel Brandeis' assertion that American Jews would not support the fund.<sup>14</sup> After the resignation of the Brandeis faction, Masliansky worked closely with the ZOA's new President, Louis Lipsky. Undoubtedly, the orator felt more at home with the Lipsky faction than with Brandeis.

Under Lipsky's leadership, the Eastern Europeans gained a greater voice in the ZOA. Masliansky's influence in the Zionist movement was strengthened after Brandeis resigned, even though he no longer held a formal office. Lipsky had known of Masliansky from his boyhood. He comprehended the influence the orator had over the immigrant masses, and he knew of his devotion to Jewish nationalism. Unlike Brandeis, Lipsky understood that Masliansky was a pioneer Zionist who struggled for the national ideal long before the Balfour Declaration. Consequently, the "Matif Leumi" was given honor and respect by Lipsky and the new ZOA leadership. Once again, the "Matif Leumi"'s presence graced the dais at ZOA conventions and programs. Just as it was in the FAZ, Masliansky was invited to carry his special style to the Zionist audiences. In his senior years, the orator was returned to a place of honor within the movement itself by the Lipsky administration.

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14. Ibid. p. 290.

In 1926, the ZOA sponsored a gala celebration to commemorate Masliansky's 70th birthday. When he left to live in Palestine in 1935, Masliansky was again saluted by the movement. His persistent and loyal devotion to the Zionist cause earned him a special seat of honor in the Lipsky ZOA which recognized his influence on the Eastern European immigrants. Therefore, he was able to enjoy his later years in the role which had raised him to prominence thirty years earlier in Russia: an honored spokesman of the Zionist movement.

#### FUND RAISING FOR THE WELFARE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

When Louis Marshall sold "The Jewish World" in 1904, Masliansky returned to that which was most familiar: oratory. He had lost a great deal of money on the paper, and in order to support his family of six children, he needed a broader field. Instead of speaking on behalf of Zionism exclusively, Masliansky devoted himself to the general welfare of the Jewish community. His exposure in the Jewish community of the East Side was heightened by his efforts in publishing "The Jewish World". At the same time, Masliansky had learned more about the Jewish community through the experience of publishing a paper. When "The Jewish World" folded, Masliansky was invited to address many communal organizations, not only those which were Zionist in nature.



Again, Masliansky saw himself as a spokesman for the good and welfare of all the Jewish people of the community. He devoted himself to organizations that helped all kinds of Jews, and which were acknowledged by all as being helpful. His ability to bring out an audience earned honorary positions for him on the boards of various community and welfare organizations: He participated in the Orthodox Rabbinical association, Agudath Harabbonim. He was frequently the featured speaker at the annual meetings of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. He raised money for the Hebrew Free Loan Society and the New York Division of the Jewish Consumptive Relief Society of Denver (for which he served as president from 1915 to 1920). Also, the preacher was frequently asked to welcome newly arrived immigrants at Ellis Island. In every city in which he spoke, Masliansky willingly used his oratory to celebrate, eulogize, commemorate, and raise funds for countless Jewish organizations. Of course, speaking was a livelihood as well and the honoraria he received for his efforts helped him earn an income. Masliansky was in demand, and Louis Lipsky recollects: "...at propaganda meetings, at dinners, at anniversaries, at Zionist conventions and conferences, at protest meetings of all kinds, Masliansky gave the light of his presence, his spirit, his remarkable artistry in oratory".<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>. L. Lipsky, p. 241.

In 1908, Masliansky desperately needed relief from his burdensome speaking schedule. His voice began to weaken and develop a gruffness. Fearful that the strain of his speaking schedule might prematurely injure his voice, the orator asked for (and received) a two month vacation from the Educational Alliance. Cancelling all of his speaking engagements, he left for the famous spa at Ems, Germany. While in Europe, he was able to participate in the Zionist Congress held that year in Cologne.<sup>16</sup>

Upon his return to the United States, toward the end of 1908, Masliansky participated in the founding of the Kehillah of New York City. The concept of a Kehillah epitomized the orator's ideology of the Jewish community. All his life, he tried to associate with all kinds of Jewish people and he devoted himself to unity and fellowship among Jews. Nothing pleased Masliansky more than the banding together of the various Jewish groups of New York in a Kehillah; an organized communal cooperative. At the 1909 organizational convention, Masliansky was asked to serve on the advisory Executive Committee of the Kehillah. He served on the committee from the beginning of the Kehillah in 1909 until the organization ceased to exist in 1922.<sup>17</sup>

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16. Z. H. Masliansky, pp. 222-225.  
See also: Judah L. Magnes to Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, 30 June 1908, Zvi Hirsch Masliansky Papers, JNLA.

17. L. Lipsky, p. 241.

The fact that Masliansky served on this honorary committee again highlights the respect and esteem with which he was held by the communal leadership. As was the case in the Educational Alliance and in the Zionist movement, as well as in the Kehillah, Masliansky was not a power broker. He was, undeniably, an immigrant leader and his exquisite oratory held sway over thousands. Yet, he had no desire to vie for power with the likes of Marshall, Schiff, or even Magnes. Contrarily, the preacher wanted to support them in building a greater Jewish community. Of course, very few Eastern Europeans were able to obtain influence in the community which was at that time dominated by a German "establishment". Yet, Masliansky was seemingly happy to serve as an elder sage who was crowned with various honors. As a member of Kehillah's Executive Advisory Committee, Masliansky had no voice in the real issues which confronted that organization's leadership. As a beloved Yiddish orator, Masliansky was heard and respected by thousands of immigrant Jews, and for this reason he was given a certain deference by the Jewish "establishment".<sup>18</sup>

During the first two decades of the 20th century, Masliansky became the venerated tribune of the Jewish

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18. Masliansky is not mentioned at all in Arthur A. Goren's book, New York Jewry and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922, New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.

community in New York. Although his rise to acclaim was due to his inspiring nationalist addresses, his image diversified after the turn of the century. His position at the Educational Alliance, his involvement with "The Jewish World", his willingness to speak on behalf of numerous welfare organizations, and his continuing work within the Zionist movement made Zvi Hirsch Masliansky more than a "maggid" or even a Zionist "matif". In the eyes of the Jewish immigrants of New York, he was a fatherly figure who spoke to benefit the needs of his community. His desire to help improve the quality of Jewish life in America, together with his popularity among the masses, made him a frequent guest of honor at various communal endeavors. His ability to cooperate with the Uptown Jews while not seeking personal positions of power made him a frequent recipient of praise and salute, but not a source of political authority.

#### PRAISE AND PUBLICATION

Hebrew played a fundamental role in Masliansky's constellation of interests even prior to his becoming an advocate of the Hibbat Zion movement. The rebirth of Hebrew as a modern language, however, was inexorably bound up in the Jewish national movement. The resurgence of Hebrew literature was thought to be an integral part of the national

rebirth by many Hovevei Zion in Eastern Europe. Just as the orator was committed to the concept of Jewish nationhood, so too was he committed to a new use of the Hebrew language. While he was yet in Russia, Masliansky contributed to several Hebrew journals, and he followed the proceedings of these journals closely. After coming to the United States, he continued to be concerned with the welfare of Hebrew literature despite his total immersion in the vast ocean of Yiddish in New York's East Side. He contributed articles to numerous Hebrew journals in the United States and abroad.<sup>19</sup>

Chicago's "Ha-Pisgah" was one of the Hebrew periodicals which frequently carried Masliansky's contributions. The preacher maintained a close friendship with the paper's editor and publisher, Wolf Schur. As a consequence of Masliansky's acclaim as a Yiddish orator, his interest and devotion to Hebrew is oftentimes overlooked. Masliansky's recollections about his travels through Western Europe after he left Russia were first published in Schur's "Ha-Pisgah".<sup>20</sup> Many of the articles which would later appear in the orator's Hebrew memoirs appeared years earlier in Hebrew journals

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19. Jacob Kabakoff, Seekers and Stalwarts (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Rubin Mass Publisher, 1978, pp. 294-295.

20. Eliezer A. Malachi, Iqrot Sofrim (Hebrew), New York: Miller Press, 1931, pp. 124-125.

such as "Ha-Pisgah".<sup>21</sup> Actually, Masliansky was primarily interested in his Hebrew writings, and his Yiddish publications grew out of the demands of New York's East Side environment.

Masliansky had been writing in Hebrew long before he began publishing in Yiddish. The overwhelming demand for Yiddish served to distract him from his interest in Hebrew for almost two decades. The preacher could not help but realize that his appeal was in a large part due to his brilliant Yiddish oratory. It was not the Zionist content which drew thousands to hear him hold forth as much as it was the beautiful Yiddish. The desire for the Yiddish language was great in New York, and Masliansky understood that it was Yiddish that the masses wanted to hear, not Hebrew.

When Masliansky decided to publish his sermons, it was only natural that they be published in Yiddish. The first collection of Masliansky's Yiddish sermons was published in 1908. The printer was the preacher's son-in-law, Philip Turberg, who had joined Masliansky in the venture to publish "The Jewish World" and then remained in the printing

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21. Masliansky's memoirs of his travels were published in Yiddish in 1924, and Hebrew in 1929. Evidently, many of his travel memoirs were written first in Hebrew and published in serial form in various Hebrew journals. Later on, Masliansky translated his Hebrew memoirs into Yiddish in order that they might be published in the Yiddish Press.

business. Turberg and his partner, Solomon Judson, specialized in Yiddish and Hebrew publications. This first collection of sermons was printed in two volumes, and it is interesting to note that there is a small appendix of Hebrew sermons at the back of the second volume. Despite the recognition that it was Yiddish sermons which appealed to the immigrants, Masliansky felt a personal, overriding commitment to Hebrew. Hence, he saw to it that at least part of the collection was devoted to Hebrew sermons as well.

Most all of the sermons in this collection were given at his Friday evening lectures at the Educational Alliance. The sermons (in both the Yiddish and Hebrew sections) were written out in full prose. The work contains a sermon for each of the Torah portions read during the annual lectionary cycle. This collection represents the closest approximation to the orator's actual sermons in existence. Yet, since Masliansky generally spoke without notes for up to two hours,<sup>22</sup> it is unlikely that any sermon confined to paper could fully reflect the essence of his mastery.

The Hebrew sermons contained in this volume also were tied to various Torah portions. In a brief introduction to the Hebrew section, Masliansky dedicated his inclusion

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22. Jacob S. Minkin, Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, "Brooklyn Jewish Center Review", February, 1943.

of the Hebrew addresses to his fellow "matifim" (Zionist preachers). In this dedication, the orator offers an interesting disclaimer regarding the content of his sermons written in America:

"I have wandered in many countries in which Jews live...but here in free America life is totally different; and since my sermons are living matter, they have changed. All that I preached in Europe cannot be preached here..."<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps the preacher was apologizing to the ardent Zionists who were accustomed to hearing Masliansky ask for people to actually return to the Land of Israel? Nonetheless, these Hebrew sermons were certainly not devoid of nationalism, yet in Masliansky's talks "nationalism" was often couched in platitudes of Jewish pride:

"And the day of fulfillment is not far off. The time is close at hand when the powers of the earth will realize it, and realizing it, they will determine that Militarism must go, ere Peace shall rule the earth. On that great day shall the ensign of Universal Peace be permanently unfurled and shall be fluttering in the breezes from the top of Mount Zion restored to its rightful owner--the Jew, and the prophecy of Isaiah shall be fulfilled..."<sup>24</sup> (Isaiah II:3).

The content and quality of these sermons were carefully oriented to the needs of the immigrant who came to listen.

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23. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Masliansky's Sermons (Yiddish) Volume II, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1909, pp. 4-5. (Hebrew Section) translation by Gary P. Zola.

24. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Sermons (English), New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1960, p. 230.



He was an advocate not only of nationalism, but also of freedom, dignity, and Jewish pride. He praised the Zionist leaders for giving new hope to the oppressed of the Jewish people. He spoke about love of Torah and love of freedom. He told stories about the biblical patriarchs, and demonstrated the common features between their lives and the lives of his listeners. He spoke words which sought to comfort the immigrant's anguish.

In 1916-1917, a project was initiated to translate some of Masliansky's Yiddish sermons into English. The translation was commissioned by a special "Masliansky Committee" of the Educational Alliance.<sup>25</sup> Presumably, the proposed translation of Masliansky's sermons was part of the festivities planned by the Educational Alliance in honor of the orator's 60th birthday which coincided with more than sixteen years of his association with that organization.<sup>26</sup>

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25. In addition to Edward Herbert, members of this committee were Jacob H. Schiff, Peter Wiernik, Israel Friedlander, and Henry Fleischman.

26. On June 10, 1917, over 2,000 people assembled in Carnegie Hall to honor Masliansky. Participating in this tribute were: Stephen S. Wise, Louis Marshall, Samuel Greenbaum, and Judah Magnes.

Edward Herbert (1863-1944), an immigrant Jew who was a lawyer and realtor who had some scholarly aspirations, translated a substantial portion of Masliansky's published and unpublished Yiddish sermons into English. The Masliansky Publication Committee (and specifically Professor Israel Friedlander 1876-1920) was not at all pleased with the quality of Herbert's translation. They instructed Henry Fleischman, superintendent of the Educational Alliance, to engage someone to redo the Herbert translation. Abraham J. Feldman (1893-1977), an aspiring young Reform Rabbi of immigrant stock, submitted a sample of his translation style and was subsequently asked to undertake the project in August, 1919.<sup>27</sup>

Members of the committee and the preacher himself were very eager to have the English translation published.<sup>28</sup> Feldman, however, was much too busy to devote all of his energies to the project. He had just been called to Kenesseth Israel, a large Reform congregation in Philadelphia, to serve as Joseph Krauskopf's (1858-1923) assistant in 1920. Feldman wrote to Masliansky and promised him that his translation would be ready by June, 1920. When

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27. Henry Fleischman to Abraham J. Feldman, 15 June 1919; 8 July 1919; 4 August 1919; Abraham J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.

28. Henry Fleischman to Abraham J. Feldman, 24 February 1920, A. J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.

Masliansky told Herbert that Feldman was nearly finished with the project, Herbert wrote Feldman to congratulate him, and simultaneously remind Feldman that he, Herbert, had done the vast amount of the work, and that he was glad Feldman was simply "revising" it for him.<sup>29</sup>

Feldman ignored Herbert's "subtle" hinting in regard to who the real translator was, and did not respond to his letters. Herbert, on the other hand, continued to write Feldman to inquire how he was proceeding on the "revision" and "editing" of the "Herbert" translation.<sup>30</sup> Feldman continued to work on the translation, which moved along slowly as a consequence of the translator's rabbinical duties in a large congregation. Although Fleischman pressed Feldman on behalf of the Masliansky Publication Committee to finish the translation, Feldman continued to delay the due-date for the work's completion.

Finally, on July 25, 1922, Feldman submitted his completed translation of the Masliansky sermons to the Publication Committee. Feldman attended that meeting in person in order to present the translation to the committee. Apparently, the committee was very pleased with Feldman's work

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29. Edward Herbert to Abraham J. Feldman, 14 May 1920, A. J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.

30. Edward Herbert to Abraham J. Feldman, 20 May 1920, A. J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.

and they began to discuss specifics of publication. Predictably, a difference of opinion arose between Herbert and Feldman concerning who was to be given credit for the translation.<sup>31</sup> Herbert demanded that total credit be given him for the translation, and that Feldman be credited only for revision and editing of the volume. Feldman, believing that Herbert's original translation was so awful that it needed to be discarded altogether, refused to relinquish credit for the final translation. In an unbelievable process of dickering, Feldman, Herbert, and Educational Alliance Director Henry Fleischman delayed the appearance of the English translation of Masliansky's sermons for nearly five years! Throughout that period, Fleischman steadfastly tried to obtain a compromise between the two men. In spite of all his efforts, Herbert would not credit Feldman for any of the translation. Fleischman, in absolute frustration, begged Masliansky to intervene with his friend, Herbert. However, even the orator could not reason with Herbert, who desired to have his name bear the "glory" of the work. Finally, after four years of negotiations, and ten years after the initiation of the project, the two men agreed upon a formula. Herbert would be credited for the "original

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31. Minutes of the Masliansky Publication Committee, 25 July 1922, Educational Alliance, A. J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.

translation" and Feldman for a "revised and edited" translation.<sup>32</sup>

The English translation of Masliansky's sermons was ultimately published by the Hebrew Publishing Company in 1926. The Masliansky Publication Committee had attempted to have the work published by MacMillan Company and then the G.P. Putnam Company, but both declined the offer, saying the book had no general appeal. After attempting to publish the book with Bloch Publishing (a Jewish press), the Hebrew Publishing Company finally agreed to do the project. The book of English sermons, a project originally begun to celebrate Masliansky's 60th birthday, finally appeared several months after his 70th birthday.<sup>33</sup>

This volume of English sermons is nearly devoid of the true quality of Masliansky's orations. The book, which was published in good English, clearly lacks the passion and color of the original Hebrew and Yiddish. Feldman's attempts to elevate the translation and dignify its presentation inadvertently altered their essence:

"Recall, friends, your childhood years, your Cheder days; bring back to your memory the month of Adar, when the days were getting

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32. The entire account of the negotiations concerning this affair will be found in the Zvi Hirsch Masliansky File of the Abraham J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.

33. The Hebrew Publishing Company published a revised edition in 1960. At that time, a brief biographical sketch of Masliansky written by his granddaughter, Sulamith Schwartz Nardi, was included in the volume.

longer and the nights shorter; when the first bright and warm rays of the Spring sun reached the icebound town and the dark and dingy cheder... where with our poor emaciated teacher we sat worrying our young heads over dry and complicated talmudic dissertations... To us the month of Adar was a veritable redeeming angel."<sup>34</sup>

Despite the beautiful quality of Feldman's English prose, stilted phrases like "complicated talmudic dissertations" and "poor emaciated teacher" lack the color, force, and true emotion of the original tongue.

The Feldman translation is the only attempt at rendering Masliansky's sermons into English. In their foreward to this volume, the Masliansky Publication Committee expressed the hope that the translation would familiarize English speakers with the work of "a great Jewish orator, writer, and scholar" and that it would "contribute towards a better understanding of Jewish life and thought".<sup>35</sup> One cannot help but feel that it falls short of both goals. The sermons reflect very little of Masliansky or the real nature of his sermons. Similarly, the difficulty in achieving an accurate English rendition of the Yiddish handicaps its ability to further the understanding of the Jewish experience out of which it came.

The apparent disinterest in a translation of Masliansky's orations, combined with the inherent difficulty in achieving

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34. Z. H. Masliansky, Sermons (English), p. 50.

35. Ibid. p. X.

an accurate rendition, seems to reflect a certain reality: Masliansky's impact and effect on the generation in which he lived was, to a great degree, confined to the Yiddish population which came to hear him. Attempts at translating his orations in English seemed futile. The many testimonies to Masliansky's greatness as a preacher repeatedly emphasize the experiential impact of watching him as he spoke. Hence, one must question how accurately even a book of his Yiddish sermons could convey the orator's greatness. Clearly, the difficulty in producing an accurate English translation serves only to demonstrate how unique the Yiddish orations must surely have been.

In 1924 (a full two years before the publication of his sermons in English finally appeared), Masliansky published his memoirs in Yiddish. These memoirs, which contain the identical material found in his Hebrew memoirs (cf., *infra*), were based on his travel diary from his days on the Russian Hovevei Zion circuit. It is not clear why the orator translated his Hebrew travel diary into Yiddish instead of publishing it first in its original language. One possible explanation is that he was able to have the Yiddish press carry parts of it in installments prior to its Hebrew publication in hardback. In fact, this did occur with his 1921 Hebrew diary of his visit to Palestine when a series first appeared in the columns of the Yiddish

"Morgen Journal".<sup>36</sup> (Later on, the original appeared in his Hebrew memoirs.) This Yiddish memoir was printed at his son-in-law Turberg's press. (The work was indexed, which adds to its historical employability.)

Like his Yiddish memoirs, Masliansky's Hebrew memoirs describe four distinct epochs in his life: his early beginnings on the Russian Hovevei Zion circuit and his brief visit to Great Britain (1891-1895); his arrival and travels in the United States, including the publication of "The Jewish World" (1895-1904); his visit to Europe in 1908; and his first trip to Palestine (1921). These memoirs (contained in volume three of a three-volume set) are unique historical documents. The fact that he kept a diary on his travels in the Pale of Settlement enabled Masliansky to supply interesting data on numerous people and events during that era. Similarly, the memoirs on his travels throughout the United States (1895-1904) and his first visit to Palestine (1921) contain some fascinating historical information (cf., Appendix).

Volume one of his Hebrew memoirs contains synopses of some of his sermons from the Educational Alliance. In his introduction to this volume, Masliansky indicated that he provided only a skeleton of his addresses for other preachers

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36. Arthur Hertzberg, "Zvi Hirsch Masliansky", Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement 3, 1941-1945, p. 513.



to use because "every preacher must put his own imprint on the material". Since the sermons contained in volume one are but sketches, it is difficult to capture much more than Masliansky's thematic outline of each address.

Volume two of the Hebrew memoirs contains a series of short articles on important figures throughout Jewish history. Among them are articles on Maimonides, Hisdai Ibn Shaprut, Shmuel Ha-Nagid, as well as those on more contemporary historical figures like Mordecai Manuel Noah and Samuel Mohilewer. The historical material is not original and Masliansky actually listed the sources he used in the compilation of the essays at the front of the volume. Almost all of his historical sources were Hebrew works, including Saul P. Rabinowitz's (1845-1910) Hebrew translation of Graetz's History of the Jews; Simon Bernfeld's (1860-1940) History of the Reform Movement in Judaism (Hebrew); and other Hebrew works by Max Raisin, Samuel J. Fuenn, Reuben Brainin, and others.

This three-volume set of Hebrew writings represents the last of Masliansky's publishings in hardback. Masliansky seemed to have sensed intuitively by the mid-1920's that the future vitality of his work resided in Hebrew, not Yiddish. Indeed, he was confronted with the realities of a decline in America's Yiddish world. The early 1920's saw a drop in the Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe. The new quotas of 1924 dramatically altered the immigrant flow from Eastern

Europe. Additionally, the immigrant generation which knew Masliansky best was getting older, and their children no longer had an interest in hearing Yiddish orations. When Masliansky wrote the Yiddish version of his memoirs, he made note of the fact that the younger Jews preferred to hear English spoken rather than Yiddish.<sup>37</sup>

Upon his return from Palestine in 1921, after hearing Hebrew used as a modern tongue in the Yishuv, Masliansky again began to concentrate his energies on writing Hebrew. His Hebrew writings published in 1929 were three times as large as the Yiddish memoirs; and the volume containing historical material on Jewish personages throughout history never appeared in Yiddish. Furthermore, Masliansky began to take a more active role in Hebrew circles during his later years.

In 1925, he became Director of the new Israel Matz Foundation for the Advancement of Hebrew Literature.<sup>38</sup> In this capacity, he was in steady contact with Hebrew writers and publishers. Masliansky himself took up his pen to

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37. Z. H. Masliansky, Masliansky's Memoirs (Yiddish), New York: Turberg Press, 1924, p. 243.

38. Israel Matz (1869-1950) was the founder of the Ex-Lax Company. He accumulated a fortune and used his monies to support various Jewish charities. In 1925, he established a foundation whose money was targeted to support struggling Hebrew writers and to advance the cause of Hebrew literature (cf., Max Raisin, Me-Sefer Hayai (Hebrew), New York: Bitzaron Press, 1956, pp. 75-79).  
See also: A. Hertzberg, p. 513.

write in Hebrew. In addition to his Hebrew memoirs, the orator contributed frequently to the Hebrew journal "Ha-Doar". Between the years 1930-1936, "Ha-Doar" carried over thirty articles by Masliansky. Although many of the articles were simply reprints from his Hebrew memoirs, others were written for a specific occasion.<sup>39</sup>

After he retired from his position at the Educational Alliance in 1928, the orator published almost exclusively in Hebrew. The Yiddish world in America had begun its decline, and Masliansky's Zionist instincts carried him back to the Hebrew language. He seemed to perceive that if he wished his writings to be remembered, it would be the Hebrew, and not the Yiddish, which would ultimately survive.

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39. cf., Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, ראשיתו של ווייצמאן "Ha-Doar" No. 39, October 25, 1935, p. 750; and שבוע אחד "Ha-Doar" No. 23, April 20, 1934, p. 430.

## CHAPTER V

### THE LAST YEARS

#### TO DIE IN PALESTINE

Masliansky's last fifteen years saw him enjoying the roles of the elder Zionist pioneer, the fatherly orator, and the family patriarch. In 1926, at age 70, Masliansky was granted a year's sabbatical from the Educational Alliance. When he returned to the lectern in October, 1927, the wealthy patrons on the Committee on Ethical and Moral Work were dubious about the preacher's continuing effectiveness:

"It will be interesting to note to what extent Mr. Masliansky's sermons continue to appeal to the neighborhood. His audiences for two or three years have been dwindling due to the fact that older men of Talmudic training, who enjoyed and understood Mr. Masliansky's talks, are gradually dying out or moving away from the neighborhood. Mr. Masliansky is now 72 years of age and has lost the vigor and forcefulness of his earlier years."<sup>1</sup>

At the next meeting of the committee, however, Henry Fleischman assured them that people were still attending

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1. Educational Alliance, Minutes of the Committee on Moral and Ethical Work, Meeting of 20 October 1927 (microfilm), AJAr.

the Masliansky lectures.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the days of greatness had passed, and both the Directors of the Educational Alliance and the preacher knew it. In October, 1928, Masliansky retired from the Educational Alliance.

The orator was much more fortunate than many others who lived through the decline of the Yiddish world. Unlike so many Yiddish writers, actors, and speakers, Masliansky did not spend his last years in destitution and loneliness. Financially, Masliansky enjoyed a great deal of security. During his heyday, when he was speaking regularly and simultaneously preaching at the Educational Alliance, Masliansky must have made a respectable living. In his retirement years, he was fortunate that his oldest son, Philip, had accumulated a substantial fortune as a merchant. Evidently, Philip provided his parents with the means to live comfortably in their retirement.<sup>3</sup>

In 1921, the orator made his first visit to Palestine. As he embarked upon that journey, he observed a 91 year old man leaving his family to spend his remaining years in the Land of Israel. Masliansky mentions in his memoirs how enamored he was of the thought--to die in the land of his ancestors.<sup>4</sup> He recalls, with profound emotion, the first

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2. Ibid. Meeting of 11 January 1928.

3. Interview with Marshall Weinberg, October 20, 1981.

4. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Zichronot, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1929, p. 241.

time his eyes were cast upon the ancient land as his boat approached shore. When he arrived in Jaffa, on May 23, 1921, he was greeted by a crowd of friends and admirers whom he had known from Russia.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, Masliansky was given preferential treatment during his 1921 visit to Palestine. He was taken to many places of interest by his friends: the Herzlia school,<sup>6</sup> various yeshivot, orphanages, and the Hadassah Hospital. Also, he visited several cities and settlements, including Tel Aviv, Rehovot, Jerusalem, Rishon Le-Zion, and the Mikveh Israel School. Everywhere he stopped he was treated as an important pioneer of Zionism. He was asked to speak in several synagogues and was invited to meet with the leaders of the Yishuv. Among others, Masliansky visited with Chief Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935) and High Commissioner Herbert Samuel (1870-1963).<sup>7</sup> Kook was so impressed with Masliansky that he later wrote him to ask if he would help Kook raise funds in America for a "World

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5. Among the people who came to welcome Masliansky in Palestine were: writer A. Z. Waldstein, educator and author Hayyim Harari, and various Russian Zionists who had settled there by that time.

6. The Herzlia school was a pioneering secondary school for Hebrew Education in Palestine established by a group of young teachers in 1906. The school was maintained with the support of many of the Russian Hovevei Zion.

7. Z. H. Masliansky, pp. 240-281.

Yeshivah" in Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> For the aging preacher, the visit to Palestine was exhilarating. He was thrilled with the progress of the Yishuv: He was delighted with the Hebrew fluency of the young generation, and he was emotionally overcome by the history inherent in every site he visited.

As a result of this visit, Masliansky hoped to return to Palestine so that he would be able to spend his remaining years there. On his return to the United States, he attended the 12th Zionist Congress in Calsbad. Reinvigorated by his visit to Palestine and his participation in the Zionist Congress, Masliansky took a renewed interest in Zionist affairs when he arrived back in New York. He appeared at various meetings and affairs to raise funds for the Keren Hayesod, and to relate the miraculous progress being made in the Yishuv.

In addition to his continuing work on behalf of the Zionist movement, the orator also devoted his retirement years to the continued support of various community organizations. In 1929, he was made the Honorary President of the Borough Park Yeshivah. He visited there frequently, and lent his home to raise funds for the Yeshivah. During the years 1934-1935, "Ha-Doar" ran a special series of articles on Masliansky's youth in Russia, taken from his

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8. Abraham Isaac Kook to Masliansky, 27 February 1925, Masliansky Collection, JNLA.

Hebrew memoirs. As he approached 80 years of age, though his energy and vitality had declined, he remained active in his circle of concerns.

In 1935, the orator decided it was time to leave for Palestine. Much to his family's chagrin, the aging preacher was determined to spend his last years in the Land of Israel. On May 9, 1935, the Zionist Organization of America sponsored a farewell tribute to the orator. Over a thousand people gathered at the Hotel Astor to hear Stephen S. Wise, Louis Lipsky, ZOA President Morris Rothenberg (1885-1950), Hadassah President Rose Jacobs (1888-?), and many others honor Masliansky prior to his final departure for Palestine.

Arriving in Palestine in June, 1935, Masliansky found that his dream of spending his last years in the Holy Land was not all that he had expected. Unlike his 1921 visit to Palestine, this time he was not given the same grand reception. Many of his old Hovevei Zion friends, who had welcomed him warmly fourteen years earlier, had since died. Masliansky was disappointed that his return was greeted essentially without notice.<sup>9</sup>

Masliansky's return to Palestine found him facing one challenge after another. First, his health began to decline. In August, 1935, he was forced to enter a special sanatorium

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9. Interview with Isaac Schwartz, 15 August 1981. Mr. Schwartz (a grandson) accompanied Masliansky to Palestine in 1935.



for his arthritis and emphysema. Back in America, his children became very concerned about his health, yet Masliansky wrote back that they should not worry since everything was under control. His family tried to persuade him to return to America, but he was determined to stay. He tried to reassure his family about the good care he was receiving. He described the various medications he was taking in letters to his son-in-law, Dr. Abraham S. Schwartz, in hopes of calming their alarm.<sup>10</sup> Yet the political situation in Palestine upset Masliansky's family as much as his health problems.

On April 19, 1936, the famous "Arab Revolt" broke out. Angry Jewish demonstrators revenged the death of two Jews killed by Arab terrorists by killing two Arabs. In consequence of their action, huge riots broke out in Jaffa and Tel Aviv where sixteen Jews were killed and many others wounded. Masliansky's family wrote and demanded he return to the United States. At first, the orator resisted their pressures. He wrote that he could not understand why the family would not believe him when he wrote that he was not hurt and his safety remained unthreatened. He reassured

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10. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky to Turberg Family, 27 August 1935 and 18 March 1936. Collection of Ms. Ruth Turberg (Masliansky's granddaughter), in the possession of Ms. Turberg, New York.

them that he had decided to remain in Palestine.<sup>11</sup>

Ultimately, Masliansky understood that he had to return to the United States. The unstable political condition and his weakening health began to concern his wife. In a magnificent and emotional letter which he hoped to have published (but which never was), Masliansky recorded his feelings upon leaving Palestine. In this letter, he dwelled on the loss he felt for the great heroes of his generation--many of whom were his comrades--who had died: Max Nordau, Shmarya Levin, Ahad Ha-am, Hayyim N. Bialik, and Judah Lieb Goldberg. He explained that his wife was frightened by the political unrest, and that she would awaken in the middle of the night crying "take me home, give me my children". Finally, he concluded that the Jewish State was for the young to build and not for the old and feeble. Without his friends, his family, and his youth, his life-long hope of remaining in his ancestral homeland was an unattainable dream.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE FAMILY PATRIARCH

Masliansky's strength had slowly begun to ebb even before he left for Palestine. After returning, his pro-

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11. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky to Philip Turberg, 4 June 1936, Collection of Ms. Ruth Turberg (see supra, note 10).

12. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky to H. J. Kohen, 4 November 1936, Collection of Ms. Ruth Turberg (see supra, note 10).

gressive frailty began to curtail his activities. He rarely spoke in public, and when he did it was painful for those who had heard him during his zenith to listen to him groping for words and forgetting his place. He spent his time visiting the Borough Park Yeshivah, and reading the Yiddish and Hebrew papers.<sup>13</sup>

The ravages of old age frustrated the orator, and after he could no longer speak publicly, he refrained from attending the various gatherings he had so long frequented. From time to time he would write an article for "Ha-Doar", but what remained of his waning energy was reserved for his family.

The preacher had six children: two sons (Philip and Herman) and four daughters (Bertha, Fanny, Beatrice, and Anne). Philip, a wealthy merchant, never married. Herman married and became an importer. Bertha married Hebraist Philip Turberg, and Fanny married Abraham S. Schwartz, a medical doctor and well-known Hebrew poet. Beatrice married Judge Joseph B. Perskie of Atlantic City, and Anne married a physician, Harold Weinberg, who later went into business. Between all of his offspring and their spouses, Masliansky had over thirty grandchildren and great-grandchildren.<sup>14</sup> He

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13. Louis Lipsky, Memoirs in Profile, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1975, pp. 247-251.

14. Many of the orator's grandchildren and great-grandchildren are still active in the Jewish community, although the Masliansky name is now spelled and pronounced: Maslansky.

enjoyed being surrounded by his family, and he is remembered by them as a loving, gentle, respected patriarch.<sup>15</sup>

As his age began to take more and more toll, Masliansky began to complain he had lived too long. In 1937, he wrote a somber and sullen article on what it is like to be 81:

"Believe me, my friends and admirers, I hate old age, and old people, and in this regard I hate myself. I love childhood and children... Where are all my friends and admirers who helped me celebrate my birthdays during the last twenty-five years? Most are gone, resting in their eternal home, and I--an old man--...must wait for the horrid end which has no encore!"<sup>16</sup>

For many years, Masliansky had suffered from neuritis in his right hand which prevented him from writing. He would jokingly remark "I never forgot Jerusalem all of my days, and yet I still lost my right hand!"<sup>17</sup> When he could, he wrote of his growing despondency over age and failing health, and of the tragic situation in Germany. In 1939, he wrote an article for "Ha-Doar" in which he expressed his despair over the state of German Jewry. He wrote of a dream he had in which he was standing in a German railway station. There, mothers had been separated from their

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15. Dorothy T. Biltchik to Gary P. Zola, 16 October 1981 (letter from granddaughter).

16. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, שירת חזיונות, "Ha-Doar", 18 June 1937, No. 31, p. 520 (translation by Gary P. Zola).

17. Z. H. Masliansky, Zichronot, p. 295.

children, and everyone was crying--Jew and Gentile.<sup>18</sup> He never lived to understand how tragically prophetic his dream had been.

In 1940, Masliansky's health began to deteriorate rapidly. He was confined to a sick bed for months at a time.<sup>19</sup> On his 85th birthday, he complained that the only thing greater than his personal physical discomfort was the pain his people were enduring at the hands of Hitler. Early in 1942, Masliansky has ceased writing for "Ha-Doar". Whenever articles did appear, they were reprinted from his Hebrew memoirs. On January 11, 1943, Zvi Hirsch Masliansky died at age 87.

Hundreds gathered in and around Temple Beth-El of Brooklyn to pay their final respects to Masliansky. Once again, leaders of the Zionist movement and the American Jewish community-at-large, rose to salute the orator. Stephen S. Wise, Abba Hillel Silver, Louis Lipsky, and Gedaliah Bublick were among the eulogizers. Dr. Nahum Goldmann brought personal condolences from Chaim Weizmann. He was praised as a great Zionist, a devoted Jew, and a brilliant speaker. He was lauded as an inspiration and an institution. Yet, of all the fine tributes offered

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18. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, מֵיָּסוּד, "Ha-Doar", 13 January 1939, No. 11, p. 164.

19. Max Raisin, Igrot Sofrim Ivriim, New York: Israel Matz Printing, 1947, p. 239.

that day, Stephen Wise's words continue to bear great historical validity:

"No estimate of Masliansky...can convey the love which a whole generation of American Jewry felt for this great soul. His public utterance was a bridge that linked the new world to the old; that renewed the ties which bound a generation of aliens to their ancient anchorage; which at the same time brought foreign-born and foreign-reared Jews to the first understanding of the best in the moral and spiritual significance of American life."<sup>20</sup>

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20. Stephen S. Wise, "Dr. Wise on Masliansky", "Free Synagogue Weekly Bulletin", January 20, 1943, p. 4.

## EPILOGUE

"In the study of the past  
we ever found hope for the future".

--- Zvi Hirsch Masliansky

The life of Zvi Hirsch Masliansky reflects the experience of the transitory generation of Eastern European Jewry which, in desperation, abandoned its faith in the status quo and turned to new lands and new dreams to realize a better existence. That generation, as is the case with any transitory generation, stood with one leg in the old world and one in the new. So, too, was Masliansky a man of two worlds; rooted in the experience of the Pale of Settlement, he eventually came to settle in the United States. He was neither a leader in the style of the old world generation, nor of the new. He accompanied his wandering people through an era of resettlement, and helping them through that process was to become his special role in life.

Masliansky was involved in the formulation of numerous by-products spawned by this generation in transition. He was a maskil, a journalist, a religious nationalist, a Zionist, a Hebraist, a Yiddishist, and a communal leader. He labored to contribute to each of these areas, always with a keen eye on the needs of his resettling people.

Like so many others of his era, Masliansky perceived the reshaping of the Jewish world. He was carried along with a host of his generation to a new shore, America. Yet his original plan was much different for he had hoped at first to lead his wandering nation back to its ancient home in the Land of Israel.

Indeed, Masliansky's rise to prominence first came as a result of his passionate belief in the ideology of the Hovevei Zion in Russia. The nationalist movement offered hope and future for a generation reeling from imperial oppression and cruelty. Inspired by the vision of national rebirth, the young Masliansky took up its cause and became its preacher-advocate. The words he uttered reflected his emotional devotion to the ideal. He brought a dream of national greatness to those Jews of the Pale who had lost their economic, sociologic, and psychologic moorings in the wake of the events of 1881.

Ironically, his intense desire to realize a national return carried Masliansky not to the Land of Israel, but to the United States. Exiled from Russia as a subversive, he was welcomed in America by those who longed for the Yiddish glamour of the world they left behind. In this new world, he once again brought hope to the masses, but his message began to change. He was no longer simply an advocate of the national ideal. He became the tribune of



the immigrant community, and his message reassured them that they had come to a land of promise. Overwhelmed and touched by the freedom and liberty of the new world, Masliansky spoke words of comfort to a generation suffering from the shock of striking roots in a new American soil.

As an advocate of the national ideal in Russia, Masliansky was designated as the "Matif Leumi", the "National Preacher". In the new world, the title engendered a broader meaning: "Matif Leumi"--The "People's Preacher". Masliansky took up the gauntlet of his new task with complete dedication. He tried (as he himself frequently stated) "to bring America to the older generation and Judaism to the younger generation". To the disoriented immigrant he sought to develop confidence in their new home. To the new generation of Jewish Americans, he hoped to instill pride in their sacred heritage.

His service to this generation in transition was not confined to oratory. He employed his talent to establish and support organizations which would help "bring America to the older generation". Almost every Jewish welfare group benefitted from his elocution and ability to raise funds. He contributed to the immigrant's world of Yiddish by writing his hopeful message in various articles. His own Yiddish newspaper, "The Jewish World", was very much an attempt to provide its readers with a high quality of Yiddish literature. Almost every institution which stood

for the welfare of the new immigrant was strengthened by Masliansky's influential oratory.

Simultaneously, the "Matif Leumi" remained committed to his first passion, the national ideal. He was a pioneer Zionist in America, and he unceasingly defended its cause from every speaking platform. He dedicated himself to the American Zionist organizations before they acquired the profile and prestige of later years. Long before Brandeis legitimized it, Masliansky held to the belief that any American who was a lover of freedom, liberty, and equality would be, by definition, a Zionist.

As a result of his devotion to their welfare and because he was a symbol of the very best of their abandoned world, Masliansky became a leader among the immigrant masses in America. He was not, however, a leader in the community, as were men like Louis Marshall, Jacob Schiff, Judah Magnes, and others of that ilk. Masliansky was not a builder of great institutions, nor was he a maker of great events. He was never a part of the political power structure in any communal organization, and, even in his beloved Zionist organizations, he was never seen as more than an honored parent.

He was, nonetheless, a leader. In the minds of thousands upon thousands of immigrants who heard him speak--who understood his message of hope and pride--he was a dominant figure. So potent was his influence that the

Uptown Jews came to respect his unique skill. Realizing how dramatically his words held sway over the immigrants who came to hear him, the Jewish establishment engaged him to help them reach their communal goals. He did so in the belief he was serving his immigrant audiences and improving their lives.

In a certain sense, he was a token representative of Eastern European Jewry on the boards of the organizations run by the Uptown Jews. He worked for them and supported their projects at the Educational Alliance, in "The Jewish World", and to a certain extent in the Zionist organizations. Yet he was convinced that he was helping his people by working with this power elite. He saw himself as a conduit through which Uptown and Downtown Jewry could communicate. Moreover, he was respected by the Jewish establishment because of his devotion to his people, his unrepachable integrity, and his masterful oratorical talent.

Masliansky's liberal-mindedness and adeptness in diplomacy enabled him to be more than a mere servant to the power structure's design. In his work with men like Louis Marshall and Isidor Straus, he was able to give insight into the mind of the immigrant. His own impressive skill convinced many of them that the Yiddish world did in fact have a value. Consequently, this Yiddish orator was able to dignify the immigrant in the mind of these leaders.

Although Masliansky associated with the Uptown Jews, he never lost credibility among the masses. He was admired as one of their own, and respected for his devotion and skill. He had a tremendous commitment to the Jewish people as a whole, and he was able to cooperate with co-religionists of different ideological persuasions for what he considered to be the good of all his people. He disliked Jewish factions and he continually struggled to find Jewish areas of common ground. Although Masliansky was a religious Zionist, he preferred to associate with the Federation of American Zionists instead of the organization of the religious Zionists, The United Zionists. For twenty-eight years he spoke in Yiddish at the Educational Alliance, defending Zionism and heightening Jewish identity in a place which saw itself as a center for the Americanization of the immigrant. The staff of Masliansky's Yiddish paper, "The Jewish World", consisted of men who advocated contradicting philosophies. Furthermore, Masliansky saw to it that the paper advocated Zionism despite his silent partner Louis Marshall's known opposition to that movement. Masliansky was a man who could compromise and be flexible in his goals. Yet he was admired by associates as a man of tolerance and commitment.

Not the least important of his numerous accomplishments were Masliansky's various literary contributions. In addition to his publication of "The Jewish World" and his numerous

articles in the Yiddish and Hebrew press, his Yiddish and Hebrew memoirs remain as a unique witness to: 1) Jewish life in America around the turn of the century, 2) the early history of the Hibbat Zion movement in Russia and America, and 3) life in the Yishuv during the 1920's. Moreover, his memoirs contain fascinating details concerning the personalities of hundreds of Jews who were active in the Hovevei Zion in Russia, the Yiddish-speaking community throughout the United States, and the early years of the Yishuv. There is a paucity of such documents in the English language, and translations of these memoirs should contribute significantly to the primary sources available from that period (cf., Appendix).

However, of all the various organizations and events in which Masliansky participated, his greatest impact was to come from his Yiddish eloquence. Week after week he spoke to immigrant audiences who filled the auditorium at the Educational Alliance. In an introduction to his translation of Masliansky's Yiddish sermons, Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman described those audiences as

"...simple folk, largely recent immigrants, many of them unacquainted with the new environment and life. They are mostly people possessing no scholastic education."<sup>1</sup>

Masliansky's son-in-law, Harold Weinberg, wrote Feldman

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1. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Sermons (English), New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1960, p. XII.

prior to the book's publication to ask Feldman if he would consider not using a phrase such as, "mostly people possessing no scholastic education". Weinberg pointed out that Masliansky liked to think that he had also attracted "thinkers and young theological students".<sup>2</sup>

When the book was published, the sentence appeared just as Feldman wrote it. Henry Fleischman, superintendent of the Educational Alliance, assured Feldman that he was correct; no thinkers and young theological students heard Masliansky.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps Feldman and Fleischman were too harsh in their characterization of Masliansky's following, for Feldman was one who frequented the Educational Alliance as a boy. In fact, many of the great leaders of the succeeding generation who were children of immigrants, once sat entranced by the great orator: Abba Hillel Silver, Barnett Brickner, Max Arzt, and others.<sup>4</sup> Masliansky's elocution inspired vast numbers of immigrants and their children. Most never achieved fame for themselves, but nonetheless they were aware of the inspiration they received from the "Matif

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2. Harold Weinberg to Abraham J. Feldman, 3 June 1926, A. J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.

3. Henry Fleischman to Abraham J. Feldman, 8 June 1926, A. J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.

4. Abraham J. Feldman to Henry Fleischman, 26 December 1920, A. J. Feldman Collection, AJAr.  
 of., Barnett R. Brickner to Masliansky Family, 26 January 1943, Zvi Hirsch Masliansky Collection, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, New York.

Leumi". They carried his image of Jewish life with them always.<sup>5</sup>

In the final analysis, it was his role as the "People's Preacher" which stands out as Masliansky's unique contribution to the generation in which he lived. As an advocate of the national ideal, Masliansky transcended the role of the old-world "maggid". In America, the preacher used his talent to become an advocate for the immigrant masses. His words made them laugh and cry, and offered them a sense of stability and continuity in an environment which was new and alienating. His loyalty to their welfare made a generation of listeners cling to his words for reassurance. It was his regular appearances as the "People's Preacher" which enabled Masliansky to contribute to the Zionist movement, the Yiddish and Hebrew press, and countless community endeavors.

In comparison to the impact of many great builders and movers of events within the American Jewish experience, Masliansky's role unquestionably remains on the periphery. In terms of the impact he had upon the immigrant generation of 1900-1920, his influence was great indeed. Stephen S. Wise concluded quite fairly that no estimate can convey

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5. Jack Luria, The Last Maggid: Z.H. Masliansky, "The Jewish Horizon", April, 1959, p. 7-8.  
 cf., Charles Angoff, Memoirs of Boston, "The Menorah Journal", Valedictory Issue, 1962, pp. 138-139.  
 cf., Louis Lipsky, Memoirs in Profile, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1975, pp. 237-242.

the love which a whole generation of American Jewry felt for Masliansky.<sup>6</sup> He helped them to bridge the two worlds between which they stood. In doing so, Masliansky improved the lives of his contemporaries, and this is perhaps the greatest tribute history can possibly offer.

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6. Stephen S. Wise, Dr. Wise on Masliansky, "Free Synagogue Weekly Bulletin", January 20, 1943, p. 4.



APPENDIX

## AMERICA

### (Chapter 33)

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New York in the year 1895 was nothing like New York today.<sup>1</sup> Then, the population was one-fourth that of today. The Jewish population was 300,000. Brooklyn was a city unto itself. The Bronx didn't even exist; 125th Street was the outer boundary of Uptown. Along the boulevards, horse-drawn wagons moved slowly, accompanied by the voices of the dragmen and the hissing of whips as they snapped on the backs of indifferent horses. This was before the time of the automobile. The streets were lighted by the meagre light of gas lamps. Only Broadway merited electric street lamps. Elevated trains were pulled along the heights of the boulevards by little engines whose shrieking grated on the ear, and whose exhaust smoke blackened the faces of the passengers.

New York and Brooklyn were two separate cities: two governments, two mayors, two police departments, and two separate elections every year. Only one bridge--the old "Brooklyn Bridge"--connected the two cities. There were no subways or tunnels. When a man living in Brooklyn wanted

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\* Pagination corresponds to The Hebrew Publishing Company's 1929 Edition of Masliansky's Memoirs.

to see his friend who lived in New York, he had to take a ferry across the river. Traveling between New York and Brooklyn was, in all respects, like traveling between two separate cities.

20        Only one thing united and connected these two cities. This is the very thing which unites all humankind of different types and backgrounds; that which levels great and small, rich and poor, master and slave--Death. All of the cemeteries were (and still are) in Brooklyn. When a man would recommend to his friend that he abandon his apartment in crowded New York for one in spacious Brooklyn, his friend would inevitably reply: "I am still young, my time to move to Brooklyn will not come until my life's end!"

28        The beautiful suburbs of Brooklyn (such as Brownsville, East New York, Borough Park, Bensonhurst, and so forth) did not yet exist. Large swamps, abandoned fields, barren rocks, dry hills and dales, here and there a wooden house rickety and dilapidated, sheep-herds and billy-goats--these were the beginnings of these great and wealthy suburbs which would eventually contain secure homes for the hundreds of thousands of Jews. These dwellings turned a dry and desolate land into a large and thriving metropolis.

4        My brother and my eldest son were there to welcome me when I descended from the ship, and they brought me to their home in Brooklyn. On the following day, I traveled by ferry to New York in order to see the Jewish neighborhood: East

Broadway and neighboring streets. I immediately found myself in my own element. I heard the sounds of Yiddish ring out and I saw the signs written in Yiddish over all the stores on the two main avenues: Canal and Grand.

11 Most especially, the word "Kosher" on the windows of the butcher shops and restaurants caught my eye. In fact, it was on that very day that I ate for the first time in my life in a "Kosher" restaurant where the word "Kosher" gleamed above it in big and clear letters. I had never seen such a thing in Berdichev, in Vilna, or in any other part of the Diaspora. In fact, if a Jew in Vilna saw the word "Kosher" over a Jewish butcher shop or restaurant, he would ask in amazement, "What does this mean?"<sup>2</sup>—"Could it possibly occur to a Jew to sell non-Kosher food?"

19 It was not for nothing that, thirty years ago, East Broadway was called by the Russian name "East Brodeskaya Ulyitzah".<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the Russian language was quite predominant; spoken by the Jews who immigrated from Russia. The intelligentsia (which consisted mainly of doctors, lawyers, and former students) all spoke Russian, and were committed to Russian Nihilism<sup>4</sup> and socialism. Yiddish had not yet achieved the status of a language with a modern literature of its own as it is today. The Yiddish newspapers--the oldest one of them "The Tageblat" and its weekly magazine, the "Yidishe Gazeten"; "The Herald" with its weekly magazine, the "Folksadvokat"; the socialist paper "Abendblatt" and the

"Arbeiter Zeitung"--were the intellectual fare of the Jews living throughout the United States. Their combined circulation did not equal that of even a small paper in our own day. There were no books or literature to speak of. Veteran readers would sustain themselves by purchasing copies of the penny paperback novels which were published week in and week out. These journals included: "The Court Intrigues of the Royal Households of Tzars and Kings"; "Eugenie, Empress of France"; and "Catherine II and her love, Potemkin".<sup>5</sup> It is no surprise that the Russian Intellectuals of East Broadway would have nothing to do with these journals, and year after year they clung to Russian literature until they absorbed the American spirit, its language and its literature. It was not easy for them to part from the giants of Russian literature: Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevski. Consequently, a small colony of the Russian Intelligentsia was formed in the Jewish neighborhood of East Broadway and the surrounding area.

9 My first visit was with the publisher of "The Tageblatt", Mr. Kasriel Hersch Sarasohn<sup>6</sup>. He greeted me most graciously, as though he had known me for quite some time.

"I have known you, sir, for years", he told me, "I know of your work in Russia and in Western Europe. Proof of this fact", he continued, "is that my paper carried full coverage of your move from London to America. We welcome you here warmly."

Sarasohn's words lifted my spirits greatly upon my arrival in this new land. Sarasohn was a warm and sympathetic man. He was a typical example of a man at peace with himself. He would receive everyone cordially; his house was open to all. He introduced me to his sons: Ezekiel and Abraham Chaim; and his son-in-law, Leon Kamaiky<sup>7</sup>. Together we entered the staff room where Johann Paley<sup>8</sup>, the paper's editor, and his associates greeted me warmly.

22 On the following morning, when I entered the editorial office of "The Tageblatt", I was shown an article ready to go to print. This article was a warm and glowing account of my work and my background. The article was entitled: "Reverend Doctor Masliansky." With my fingers, I blocked out the word "Doctor" from the type-set line. The writers and the typesetters looked at each other in astonishment! How odd it seemed to them that a man would seek to diminish his own title...

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1 "Gentlemen", I said to them, "why do you crown me with a title of which I am not worthy? I have no right to be called by the name 'Doctor'."

"Your words, sir, indicate", they chided me, "what a 'greenhorn' you are! You clearly know nothing of the local customs! Almost every day we grant the title 'Doctor' to someone, and they retain this title their life long. Some are even named 'Reverend Doctor'. This, too, is an honorary title conferred upon them by the newspapers, and no one

would dare to challenge it..."

8        Indeed, had I known then what deceitful acts are done in America under the title "Reverend", I surely would have removed this title from the article written about me as well. Alas, that which has passed cannot be salvaged. I have retained this title, for it has stayed with me (without my consent) throughout all of my life.

12        Dr. Moses Mintz<sup>9</sup>, one of the "Biluim"<sup>10</sup> and a seasoned orator for the Hovevei Zion<sup>11</sup>, published at that time a periodical called "Der Recorder". He stood by my side and helped me immensely in his pro-nationalist periodical.

(Chapter 34)

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1        The newspapers announced that on Shabbat, July 13, in the afternoon, I would give my first address in the Bet Ha-Midrash Ha-Gadol.<sup>12</sup> The subject: Peace Across the Sea.

3        That Friday eve, I went to the Bet Ha-Midrash Ha-Gadol to pray. The Chazzan and his choir sang the prayers beautifully. However, I was astounded by an announcement made by the "Shammash"<sup>13</sup>, the likes of which I had never heard in all my life. Before the "Alenu" prayer, the "Shammash" hit a gavel on a leather pad and declared in a strange voice: "No one say Kaddish--Jahrzeit!"<sup>14</sup>

9        I was shocked to hear this peculiar announcement, and I didn't know what to make of it. Why shouldn't a man say Kaddish? What is all this talk about Jahrzeit here? Who

was this person who had a Jahrzeit? And if he had a Jahrzeit, why shouldn't he say Kaddish?

13 All of my questions were answered completely by one of my countrymen, an elderly and distinguished man:

"This is an American custom. You will not find it anywhere else. Truly, "business" is first and foremost here, and the "business spirit" fills all institutions; the synagogues, the hospitals, and even the cemeteries. After you have been here for awhile, you will come to understand the nature of these things."

"But please explain to me the purpose of the Shammash's announcement! What has "business" to do with Kaddish and why should it not be said?"

"Yes, my friend", the old man chuckled, "the Kaddishes which are not said are a matter of "business" to the synagogues--and especially to the Shammash. The Jews of America do not attend synagogue every single morning and evening. Only a small number, barely a minyan, come to morning and evening services. So who comes to pray? Those who come to services are mourners who have a Jahrzeit and are obligated to say Kaddish. Kaddish and Jahrzeit are the mainstay of the synagogues of America--even of the Reform temples. Death-related customs cast a pall of fear over the living; they are more scrupulous about them than about the whole Torah from beginning to end! During the twelve months of mourning, every mourner serves as a source of revenue for



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the synagogue and the Shammash. Yet the most important source of revenue comes from those who have a Jahrzeit and come to the synagogue once or twice a year. They pay the synagogue generously for an "Aliyah", and to the "Shammash" for the remembrance prayer. When the person who has a Jahrzeit comes to the synagogue, the Shammash silences the voices of all the mourners, and the privilege of saying Kaddish is given only to the one who has a Jahrzeit. Now then, my "greenhorn" countryman asks, 'What is the purpose of the Shammash's announcement, and what have unsaid Kaddish prayers to do with business?' The longer you will be in America, the more you will come to understand how important death is in sustaining and supporting all American Judaism. Surely you have heard of the big "fraternal orders" and of their lodges, that count the number of their members in the

10 hundreds of thousands. These institutions are beneficial, and a great deal of good would come from them to the Jewish people generally, if only they had some Judaism in them!

12 Unfortunately, they are great in quantity only, not in quality. They, too, thrive on death and the customs pertaining to it: such as burial plots, cemeteries, tombstones, grave enclosures, and Shiva money<sup>15</sup>. These are the life's blood of such organizations."

16

As I walked out of the Bet Ha-Midrash Ha-Gadol with this wise and good fellow countryman by my side, I was shocked by what my eyes beheld: Outside, in front of the

entrance to the Bet Ha-Midrash, was a group of young Jewish boys selling Jewish newspapers. The boys, half-naked and barefooted, scrambled among those departing from the Bet Ha-Midrash, yelling merrily in childish glee: "Two papers for a penny!"

21 Passersby and some of those leaving the Bet Ha-Midrash bought papers unabashedly, while from within the Bet Ha-Midrash the echoes of the Chazzan's voice singing, "The Children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath...", could still be heard.

24 Early on Shabbat afternoon, at the appointed time, I went to deliver my first address in the Bet Ha-Midrash Ha-Gadol. When I arrived at the corner of Grand and Norfolk Streets, where the Bet Ha-Midrash was located, a literal wall of humanity stood before me and I was not able to go another step further. A huge crowd of people, young and old, men and women, stood crowded together and pushing toward the entrance of the Bet Ha-Midrash. This crowd reminded me of a Shabbat during Hanukkah in London, when I spoke at the new synagogue there<sup>16</sup>. In New York, as in London, the police had to escort me into the synagogue.

A feeling of admiration and respect for America and her institutions came over me as a result of my contact with the police. At that moment, I was reminded of my relationship with the police of Russia, who interrupted my speeches and threw me out of synagogues in Odessa, Kishinev, Lodz, etc.,

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with savage cruelty. Tears of joy flowed from my eyes when I felt the difference between the police of New York and the gendarmes of Kishinev. The latter, wild beasts full of hateful vengeance, expelled me from the synagogue. The former, in kindness, consideration, and respect, escorted me into a synagogue. Light and darkness, slavery and freedom--what a huge distance there is between them! And my lips whispered, "Blessed are you, America, and blessed is your freedom."

7

With a great deal of effort and labor, I ascended to the speakers' platform. My eyes swept over the audience packed into the Bet Ha-Midrash from wall to wall--including the balcony. A feeling of inspiration came over me. I read on their faces that they were expecting to hear something new; something extraordinary. There was intense silence despite the gigantic size of the crowd. Four thousand eyes were fixed upon me. A sensation passed through me like a bolt of electricity, and my spirit leaped even higher than what I usually feel when I ascend to the platform. Note how remarkable this was! For many years, I had been accustomed to vast audiences in synagogues and auditoriums in different cities and lands. Yet, never did I feel so exalted as when I gave my first oration in America at the Bet Ha-Midrash Ha-Gadol.

18

At that moment, I felt as if a new chapter in my life was beginning. I felt that America, which had already served as a refuge for 250,000 Jews, would become in the future a

sanctuary and bountiful homeland for millions of our brethren who wandered about Europe in their huddled masses. It seemed to me that my first address would give me the ability to put  
 23 an end to my own wanderings. My heart prophesized to me that here, in this great city of New York, I would be able to make my home. Truly, I had found a new field of endeavor. It was an abandoned and forsaken field, without any order or central authority, without spirit, knowledge, or will. The immigrants coming to this country from different lands-- speaking different tongues, and feeling different emotions-- were like the dead spirits in Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones.

30 In a mighty voice that shook me to the depths of my being, I began my first address with a quote from the ancient rabbis: "When one sees a multitude of Israel, one should say: 'Blessed be the One who knows the secrets of the universe'. When one sees a multitude of idol worshipers, one should say: 'Shame on your mother, your progenitor has violated (her trust).'"<sup>17</sup> This profound rabbinic saying served as a framework within which I could depict different  
 39. pictures of Jewish life in the Diaspora. I spoke for more  
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 1 than two hours, and within that time I brought the listeners to many emotions--from tears to laughter, from sorrow to joy.

3 When I had concluded, the audience expressed its satisfaction by offering me their heartfelt congratulations. Many people hugged and kissed me, and shook my hand in sincere gratitude and affection.

6       At that moment, I felt that my destiny was set: I would settle in America. I would be a free man and I would no longer be persecuted by cruel authorities. From now on I would no longer need to speak obliquely. My tongue was no longer chained, it was free to speak as it pleased, and not at the pleasure of others.

10       The next morning, both the Jewish newspapers and the general press (even the "Deutscher Staats Zeitung" and the "New York World") carried laudatory articles on my talent. Not long after, I was invited to other cities to speak in public. The first city I went to was Baltimore. I was brought there by a well-established Hovevei Zion group which had been in that city for quite some time.<sup>18</sup>

15       I was not in a hurry to leave New York. I wanted to understand the nature and character of my new life in this new country. I spoke scores of times in several large synagogues, such as the synagogue on Eldridge Street<sup>19</sup>, the Sons of Kalwarie Synagogue<sup>20</sup>, and so forth.

19       On every street that I walked, I was distracted by the large signs with the word "Kosher" over every eating establishment, and the words "Friend of the Worker"<sup>21</sup> over every saloon. Master of the Universe! Ten measures of Kashruth and "Friend of the Worker" were granted to the world. New York took nine measures, and that left the rest of the world with one measure!<sup>22</sup>

## (Chapter 35)

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While I was still living in Russia, I read in the Hebrew newspapers, "Ha-Zefirah"<sup>23</sup> and "Ha-Meliz"<sup>24</sup>, about the magnificent reception given to the first Chief Rabbi to be appointed head of the Orthodox community in New York by the people of that city. The venerable teacher and master, Rabbi Jacob Joseph from the city of Vilna, was renowned throughout the "Lithuanian Diaspora" as a brilliant Halachist, and as a talented homiletical artist. The people referred to him by the loving nickname: Rabbi Yankelch, the "sharp-witted".<sup>25</sup> It was not at all easy for the New York followers to induce Rabbi Jacob Joseph to come to the new community in distant America and leave his prestigious position in Vilna--"The Jerusalem of Lithuania"!<sup>26</sup> A reception fit for a king was bestowed upon him as he descended from his ship. The most influential and powerful members of the synagogues and the communities were on hand to welcome him. Hundreds of carriages (this was before the automobile's era) and thousands upon thousands of people accompanied him to the apartment which was prepared for him and his household. Hundreds kissed his coat-tails. With tears of joy, they carried him from his carriage to his apartment on their shoulders. Of course, not everyone was permitted to see him and greet him personally. Legends began to be formed about his greatness in Torah and his wisdom. The "Chief Rabbi's" reception was

given in American style; with loud shouting, deafening announcements, and so much noise that even the non-Jews began to be interested in the new "Chief Rabbi"! Before long, the English press was carrying articles in praise of him.

21 Yet, like every sensational movement--which begins with a roar and concludes with a whimper--such was the tragic fate of the "Chief Rabbi". The rabbi's splendor soon was tarnished. Newspapers began to speak of him derisively. Suddenly, it became apparent that all "the holy beasts" which rose before him "in a great tumult" had only sought their own self-aggrandizement and self-interest. Their purpose had really not so much to do with the rabbi as with the business of Kashrut. It was not his great wisdom and knowledge of Torah that they wanted, but rather his authority to decide that which was Kosher and that which was not. The gnawing question, "Who will feed us (Kosher) meat?"<sup>27</sup> exploded like a great storm. Stamps of approval and Kashrut permits declaring: "This has been approved by the Chief Rabbi" appeared in the windows of butcher shops and slaughter houses of New York's East Side community. Even today, twenty years after the "Chief Rabbi's" resignation, it is possible to still find these signs of approval on some of the windows of stores selling Kosher merchandise.

3 The Chief Rabbi was shocked by the scandalmongering which abused his good name. Yet he recognized his error--

the error he made when he exchanged Vilna for New York! In  
 5 his heart he began to comprehend the disgraceful deeds of  
 his closest associates. He began to understand and sense  
 what was happening, but it was already too late. He could  
 no longer help himself. His great heart burst, and one by  
 one his limbs became paralyzed.

8 It was in this tragic state that I found him--lying in  
 his bed, abandoned and lonely. When I introduced myself to  
 him, he sat up in his bed and hugged and kissed me. He  
 looked at me, and I saw that his eyes were full of tears.  
 His tragic stare conveyed his thoughts without even a word  
 being spoken: "Woe is me, that you should find me in this  
 condition!"

12 At that moment, one of the sayings of our great rabbis  
 flashed through my mind: "How does a great scholar appear  
 to an ignorant man? At the beginning, he is like a golden  
 bowl. If one converses with him, he becomes like a silver  
 bowl. If one benefits from him, he becomes like a clay bowl.  
 When it is broken, it can never be repaired."<sup>28</sup> This was  
 exactly what happened to the "Chief Rabbi". The "great"  
 leaders of New York made the Rabbi a "broken vessel". The  
 rabbi lay depressed and ill on his bed, and his household  
 lived a life of sorrow and poverty.

19 I was neither silent nor inactive. I did everything I  
 possibly could do. In my addresses, I made the community  
 aware of the sick rabbi's tragic plight. In addition, I



attended several meetings of community leaders from the East Side to see that everything possible was done to grant relief to the scholar.

23 In one of my addresses, I cited the ancient rabbinic statement: "(How dull-witted are those) people who rise [in deference] to the Torah Scroll, but fail to do so before a great man."<sup>29</sup> "You honor the Torah Scroll, you give much money to the synagogues, but you have no concern for a great man of the household of Israel!"

28 The last days of the "Chief Rabbi" were both painful and tragic. The worst time of all was the day of his death, and his funeral which followed. His funeral was, in effect, a national calamity--a disgrace to our people--like anti-Semitic pogroms in the land of the free--America.

32 On Wednesday, the 24 Ab, 1902, headlines in big letters appeared in the newspapers: "The Chief Rabbi Has Gone To His Eternal Reward"; "The Great One Is Gone" and "Rabbi Jacob Joseph Is No Longer With Us". Immediately the news spread throughout the city. Hundreds of thousands from New York and the surrounding cities flocked to the East Side to the "Chief Rabbi's" apartment, in order to offer last respects to the late master, and to fulfill the ancient proverb: "Speak well of the dead".<sup>30</sup> The streets were filled with people. One giant body of humanity just stood--no one moved.

6 "Men! Jews!"--my heart cried out from within--"Where were you yesterday; the day before; last month; last year?

Where were you when this rabbi needed your help? Had even one of you come to his aid, you wouldn't be crowding together now at the dead one's funeral."

10       The police had quite a job keeping order among the participants, and helping to make way for the bier and for the hundreds of carriages in the procession. A large group of students from the Talmud Torah and their teachers marched in front of the bier chanting Psalms. The procession, with its thousands of participants, wound its way down East Broadway to Grand Street. Everyone marched with heads bent in silent mourning.

16       Suddenly, when the procession arrived at the Hoe Factory, where hundreds of German laborers worked, a deluge of rocks began to fall upon the casket and the people accompanying it. Like in an earthquake, pieces of wood and clods of mud were being flung from the factory's windows. The crowd raged like an angry sea, it shattered hundreds of window panes in the factory. The crowd attacked the factory, breaking its doors. A bloody fight broke out between the Jewish crowd and the Gentile factory workers. Many injuries were sustained on both sides, and finally the police interceded. They arrested those who were guilty, and calmed the crowd's anger. The funeral procession continued upon its way to the Grand Street Ferry, which would take them to Brooklyn.

26       Hundreds of thousands of people filled the cemetery. In deathly silence and in total respect, the pallbearers

lowered the coffin into the grave. The entire crowd cried bitterly throughout the eulogies, deeply touched by the words. I was one of the eulogizers.

30        Once again, my heart cried out from within me: "Where were all of you when this great man was still with us, alive and suffering?"

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I found Hebrew education in New York to be in a state of confusion and disarray at the close of the nineteenth century. The number of Jews living in New York had reached a quarter of a million, and there were no Hebrew Schools! There were only two Talmud Torah Schools in existence: "Machzike Talmud Torah"<sup>31</sup> on East Broadway; and a second one, smaller than the first, Uptown. The combined number of students attending both of these schools was about 1,000.

7        The executive board of the "Education Committee", as it were, invited me to visit the Talmud Torah School on East Broadway. The instructors were very learned, about half of them were Maskilim<sup>32</sup>, and quite proficient in the Hebrew Bible and in Hebrew Grammar. A few knew some Talmud, however they had no systematic form of scholarship. The director was an elderly gentleman who knew the German language perfectly. He was an expert on Mendelsohn's work on the Torah, and he was careful to see that the German language

constituted at least fifty percent of the instruction. This, too, was the style of the newspapers at that time. No one knew nor wanted to know pure Yiddish. I felt sympathy for the young Jews of America, for they carried the burden of having to know three languages. Until three o'clock in the afternoon, the young Jew had to learn in grammar school the national tongue: English. From four o'clock until eight o'clock in the evening, he was afflicted with two foreign languages: Hebrew and German, simultaneously. If the teachers would translate the Hebrew for them into Yiddish (the Yiddish that they heard in their parent's home), they would be able to comprehend. Yet, using German to teach American Jews--this was total idiocy.

24 I examined the pupils most carefully, and indeed I discovered that they could read the "Ivri"<sup>33</sup> perfectly, according to the laws of grammar. The director watched over the teachers--and they, in turn, over the students so that they would not fail (Heaven forbid) in their language, and confuse a shevah.nahwith a shevah nach, nor a weak dagesh with a strong one.<sup>34</sup> Laws of accent were observed scrupulously. It was this hair-splitting grammatical precision that was loaded upon the pupils' minds, and stole hour after hour from them day after day. When I asked the pupils about the content of that which they were reading, that they might relate for me a story from the Torah, they responded mechanically--half in corrupted German. They did not know what they were saying.

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How far this stress on proper pronunciation and grammatical precision was pursued can be demonstrated by this fact which deserves mention. It happened that four Jewish scholars, renown in Hebrew literature, each in his own specific field of study, were not able to meet the standards of this school and failed to qualify as teachers in that Talmud Torah on the grounds of their incompetence in Hebrew. The director and the "Educational Committee" had never heard of these Hebraists, and they flunked them for not being able to read correctly. The first of these four was the scholar Sossnitz<sup>35</sup>, who failed on account of a short vowel; the scholar and author Dobsevage<sup>36</sup> failed on account of a strong dagesh; the Hebrew poet Menachem M. Dolitzki<sup>37</sup> was "tripped up" by accentuated and unaccentuated syllables; and, finally (this is so absurd one doesn't know whether to laugh or cry), the brilliant grammarian Moses Reicherson<sup>38</sup> failed on account of the sheva nach!

11 This is what is known in the language of Kabbalah as "Ketanut D'Mohin"<sup>39</sup>.

When this disgraceful event became known to the Hebrew community, the directors in the Uptown Talmud Torah corrected the misdeed and appointed two of the top scholars to be instructors at the school: Sossnitz and Reicherson.

15 Where were the tens of thousands of Jewish children of New York educated? Who taught this new generation? There were only two Talmud Torah schools, and Hebrew day schools

did not exist at all. Old fashioned "cheders" were few in number. Yet, in spite of all this, these young Jews learned Torah. The system of the past was completely transformed: students did not go to the Torah, but rather the Torah came to them! It came to their homes. Old and frail men right off the boat from across the ocean, men who no longer had the strength to peddle their wares from door to door, earned a living by "peddling" Torah. Armed with a prayerbook and a bible under their arm, they walked from street to street, begging at every door. They lingered in each house for fifteen-twenty minutes in order to teach a child or two to read a little Hebrew, or to translate a verse from the bible. Then they were off to another home to teach their "Torah" to other children. This "Torah" cost twenty-five or fifty cents a week.

28

It was easy to imagine how much progress was attained by a child who attended public school and then suddenly fell into the hands of an old, feeble Jew who spoke a mixture of Yiddish and Hebrew, neither of which he understood. The child was dumbfounded. He was fearful of his teacher, and he had no idea what this strange old Jew was talking about, or what he wanted from him. After the child became accustomed to him, he mocked both his teacher and his teacher's "Torah".

The story is told about one of these peddler-teachers, who sat in a certain home on Henry Street at noontime one day, at the time when the children returned from school. He would

impart his knowledge to his pupil in one of the rooms in the house. Suddenly, the boy's father heard the melamed's voice cry out, "Gevalt--Save Me!" The man opened the door of the room and was stunned by what he saw: Benny, his darling son, was grasping his teacher's beard and pulling it with his strong hands.

"My son!", the father rebuked him, "What are you doing? Let go!"

The boy was crying bitterly and answered: "Believe me, father, he hit me first!"

11 At this time, every Jew who had not lost his concern for and attachment to his people and his religion was sickened over the degenerate state of Hebrew education. A concerned Jew was thoroughly amazed when he heard and saw what went on at the various youth "meetings" which were held in the halls and gathering places. This was the destructive period of the well-known dances and balls held on Yom Kippur. It was an insult and disgrace against heaven, and a hateful war against faith and tradition. Fiery orators derided heaven and profaned everything holy with blasphemous and contemptible slogans--in speeches and in writing. One of the free radical newspapers printed every Sabbath a column of articles attacking the chastity of the matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. These articles were full of venom, contained preposterous dialectics, and supported radical nonsense!

It was this sort of befouled pool which the left-wing

radicals thought to be an "intellectual fountain" from which the masses would come to drink!

25        One Sabbath afternoon, I was sitting with Bucanski (also known by the pen name, Ben-Porath), the editor of "The Herald" and the "Folksadvokat"<sup>40</sup> in those days, and the poet Isaac Rabinowitz (pen name: Ish-Kovno<sup>41</sup>), who was full of enthusiasm, devotion, and a burning love for Jews and Jewish tradition. Bucanski was not a sentimentalist, yet he was a man who was knowledgeable, intelligent, and well-versed in several literatures. We sat together engaged in conversation. Suddenly a bell rang, the door opened, and two young people came into the house.

32        "Which one of you is the Orator Masliansky?", the two asked, brazen-faced.

33        "I am he", I responded. "Who wants to know?"

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1        "We have been sent by the Socialist Party. We have brought you a letter, sir. Look at it, and give us your response!"

3        The letter and the address were written in red ink. It was an invitation for me to come and debate in public with one of the socialist speakers, on God and nationality. There would be an admission charge, and the profit would go to the winner of the debate. The signature at the bottom of the note was: B.P.<sup>42</sup>

7        This silly letter made a bad impression on us. Bucanski began to tease the two messengers. With his unruly beard and the clothing he wore, he appeared to be just an ordinary man.



10 "Tell me, boys", he asked the two in affected innocence,  
 "What is Socialism? Explain it to me, and I will be a member  
 of your party."

12 The two youths grinned broadly, as if to say, "How could  
you possibly become a socialist? You will be a "believer"  
 until your dying day!" However, Bucanski would not let them  
 be. He continued to speak innocently; words which to them  
 were like the jabs of a sword. Ultimately, they began to  
 recognize that he knew and understood more than they.

16 Suddenly, one of them spotted a magazine lying on the  
 table with a picture of Bucanski above the caption: "The  
 editor of the "Daily Herald"." He showed the picture to his  
 comrade, and the two promptly departed without waiting for  
 my response! The debate, of course, never took place.

### (Chapter 37)

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1

Baltimore was the first of the many cities to invite  
 me to come and speak. A Hovevei Zion group<sup>43</sup>, young people  
 full of devotion and enthusiasm for the ideal of Jewish  
 nationalism, welcomed me at the railway station. Among the  
 members of this group were: Reuben Aaronson, the President<sup>44</sup>;  
 P.F. Mirvis (Aaronson's brother-in-law)<sup>45</sup>; Dr. Fox<sup>46</sup>;  
 Horowitz<sup>47</sup>; and Senior Abel<sup>48</sup>.

5

I immediately felt as if I was in my natural element,  
 among comrades. It was hard to believe that I was in America,  
 for the spirit of national fervor was every bit as strong as

it was in Vilna or in Bialystok. I visited a number of public institutions, including many synagogues and their rabbis. Everywhere there was a real spirit of Judaism; of its hallowed tradition and its finest principles. Pious Jews like the Friedenwald family<sup>49</sup>, the Levy family<sup>50</sup>, Rabbi Dr. Schaffer<sup>51</sup>, Mr. Tanhum Silberman<sup>52</sup>, and others like them rivaled even the Jews of Vilna. Great learning and civilized ways prevailed among the Jews of Baltimore. Thus, it was not without good cause that I referred to that city at the end of the 1890's as the "Bialystok of America."

15 Dr. Benjamin Szold, who was the father of the great Zionist Henrietta Szold, was a wonderful man<sup>53</sup>. In this rabbi, I found learning, wisdom, a humble spirit, and a fine heart. I deeply enjoyed the conversations we had during the Sabbath I spent with him. He was, at that time, in the process of writing his commentary on the Book of Job. He was an old man, but young in spirit. His heart was filled with love for the Jewish people and the Jewish tradition.

20 His wife and his charming daughters were also like him. They all lived lives like those lived by the Jewish patriarchs. They loved their people and, in turn, their people loved them.

22 An interesting episode took place in Baltimore on Yom Kippur in the year 1895<sup>54</sup>. I was staying at the home of Mr. Aaron Aaronson<sup>55</sup>, the father of Reuben, who was the

president of the Hovevei Zion group. Mr. Aaronson was a middle-aged man of great learning who had a good heart and a temperate spirit. He was a simple, God-fearing man, yet never hypocritical or fanatical.

27 I came to New York from Russia--a country in which censorship reigned supreme. When I found in America a free Yiddish press, I devoured it eagerly. I especially read books on economics, including the socialist journal "Die Zukunft"<sup>56</sup>, which had also published a Yiddish translation of Karl Marx's Das Kapital.

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1

Upon returning from the synagogue on the evening of Yom Kippur, I was extremely tired from having spoken at Kol Nidre services. I retired to my room at once. Reb Aaron sat down at the dining room table and glanced at a book by the light of the Yom Kippur candle. My briefcase was lying open on the chair not far from the table. "Die Zukunft" was laying on top. My door was slightly ajar, and, lo and behold, I saw Reb Aaron get up from his seat, go over to the books, and take the copy of "Die Zukunft" to scrutinize. Apparently, he had never seen such books in the Yiddish language. He paged through the journal, and then his eyes fell upon Karl Marx's Das Kapital. He did not put the copy of "Die Zukunft" down, but he returned to his seat and skimmed through the journal. After a few seconds had passed, I suddenly heard the beautifully melodious voice of Reb Aaron chanting the article, just as he might chant a page of the

Gemara! He sang in a whisper, and yet his face testified to the tremendous pleasure he was receiving from the journal. He lifted up his head, wiped his hand on his wrinkled forehead, and whispered to himself, saying: "Excellent! Words of wisdom! This author deserves much praise!"

16 I was absolutely delighted with this marvelous psychological phenomena: a learned, God-fearing man was thirstily drinking in the words of Karl Marx without knowing anything about who Marx was! I felt better, for I was concerned what Reb Aaron's reaction might be upon finding a copy of "Die Zukunft" in the briefcase belonging to the "National Preacher"<sup>57</sup> who had just spoken at his synagogue on Kol Nidre. Who knows what kind of an impression this would make on this wise and pious student of Torah?

23 Reb Aaron sat and studied diligently the burning and complicated questions of the relationship between capital and labor until he had completed the entire article.

25 Everything came out all right. Yet, the devil ultimately had his way, for next to the article on Marx there was published an offensive and foolish article called "What is Yom Kippur?" This article was written by "B.P."<sup>58</sup>. This was a blasphemous, crude piece designed to insult those Jews who were religious.

28 As Reb Aaron began to read the article his face became red. He got up from his seat in a rage and threw "Die Zukunft" to the floor, letting out a great cry as if a snake

had bitten him. I practically jumped out of my skin when I saw this sight! I tossed and turned all night, sleeping very little. I said to myself: "Would that you were here, radical writers, as it were, socialist orators who consider the war against God and the besmirching of our religion--to be education of the people!" If you had only seen as I did the distress felt by this pious, learned, good-hearted man when, while innocently taking in the sophisticated words of Karl Marx, he was stung and hurt terribly by that poisonous article. Had you seen and considered all this, then you would truly understand how to bring knowledge to our people. For then you would know that economic wisdom does not necessitate the profanation of religion and degrading all that is holy. Our great prophets of old bitterly reproached those who oppressed and exploited others, and they did so in the name of God. With the fire of our holy religion, they fought on behalf of the downtrodden and the oppressed. And they fought the battle for the poor at the gate...

Fortunately, the episode had a happy ending. When I arose the next morning, I expected to be harshly chastized by Reb Aaron on account of the "befouled" item he found in my briefcase. Yet I did not receive even a drop of chastisement. He greeted me warmly the next morning, as he had formerly. This was truly a tolerant man.

Baltimore and I derived pleasure from one another: The people of Baltimore were happy to hear the language for which

they had been yearning for some time. As for me, I was delighted to speak before an audience which listened and understood. My efforts were put to good use as well, for the number of Hovevei Zion groups grew handsomely, and the Talmud Torah schools were strengthened. The national fervor continued to flourish among the city's young people, and the demand for Hebrew teachers increased as well.

19 I spent a lovely evening with these exceptional people of Baltimore. They thanked me with a beautiful scroll written in Hebrew. I left Baltimore with a soaring spirit. My next stop was Chicago.

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1

New, great, uncultivated, and primitive--these words describe how I found the second largest metropolis in the United States--the "Queen of the West"<sup>59</sup>--Chicago in 1895. Although Chicago was larger than New York territorially, the city's population was less than half that of New York. The city's boulevards and public parks were carefully planned. The homes were large and spacious, yet their exteriors had no aesthetic quality. Disorder reigned, and the city had a small town flavor. The city's most beautiful and largest street--"Michigan Avenue"--was stretched along Lake Michigan. This street was similar to "Riverside Drive" in New York. The other streets were not properly paved, and they were engulfed in darkness in the nighttime. The city had great

suburbs with only a few homes in them. Every day the newspapers reported the city's robberies and murders, as if it were a savage city in Asia. Even the police could not be sure about the safety of their lives when they were on duty in the city's remote areas. The reason for the unordered and unruly state of affairs dated back to the city's beginnings as a major metropolis. The city began to grow rapidly above and beyond its means, and consequently this disrupted the city's organization as well as its citizens' wellbeing. At that time, Chicago was already the intersection of America's railroads--from East and West.

- 17        The financial situation of the city's 10,000 Jews was very strong. Most of them came here from Russia as a result of the pogroms of the 1880's; when Alexander II was assassinated by the anarchists, and Alexander III--the enemy of the Jewish people--ascended the throne. Interior Minister Count Ignatyev<sup>60</sup> promulgated the infamous "May Laws" which completely upset the living situations of tens of thousands of Jews, and left them with no other choice but to pick up their walking sticks and wander the great distance to America. In Chicago, a number of these unfortunate wanderers found some peace. Their talents in business and commerce helped them to fortify their positions (financially), and within but a few years they had built for themselves congregations with large synagogues, Talmud Torah Schools for their children, and "lodges" in various fraternal orders. I was happy

to be with my brothers-in-exile, who had just been exiled from my gloomy birthplace: Russia. In no time at all, they had settled themselves in a new metropolis. They had rabbis, cantors, the entire array of religious officiants, and even a "Hebrew Literary Society"<sup>61</sup>, at whose helm stood the learned journalist, Peter Wiernik<sup>62</sup>, one of the editors of the "Courier"<sup>63</sup> in its day. Hebraists in Chicago! It was like finding "grapes in a desert!"<sup>64</sup> I expressed my total amazement in these very words from the prophet in my first sermon in the synagogue of Russian Jews.

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1 The senior rabbi in Chicago was Rabbi Abraham J.G. Lesser<sup>65</sup>. He was at that time well into his sixties, yet he was vigorous, clever, energetic, and tolerant. I spent many hours with this rabbi, and he helped me sow the idea of "national rebirth" in the virgin soil of modern Chicago.

7 "I sought, and I found"<sup>66</sup>. I found many businessmen who were truly knowledgeable Jews. They kept the traditions of their forefathers; were observant in their homes; gave their children a Jewish education; kept the Sabbath and holidays; and supported Jewish charities. Where did this all take place? In primitive and uncivilized Chicago! I still remember some of the names of these people: Shulman<sup>67</sup> and Kaplan<sup>68</sup>, who were the parents of the Zionist leadership --founders of a Zionist "Fraternal Order" named: "The Heroes of Zion"<sup>69</sup>. There were the Horwich brothers<sup>70</sup>, one of whom was a Zionist orator, and the other who was an energetic



Zionist worker. Mr. Nathan<sup>71</sup>, a wealthy Jew who was tremendously generous and kind-hearted, gave generously to many worthy causes, and took a special interest in the welfare of widows and orphans. He founded the orphanage in Chicago which was named after him: Nathan's Orphanage<sup>72</sup>.

18        This generous man's end was truly a tragedy, and it should be recorded here for posterity.

20        His lovely and good-hearted wife was a philanthropist as well. Although they were childless, they adopted several of their relatives' children and raised them as their very own. They were both honorable and virtuous people. Their home was open to all, especially those who were unfortunate and downtrodden. In particular, they couldn't do enough for orphans and the elderly. For the former, they built a home, and for the latter, they contributed generously to the "Orthodox Jewish Home for the Aged". They lived quiet and humble lives, loving other people and being loved by them in return. They raised their adopted children and married them off. During the many decades in which I frequently visited Chicago, I would always ask about this wonderful couple.

30        Then, ten years passed and I did not return to Chicago. A few years ago, I was asked back to Chicago to speak on behalf of the Federation of Welfare Funds. I asked my childhood friend, S. B. Komaiko<sup>73</sup>, one of Chicago's communal leaders, to come with me to visit the different charity

organizations in the city so that I would be able to speak  
about them and emphasize whatever might be appropriate.

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1 We visited Nathan's Orphanage, and I left there feeling  
content. While we were leaving, I remembered about this  
lovely couple who were the founders of this institution.

3 "How are those two angels disguised as human beings who  
built this great institution?", I asked my companion.

5 "You don't know what happened to them?", Komaiko re-  
sponded with an additional question and was silent.

7 "What happened to them?", I asked sternly.

8 "My friend, the horrible and tragic end which befell  
them should never befall us. Mr. Nathan died a few years  
ago, and his unfortunate wife--just a minute and you will  
see her."

11 We entered the Home for the Elderly<sup>74</sup>. On the first  
floor, in a small clean room, I found the widow Nathan still  
lovely, but in a pitiful condition. She recognized me  
immediately, got up from her seat, and with a sad smile she  
asked: "How are you, my friend from long ago?"

15 I didn't respond. I was not able to respond. My voice  
was choked up with tears. She perceived this, and, placing  
her hand lightly on my shoulder, she uttered these sage and  
18 dignified words of wisdom: "I am surprised at you, Mr.  
Masliansky, for a man the likes of you--who preaches to our  
people, strengthening their spirit and encouraging them to  
live, hope, and struggle--to be overcome with tears. What

happened? You found me in my widowhood, in a home for the aged. I have it good here. I have a room to myself, and I lack nothing. I am better off than many of my other women friends who are old and poor and who have found refuge in this home. Their present is as bitter as their past. It is dark and gloomy without a ray of light. This is not the case with me. Indeed, I am now a widow, poor and lonely, yet my past was a rich one--full of brightness. Here are some pictures on the walls of my small room. Here is a picture of my dear husband, may his soul rest in peace, and here is a picture of the orphanage which we established together. These are my large silver candlesticks which I still keep with me. I light them every Sabbath. It is true that my husband has passed away, and our estate was swallowed up by evil men who fed us lies and deceit. However, I have not yet lost my courage. I am still alive, and I have found shelter in this institution which my husband and I supported financially. Blessed be the Lord, who has not withheld his mercy from upon me."

33

We stood staring astonishedly at one another, amazed by the majestic spirit of this great and noble woman.

(Chapter 39)

I had never encountered Reform Judaism at first hand. I had certainly heard about it, but I had never seen it. I had read a great deal about the Reform movement in the

previous century, especially the history of the movement's founders: Holdheim<sup>75</sup>, Geiger<sup>76</sup>, Einhorn<sup>77</sup>, and the like. I devoted myself to understanding the controversy which split the Jewish camp at the beginning of the movement's growth. I wanted to comprehend the arguments supporting the movement, as well as those against it. I knew of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's battle, which he fought with all of his heart and soul<sup>78</sup>. In the 1880's, the great author Peretz Smolenskin waged war against the "scholars", as they were dubbed in the "Ha-Shahar"<sup>79</sup>. I knew about all of this very well. Yet, hearing and reading about something does not compare with seeing it first hand! There is quite a difference between theory and practice. One must never judge anything on the basis of rumor alone.

12 In Chicago, I had the opportunity to see Reform Judaism first hand. I met its Rabbis; seeing them in their work and in their pulpits. I looked through their "prayer books", and I heard the organ music which accompanied the choir of female voices. I must admit the truth: all of these things, which glitter like lightning externally, made a horrible impression on me. There are gloomy Temples, where no one comes to pray. Their rabbis are learned, but there is no sense of Torah about them. They have "prayer books", but there is no praying. There is music, but without any Jewish flavor. They are Jews, who exist without Judaism. Mention of Zion and Jerusalem has been removed from the prayer service which is

said ninety-nine percent in English and one percent in Hebrew. The Hebrew which remains miraculously in this emasculated prayer book is strange and foreign to the eyes of the congregants; the majority of whom cannot even recognize a Hebrew letter. Hebrew writing for these people might as well be Chinese or Japanese. The "Shema" and the "Kedusha" are not said by the congregation, but instead chanted by operatic voices of Christian women with accompaniment of the organ. As if the translated prayerbook were not reduced and simplified enough, the rabbi must announce each and every prayer to the congregation: "Please turn to page such and such!" There is a chill (the likes of which remind one of Siberia) which prevails in these shrines at the hour of worship.

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1 There is no warmth, no outpouring of soul, no spark of prayer directed to a living God, no hint of emotion even in the prayers of the reader--only a deafening chill: frigid, apathetic, and dead, from beginning to end.

3 The reader can well imagine for himself how I felt when I went for the first time in my life to Sabbath services in a synagogue on Sunday! The name of the synagogue was "Sinai"<sup>80</sup>, just like the mountain on which the Law of Moses was given, and upon which God's presence graciously settled to give the Shabbat as an everlasting treasure. "Sinai" Congregation is closed to the public on the Shabbat.

8

What a great disgrace and terrible pain it was to see a four thousand year old faith knowingly committing suicide,

and selling its soul with flattering dances before her straying daughter, who suckled her breasts and then bit its very nipple until blood flowed. The blood is still flowing...

13       Great Heaven! How perverse it is to change the Sabbath to Sunday. What fool can not understand that work comes before rest. A man who is tired from work must rest. Therefore God has commanded us: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all of thy work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath."<sup>81</sup> But to rest in order to work--this is totally absurd.

18       This thing spoke for itself! Such a travesty could be nothing but a deliberate act of rebellion on the part of a rebellious daughter. "You, mother, commanded me to rest on the seventh day; but I, just to be spiteful, will rest on Sunday." To this very day there are hundreds of thousands of Christians who cannot bear the strange notion of placing their rest before their work, and they observe the Sabbath day. And here, in Chicago, Congregation Sinai switched the Sabbath day to Sunday!

25       These ideas both confounded and pained me when I saw for the first time "the second day of Sabbath celebrated in the Exile"<sup>82</sup>.

27       After services in the "Temple", I was privileged to meet the learned and well-known Reform Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch<sup>83</sup>. At that time, he was young, very handsome, and a vigorous man. He was also a fine scholar and an excellent speaker. He was very learned Jewishly: An expert on the Bible, he

understood Talmud, and spoke Hebrew fluently. We spoke to one another in Hebrew. Hirsch was a clever man who loved a good joke. It was these excellent qualities which even deepened my feelings of animosity toward the Reform movement, and the Reformers.

34 "What did you think, sir, of our services, our Temple,  
pg. and our prayerbook?", Hirsch asked me. "I believe that this  
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1 is your first visit to a Reform Temple. Tell me the absolute  
truth, what was your impression of it?"

3 "My good Doctor", I responded, "this is a very difficult  
question to ask me. As a human being I am obliged to tell  
you the truth, but as a sociable being I cannot do so. I am  
your guest, and common courtesy is more important than even  
the Torah itself. My impressions are still new to me. I  
have not had time yet to consider all of their implications.  
This is the very first time I have seen this type of Judaism,  
and I simply cannot pass judgement on it now. Just one thing,  
my good Doctor, will I permit myself to say to you. I truly  
hope that when I say this, you will forgive me."

11 "Speak everything that is in your heart. Speak, and I  
shall listen.", is how this Reform Rabbi answered in the  
most serious manner.

13 "Today, while visiting your Temple, I came to realize  
that I have been totally desecrating the Sabbath, and you,  
sir, observe the Sabbath according to the way it was divinely  
ordained. I do my work on the Sabbath. In fact, I do more

work on the Sabbath than on the other days of the week. Yet you, my good sir, close Temple Sinai on the Sabbath, and only open it on Sunday!"

18 Dr. Hirsch chuckled. He understood what I was saying.

19 Afterwards, during the ensuing years, Dr. Hirsch and I crossed paths several times on the speaking platform, and I began to understand him better. He was a superb speaker, and in his articles in his English periodical, "The Reform Advocate"<sup>84</sup>, showed that his writing skill was equal to his oratory. Yet he had one shortcoming in both his speaking and his writing: He was not at all consistent in his opinions. He never gave two speeches, nor did he write two articles, that were similar in spirit and principle, one to the other. It was truly impossible to grasp that a single speaker uttered them or a single author penned them. On one day he would be holding forth from his pulpit against the nationalists and the Zionists in a bitter tirade, and the following week he sang the praises of the Zionist ideology and enthused about Nationalist sentiments as though he was a complete supporter of Herzl and Nordau.

30 There was at that time a very diligent journalist in Chicago. It was his desire to make life difficult by pointing out the incongruities in Hirsch's positions. Week after week, he would attack Hirsch by pointing out the contradiction in Hirsch's own words. He was the veteran Zionist and outstanding journalist, Mr. Leon Zolotkoff<sup>85</sup>. It



was delightful to read Zolotkoff's polemical articles against Dr. Hirsch.

35 I also met Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal<sup>86</sup> while I was in  
pg. Chicago. Felsenthal was the rabbi of a more conservative  
185 Reform congregation, and we quickly became friends. He was  
1 a learned scholar, a disciple of Reform's founders while  
remaining religiously observant. He observed the Sabbath  
most completely. Like most of the elderly German rabbis who  
had come to America at that time, Felsenthal was a learned  
gentleman and he spoke German from his pulpit. Dr. Benjamin  
Szold, Dr. Gustav Gottheil<sup>87</sup>, and Dr. Kohler<sup>88</sup> were all rem-  
nants of that "old school". Dr. Felsenthal wrote and spoke  
eloquent Hebrew. He was also a financial supporter of poor  
students of Torah, who were swept into America during the  
massive European influx. He wrote me many letters about  
the difficult conditions endured by Wolf Schur, editor of  
the "Pisgah"<sup>89</sup>.

11 I was thoroughly delighted to meet Professor George  
Selikovitch<sup>90</sup>. His good name was indelibly inscribed in my  
memory from the day that "Ha-Meliz" published his "Travel  
Glimpses" when he was the official translator for the  
English Army in Egypt. His articles were written in a new  
style of Hebrew which made a major impression upon the  
literature. Later on, they printed several of his impor-  
tant articles in S. P. Rabinowitz's "Keneset Yisrael"<sup>91</sup>.  
Shortly thereafter he dropped out of sight. Suddenly I

located him in America's Mid-West, where he was the editor of a Yiddish newspaper. At that time, I thought this was a debasement of Hebrew. Nonetheless, we became fast friends.

20 My friends in Chicago gave me a wonderful going-away party. The "Hebrew Literary Society"<sup>92</sup> played a considerable part in this affair. At the end of the affair, a beautiful Hebrew scroll was presented to me by the President of the organization, Peter Wiernik, and by his Vice President, B. Horwich<sup>93</sup>.

They all accompanied me to the train station.

#### (Chapter 40)

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1

From Chicago, I traveled to Cleveland. The Jews of Cleveland gave me a very warm reception. I was received by Mr. Berman<sup>94</sup>, the ritual slaughterer. Berman was a clever and distinguished Jew, and the father-in-law of Burstein<sup>95</sup> and Biskind<sup>96</sup>, two well-known physicians in Cleveland. I also met wealthy Mr. Brudno<sup>97</sup>, and Mr. Joshua Rucker, editor of "The Jewish World"<sup>98</sup>, a clever and accomplished Jew who was born in Hungary but got along very well with the Lithuanian Jews. The Maskil Mr. Laufman<sup>99</sup>, along with several others, were on hand to greet me, and for two straight months they were constantly with me during my stay in Cleveland.

8

The first night, several congregational presidents came to me and invited me to speak to their congregations. Every single one of them came to me, saying: "I am Mr. So & So,

president of the Russian Synagogue", or "I am Mr. So & So, president of the Lithuanian Synagogue", "...the Polish Synagogue", "...the Hungarian Synagogue", "...the Hungarian Synagogue that split off from the first one", etc.

- 13 "My good sirs!" I turned to them and asked the very same question I asked the Jews of London, England: "Who is the president of the Jewish Synagogue?"<sup>100</sup> I am shocked. You people of Cleveland have synagogues for different nationalities, but have you no synagogues for Jews? In this great proliferation of "national" synagogues, we truly see the failure and deviciveness which our long, dark exile has bequeathed us. It has scattered us throughout different countries and amongst different peoples. Over the course of many centuries, we learned their languages, adopted their customs, and even took on their names. And now, even though we have left these dark countries of oppression for the land of freedom, America, and we build our synagogues in a place where there are no restraints upon us, we still insist upon calling them by the names of those oppressive lands from which we escaped! Why on earth do we give foreign names to our synagogues? Why should tiny, poverty-stricken Lithuania matter to us here in a free country? Why should Russia, the
- 14 land of great darkness, matter to us? What does the Polish nobility have to do with our synagogues? Even the Magyars are not worthy of the honor of mentioning them in our synagogues. Good gentlemen, and leaders of our congregations,

have you ever seen names on synagogues such as: Russian Turks, or Turkish Russians; Italian French, or French Italians; English Germans, or German English? Yet we, the Jewish people, the oldest nation of all, have allowed ourselves to disintegrate completely."

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1

"We have Russian Jews, Polish Jews, Lithuanian Jews, Hungarian Jews, German Jews, Turkish Jews, Persian Jews, and Greek Jews, but where are the 'Jewish' Jews? Even in New York and Chicago I was disgusted to hear large and wealthy synagogues calling themselves by the names of little towns in Russia. For example, there is 'The Kalwarie Synagogue', and the 'Marijampole Synagogue'. Do you know, dear friends, the meaning of these names? Calvary is the name of the mountain on which Jesus<sup>101</sup> stood and preached his teachings-- teachings which have absolutely nothing to do with us. So why on earth should an important synagogue go by that name? 'Marijampole' means 'Miriam's city'. However, this does not refer to the Miriam who was the sister of Moses and Aaron; rather it refers to Mary, Jesus' mother, who is in no manner or form a part of our people. Why ever would American Jews living in Chicago wish to call their great synagogue 'Marijampole'?"

14

My guests, the synagogue leaders, listened to my words. Some did not understand what I was saying, others simply stared at one another in amazement: "What does this peculiar Jew want from us? Why doesn't he like the names of our

synagogues?" However, my friend Joshua Rocker, the Hungarian Jew who acted more like a "Litvak"<sup>102</sup>, was there that evening translating for me. He was able to explain what I was talking about quite well, and eventually even the then president of the split-off Hungarian synagogue began to understand my nationalist thoughts and beliefs.

21 The presidents of the congregations drew up a calendar for when and where I would speak. I worked this way in Cleveland for two months. I preached more than twenty times before different groups.

24 Due to me, the concept of national rebirth was firmly established. The Talmud Torah School continued to grow in both quality and quantity. Controversy between the rabbi and the lay leaders subsided.

27 With regard to this matter, it is worthwhile to mention an interesting paradox which I heard come out of this rabbi's mouth during an argument he was having with his laymen who had disagreed with him. While the rabbi was speaking from the pulpit, he said:

30 "Listen to me, Jews of Cleveland. Surely you realize that I am the rabbi of Cleveland, and, in turn, Cleveland is my congregation. If you want to remain here in peace and tranquility, settle yourselves here and become honorable Jews of Cleveland."

"If you are not pleased with me, you are perfectly

welcome to leave Cleveland and go to any other place your heart desires. I am certainly not holding you from doing so against your will. You are all free people in this, "the land of the free...".

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1

I remember one bright morning, when the sun was shining brightly on the white virgin snow. The air was fresh and cold. I was casually walking down the large and beautiful Euclid Boulevard with a fellow townsman. Lovely little villas had been built along the entire length of the street. Suddenly, out of one of these villas ran a small boy, no more than six years of age. The child ran toward us and, stopping with a "good morning" (in English), he asked us, in a voice full of tender excitement, if we would help him have a little "fun". (Fun is a word which needed no translation.) He wanted to know if he could throw two soft little snowballs, which he held in his hand, at us. We agreed. His tiny eyes lit up with joy, and he quickly carried out his mission! He gave us a gracious bow, and in a voice pure as silver, he said, "Thank you!".

11

Ah, where are you, O innocence of childhood! Why must you leave us when we've grown?

12

There was a disgraceful scandal being perpetrated amongst the Jews of Cleveland and, as a result, the whole community was in an uproar. In the large Reform Temple,

Rabbi "G."<sup>103</sup> (a student of the Cincinnati School of Judaism) commanded that the Torah scroll be taken from the Holy Ark, and to replace it with a copy of the English Bible. The Torah scroll was to be hidden<sup>104</sup> in the Temple basement. The rabbi's order was executed, and became a fait accompli. A rumor began to form all around the city about this awful incident. The Temple's shammash, who had been compelled by the rabbi to do his bidding, was eighty-four years old. He was able to remember when this Temple was a synagogue of God-fearing pious Jews. He was now removing the very same Torah scroll which he had carried into the Temple more than sixty years earlier. This terrible act made a frightful impression upon him. His honest old heart was not able to bear the pain and, while he was carrying the Torah down to the basement, he dropped dead from a heart attack.

25 The Orthodox were not the only Jews who were upset at this scandal. Many members of the Reform community, even those in the rabbi's own Temple, were not able to bear this great sin. They reproached the rabbi to his face, but the rabbi stood his ground, saying:

29 "I am the spiritual pastor here, and you are my flock. It is your duty to heed my voice. We are living at the end of the 19th century--we must separate ourselves from that which is antiquated--and move forward."

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1 The rabbi was victorious. The holy Torah scroll was hidden in the basement, and a non-Jewish English Bible was

placed in the ark.

3 In strong words of anger, I stirred the hearts of hundreds of people belonging to Hovevei Zion against this modern Jason.<sup>105</sup> I stirred their hearts with passion for both the Jewish religion and the Jewish nation.

6 My supporters in Cleveland surprised me my last night in their town: Before my departure they made a party for me, and they presented me with a gold coin. The coin was inscribed with an artist's drawing of a shofar<sup>106</sup>, and above the engraving was the phrase: "Lift up thy voice like a horn<sup>107</sup>, Zvi Masliansky".

(Chapter 41)<sup>108</sup>

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In Cincinnati, I found two opposite extremes within the Jewish community. One extreme was a community of God-fearing and observant Jews who belonged to the congregation of Reb Schachne<sup>109</sup>. There were two outstanding rabbis in this community, with study groups in Mishna, Mishnayot, Psalms, and for the "Hayye Adam"<sup>110</sup>. These Jews could be found sitting at long tables and studying Torah between the afternoon and evening services just as is done in Vilna or Berdichev. The other extreme consisted of a stronghold of Reform Judaism. The city was the great home of the Reform establishment: Dr. Isaac M. Wise<sup>111</sup> and his seminary, the Hebrew Union College. The College prepares men for the Reform Rabbinate in America until this day.



10        One of the Reformers in the seminary was Dr. Gotthard Deutsch<sup>112</sup>, the well-known historian. He was a veteran Hebraist as well as a great scholar in Hebrew literature, both ancient and modern. Deutsch visited me at my hotel, and extended to me an invitation (in the name of Dr. Wise) to speak at the College after the Sabbath afternoon service. I was to speak before the faculty and students of the seminary.<sup>113</sup>

15        "But who will understand what I am saying?", I asked Professor Deutsch.

17        "Only a small group of Hebrew speakers", the Professor responded; "some of the instructors and some of the students. We have a few young students who came to this country from Russia. A few of these young people were students in the Yeshivot at Volozhin and Telz, and they know Talmud and Hebrew. They will understand you."

22        I accepted the invitation.

      The two Raisin brothers<sup>114</sup> (both of whom are now Reform Rabbis and Hebrew authors) were students at that time at the College in Cincinnati. They, together with Dr. Judah L. Magnes<sup>115</sup>, came to pick me up at my hotel, and we walked together to the College.

26        These three young students, future rabbis, brought me to the College. On the steps of the entrance, I was met by Dr. Wise and Dr. Deutsch. The venerable Wise greeted me most cordially. He was at that time almost eighty years of

age, but in his agility and his alertness he was like a man of forty. He had a youthful countenance, eyes that sparkled with vitality, and a clear voice. He was a likeable person. Professor Deutsch resembled a patriarch with his grand stature, large head, wide forehead, and a long and full beard.

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The two of them brought me into the College.

1

As we walked up the stairs, Dr. Wise said to me with a twinkle in his eye: "We shall now understand the meaning of the Scripture when it says 'I have made you a prophet to the nations'." <sup>116</sup>

4

"Not so, my good Doctor", I answered, "I am not a prophet, nor are they Gentiles!"

6

"If this be so", interjected Deutsch, "allow me to offer a compromise verse: 'An Ambassador is sent among the nations'." <sup>117</sup>

The hall was full; there were professors, students, and many of my Cincinnati admirers. Afternoon services began with "Ashrei" (Psalm 145), but in English, recited responsively between the reader and the congregation. Everyone prayed bareheaded, with the exception of myself and Dr. Deutsch, who wore headcovering out of respect for me. Deutsch would preside over the gathering for my speech.

13

One of the more senior students took the Torah from the Ark, rolled it to the weekly portion "Vayeshev" <sup>118</sup>, said the blessing prior to reading the Torah, recited the first three verses of the portion in a most dramatic voice,

uttered the blessing after the Torah, lifted the scroll and held it on the platform until the end of the service.

17        Professor Deutsch introduced me to the congregation in eloquent Hebrew. He told them that I was not from the Reform camp, and did not share the same views as they themselves. He told them that I was a "Nationalist Jew" from the Orthodox Nationalists, and that I was a proponent of the new concept of "Hibbat Zion". He told them that he had read a great deal about me in the Jewish newspapers of Europe, that he had heard me speak in a number of Orthodox synagogues, and knew that I was a talented and devoted Jew. He therefore decided (with Dr. Wise's approval) that my words were worthy of being heard by the professors and students at the Hebrew Union College.

26        I spoke Hebrew for about an hour before these strange brethren of mine; strange to me in tongue and in ideology. I spoke slowly so that they might understand my words. The majority did in fact understand. I described to them the lifestyle of millions of their fellow Jews living across the sea in dark, oppressive Russia. I portrayed the great sadness and the great sanctity of the lives of their colleagues studying in yeshivot, practically killing themselves in the study of Torah for its own sake, and not for the sake of a career. These students will not serve the rich congregations, nor have splendid Temples which the American seminary students will enjoy. I went on to explain that I

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had not come to argue with them about matters of faith and religion. I only came to ask one thing of them: the privilege to demand that in their capacity as students in a Jewish Seminary, they increase their knowledge of Torah and the Hebrew language, for these things comprise the essence of Judaism. I asked them to fight with all their might against the vast ignorance which stands to undermine our spiritual and ethical lives. I asked them to always bear in mind that, according to our tradition, "we read the scriptural portion twice, only once in translation".<sup>119</sup> It pained me to find that in the "College" there is only the translation, and almost nothing of the Hebrew text.

6 I gained more courage when I saw on their faces that my last words were understood by almost everyone there. I called out to them:

"Dear brethren, children of Abraham, Moses, and David, disciples of Isaiah, Hillel, and Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai! Do you not sense and perceive as do I the pain and the disgrace of this moment? A Jewish preacher speaks Hebrew to students in a Jewish Seminary, and many do not understand the words. They look at the speaker in astonishment, as though he were speaking a dead tongue: Greek or Latin, and his entire speech is foreign and uncomprehensible to them. Is it not fair to ask that in a Jewish institution such as this, the ringing sounds of our holy tongue should often be heard? Is it not fair to say that young rabbis who go forth

from this institution should at least know the Hebrew language? In Reform Judaism, you have established in your community the concept of 'They have forsaken Me',<sup>120</sup>. At least fulfill the precept of 'They kept my Torah',<sup>121</sup>. Through the strength of the Scriptures you shall succeed in overcoming ignorance, but in a dry translation you shall never restore the soul of the Jewish people, nor will you revive its spirit."

21 I turned to the venerable, learned founder of Reform, Dr. Isaac M. Wise, who was sitting next to me. I said to him:

23 "And now, I will permit myself a few words to our beloved esteemed teacher of Judaism. You should know, my good man, that in a neighboring city in this very state--in Cleveland, Ohio--one of your students, Rabbi "G.", has committed a horrible disgrace which has not only angered and pained my Orthodox brethren, but has bitterly angered Reform Jews who are upright of heart.<sup>122</sup> This former student has committed a Hellenistic abomination. He has removed the Torah scroll--the glory of our sanctuary--from the holy ark and has put it in the basement, replacing it with a copy of the English Bible."

31 With trembling hands and eyes filled with tears, I grasped the Torah Scroll which was laying on the table next to me on my right and I cried out:

"She has been carried forth..."<sup>123</sup> in Cleveland by one

of your distinguished disciples. And the venerable teacher in Cincinnati must confess, saying:

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1       "(You are) more righteous than I"<sup>124</sup>, for he has caused this as a result of his advocacy of radical reform.

3       I saw that two large teardrops filled the good eyes of the elderly gentleman, and I said to him:

"Forgive me, my dear old friend, for my words came from my bleeding heart and it was not my intention--heaven forbid--to cause you insult."

7       Dr. Wise stood up and grasped my hand in friendship; in a silent glance he expressed to me his appreciation.

9       The worship came to an end. Professors and students expressed their deep appreciation to me.

11      At the conclusion of the service, Dr. Wise invited me, along with the Raisin brothers, to visit with him at his home. I eagerly accepted the invitation.

I discovered several books sitting on his desk, including Rambam's "Yad Ha-Hazakah"<sup>125</sup>, "The Kuzari"<sup>126</sup>, and the Bible with Rabbinic commentaries<sup>127</sup>.

17      "I did not expect, my dear young friend", Wise said to me, "that your words would affect me so deeply and lead me to invite you to my house. Look at the books that you see lying on my desk. They are my faithful witnesses that I have yet to be torn from Judaism and its teachings."

21

"God forbid", I responded, "that such a thought should even cross my mind. It is just that horrendous situation

in Cleveland which upsets me so."

"Indeed, my good friend, this is an awful thing. I swear by Heaven that I was sick to my stomach when I heard of this deed perpetrated by my former student. Yet, the responsibility does not rest upon my shoulders; this doctrine comes from "Sinai" in Chicago."<sup>128</sup>

27 Wise suddenly rose from his chair, and with eyes flashing and the voice of a prophet, he declared:

"Kindly walk over to the wall."

He fascinated me with his dramatic tone. I approached the wall.

"Why are you standing here, and not walking further?", he asked me.

"How can I walk any farther," I answered, "the wall is in the way!"

"So it is with my foolish students. They have gone so far out that they've come to a wall. They are banging their heads against the wall, but there is no path before them. They shall return. I don't know if I will be privileged to see this return with my own eyes as I am already old, but you, my good sir, shall surely merit seeing this come to be..."

#### (Chapter 42)

Pittsburgh is the second largest city in the state of Pennsylvania. The city is located in the center of divinely

blessed natural resources with which Pennsylvania is endowed: "black gold"<sup>129</sup>. It is this coal and natural gas which lights the countryside and warms the houses, moves the wheels of industry and the railways.

5       The great scholar Rabbi Israel Lifshitz, author of "Tiferet Yisrael"<sup>130</sup>, mentions in this commentary on the Mishna: "Pittsburgh's mountains in the State of Pennsylvania."

8       It is fascinating to travel on Pennsylvania's train, rails bend about like a "twisted serpent"<sup>131</sup> on the giant mountainsides. From the window of a train car, one gazes out upon deep valleys to see the flames from the natural gas shooting up between the mountains. These flames sparkle like stars. One is likely to think that the train is traveling in the heavens and that the stars are shining from below. It is truly a lovely and spectacular sight.

14       When one enters Pittsburgh, especially as one descends into the city, one is likely to feel as though one is entering a gigantic factory. There are countless chimney stacks standing erect like palm trees, spewing out clouds of thick black smoke which darken the sky and fill the air with soot. One breathes with difficulty, and within a few minutes one sees that one's hands are covered with soot. However, the entire city is not engulfed in this pollution. On the heights of the hills and the cliffs which surround the city, there are beautiful homes and lovely gardens the likes of which



may be found in every beautiful American city. In Pittsburgh, one can see Heaven and Hell, back to back! When standing on the heights which surround the city and looking down into the valley, one sees Hell with its fiery flames and columns of smoke billowing upward. When one stands down in the valley and lifts his eyes upward toward the surrounding hills, one cannot help but to softly whisper the words of the psalmist, "I lift up my eyes to the mountain..."<sup>132</sup>

One looks up toward a veritable Garden of Eden in the fullness of its beauty as it extends all across the mountains of Pittsburgh. Would that the people who live in the heights of this "Garden of Eden" look down and see this Hell and surely take it to heart. It is good if those poor unfortunates who live below, rotting in the fire and filth of "Hell", are able to look upwards and see the lifestyle and the great beauty which exists way up high, for striving and hoping are the very foundations of life.

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I found a pleasant group of respectable businessmen living in Pittsburgh in the year 1895. This group included scholars, intellectuals, and merchants; yet a Jewish spirit animated them all. I found large, beautiful synagogues, I spoke in many of them before congregations which consisted of people from various groups. My words pleased these people. The local "Hovevei Zion" group had grown considerably, the Talmud Torah schools prospered, and the youth began to be attracted to Hebrew and Jewish history.

8       Who could imagine that in this city my reward would have been sorrow and hurt? All of this came to be only because I was a matter of controversy in the Jewish newspapers.

10       One of the radical socialists--a fanatical leftist--attacked me in the socialist paper, "The Abendblatt"<sup>133</sup>. This caused an uproar in the city's Yiddish, Hebrew, and German newspapers. "The Abendblatt" published these insidious lines:

14       "Masliansky the Pest. From Pittsburgh, people have been writing: These past two months our city has been in complete turmoil. Masliansky, the persistent hammer, the constant pounder, the shrewd and agile, etc., has taken the last pennies from the poor, the wretched, and the downtrodden Jews, men and women of this city, in order to fill his own pockets and do honor to himself. He blasphemes our socialist newspapers, insults Karl Marx, curses Lassalle and Engels<sup>134</sup>, threatening the judgement of hell upon radicals--the readers of "Die Zukunft", "The Abendblatt", and the "Arbeiter Zeitung". He blasts socialism and its adherents with his fire and brimstone. Would that we be spared from hypocrites and obscurantists the likes of Masliansky and his cohorts!"

26       When I read these disgusting lies, written in Hebrew letters in the paper, my heart turned sick in my chest. At that time, I had been on the Jewish speaking circuit for

about 15 years, and I had never heard anything but encouragement and praise from the Jewish newspapers. Suddenly, I found myself being denounced with crude lies in a newspaper which had thousands of innocent readers who believed its words.

31 After taking counsel with my friends, I wrote a letter to the editor of "The Abendblatt". In my letter, I emphasized that I had never fought against the socialist idea or its advocates. I am a disciple of the prophets of Israel - the seers of God: Amos, Isaiah, and Micah, who, in my opinion, were the first great warriors for truth, justice, and the rights of the oppressed.

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1 A week later, my letter was published in "The Abendblatt" with this accompanying note:

2 "We are very sorry that in our article on Pittsburgh we reported things incorrectly. We are most happy to give Mr. Masliansky an opportunity to express himself. We are sure he will realize that an editor is human and not a god, and is as likely to err as any other mortal. We are grateful for your forthright words, Mr. Masliansky."

6 Yet I jumped from the frying pan to the fire. From my socialist "enemies" I was rescued, only to fall into the hands of my supporters! God should protect me from such support.

9 The editors of the two papers belonging to my friend Kasriel Hersch Sarasohn--Gershon Rosenzweig<sup>135</sup>, editor of

"Ha-Ivri"; and Johann Paley, editor of "The Tageblat"--were both very close friends. However, there is no "friendship" in the newspaper business. The little note in which I expressed my point-of-view to "The Abendblatt" gave these two men a perfect opportunity to turn the whole matter into a major controversy. They consequently caused me a great deal of anguish, which I know they had not really intended to do.

15       The learned editor of "Ha-Ivri" published the following question:

"Friend or foe?"<sup>136</sup> In letters to the Editor column of "The Abendblatt", the socialist organ of our city, I saw a letter which was written by Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, the National Preacher, praising the socialist ideology and claiming that he supports many socialist ideals, although he is not an adherent of the philosophy. Since I believe that Nationalism and Socialism are two mutually exclusive ideologies, I would like to ask Mr. Masliansky to respond to this question for all of the readers of "Ha-Ivri": "Are you one of us, or are you a socialist?" Who knows, perhaps he has found a way to reconcile these two ideas that I do not know about!"

26       The great newspaperman Paley wrote the following sarcastic editorial in "The Tageblat":

"There are two people who want to please every political party: President McKinley and Masliansky. There is only one difference between the two: McKinley is too quiet, and

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Masliansky talks too much. We realize that Masliansky is an observant Jew, a nationalist, and a supporter of Hovevei Zion. This he has declared openly. This superb orator travels to many cities and preaches on behalf of religious nationalism and the Zionist idea. We now learn that

1 Masliansky is also a complete socialist. He himself has admitted this to the socialists in a ringing plea of supplication! A socialist and a nationalist?; a believer in Karl Marx and the Shulchan Aruch?; a supporter of revolutionary propaganda and a preacher advocating Zion and immortality of the soul? How can one possibly unite these two extremes?"

6 My two friends hit the mark. Orthodox Jews began to complain, and I immediately felt their pressure. I wrote a strongly worded article for "Ha-Ivri" in which I clarified my position, and after two weeks they once again restored my "Kosher Status". "Ha-Ivri" printed my response. In addition, my good and learned friend, Professor Gotthard Deutsch of Cincinnati, published two articles: one in German in "The Deborah"<sup>137</sup>, and the other in Hebrew in "Ha-Ivri". Deutsch strongly criticized the two editors for allowing journalistic capriciousness to blind them and lead them to senselessly insult one who is a beloved friend.

15 "The Tageblat" printed my response along with the following note:

"Rabbi Masliansky's response satisfies us. His letter in "Ha-Ivri" proves that he is not to be counted among the

socialist ranks. He preaches the prophetic ideal to save the oppressed from the hand of his oppressor, and imagines the agitators on Rutgers Street do the same.<sup>138</sup> Rabbi Masliansky does not comprehend that these people's "Love of the Workers" means lawlessness and destruction of all that is Godly. These people would bring Jew into conflict with Jew, and they would invite a bloody revolution which would result in terrible anarchy. No, this type of socialism is not what a prophet of Israel would preach, and Mr. Masliansky is in no way to be associated with the likes of these. We are very happy that Mr. Masliansky clarified his position. We all know that he counts himself as a steadfast member who stands under "the standard of the Judean camp"<sup>139</sup>."

26 My admirers and supporters in Pittsburgh did a great deal to lighten my sadness and my sorrow during this unusual newspaper controversy. After two months of my spiritual work in that city, they held a wonderful banquet on my behalf. There they gave me a gold coin with an artistic engraving embedded in a silver plate on which there were two apples and the following quotation from scripture: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver"<sup>140</sup>. The idea of this present was suggested by my good friend, the Hebrew instructor, Mr. Moses Rubin<sup>141</sup>.

I returned to New York.

## (Chapter 43)

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After five horrible years wandering throughout Russia and Europe, after constant persecution by the police of oppressive Russia, after imprisonment and the nervous strain that accompanies such an experience, I decided to seek some rest for myself and for my family, which was still in Russia. I wanted to find myself a permanent position to relieve myself from the heavy burden of constantly moving about and to live a "normal life". I had traveled and seen all of the great communities in the United States. Many of these places had desired that I remain with them to serve as rabbi and preacher. Yet, I deeply believed that my place was in New York, for in this modern Alexandria there was plenty of work in the area of nationalism. I knew I would be able to be a benefit to my people and, at the same time, earn my living.

11 However, the question remained: How? Where? With whom?

I visited a number of large synagogues during the week, in order to familiarize myself with their spiritual leaders. I was disgusted with everything I saw. I wrote here that I visited synagogues, but this is not really the truth. It was completely impossible to visit these synagogues during the weekdays because they were closed! Only in the subterranean basements which are called Bet Midrash<sup>142</sup> did a few minyans<sup>143</sup> of mourners gather--those who were commemorating a Jahrzeit, and those who just simply came to recite

the Kaddish (hired to do so on behalf of deceased persons who were not related to them). This group consisted of old people and derelicts who were dependent upon their children. It was before the likes of this group that the rabbi or preacher delivered his daily talk...

22       No! I had made up my mind. This work was not for me. I was not created for this task. I did not come into this world in order to preach dry sermons to a congregation of shades. My spirit was full of life, and I felt compelled to speak about the living, to the living: who cling to life, and desire life...

26       One time I was invited to the home of the president of a large synagogue. The president (a Mr. P.)<sup>144</sup> was sitting in the dining room, dressed in a bathrobe, and contentedly drinking a cup of coffee. The rabbi of the congregation was sitting opposite him, groveling:

"I do hope that you, Mr. President, understand and appreciate my difficult work. Every day I must speak to the congregation. On Shabbat and on Sundays, I must preach publicly. During the rest of the weekdays I teach "En Yaakov"<sup>145</sup> in the Bet Ha-Midrash. My salary is only twenty dollars a week. I have a wife and six children, and my meagre salary is not enough for me to live on. I therefore respectfully ask, Mr. President, that you kindly request a raise of five dollars on my behalf at the meeting of the trustees of the congregation tonight. I and my family will



pray on your behalf."

6       The president calmly sipped his coffee and smiled. He then got up from his place and walked into the adjacent room where a plasterer was redoing his walls. The president brought the plasterer into the room with us, and instead of simply responding to the rabbi's request, he engaged in the following conversation with the plasterer:

"Tell me, young man, how many hours a day do you work?"

"Eight hours", the worker responded.

"What salary do you earn by the week?", the president asked quite pleasantly.

"Twelve dollars a week", answered the plasterer.

"You see this, Rabbi"--the president had turned to the rabbi--"this man works eight hours every day and his salary is only twelve dollars a week, yet he is happy with his lot. Our Rabbi works only an hour or two every day, and his salary is twenty dollars a week. Yet he says that this is insufficient!"

20       The president shot a glance at me to see how I was impressed with his clever response to the rabbi.

Embarrassed and distraught, the rabbi lowered his eyes and did not respond.

24       My blood raged with a mixture of sorrow, anger, and affrontery when I saw how my colleagues and I had declined in this new and free world; how the teaching of Torah had become so degraded that the head of a large congregation

with many hundreds of members would be crude, rude, and dare to compare the holy labor of a rabbi to the menial task of a plasterer. What's more, he was proud of himself! However, I did not blame the president entirely, for he was clearly just an ignorant, shortsighted refugee of Nicholas' army<sup>146</sup>. I blame "the collection of snakes who support him"<sup>147</sup>, the members of the congregation who placed him at the head of their community. The leader is no better than the generation he leads.

33 I left the president's home with a heavy heart--feeling  
pg. embarrassed and disgusted. Deep in thought, I wandered  
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1 through the streets and made up my mind not to accept a position in a synagogue in New York even if they offered to give me all the gold and silver in the world!

2 I strolled around East Broadway, and I arrived at the corner of Jefferson Avenue. I stood there and looked at the great building of the "Hebrew Institute" (which today is called "Education Alliance"), and I sensed almost instinctively that my heart was predicting: here in this place you will labor devotedly for many years!

7 While I was standing and looking at the Institute's building, Dr. Adolf Radin<sup>148</sup>, the rabbi of the People's Synagogue which was a part of the "Hebrew Institute"<sup>149</sup>, asked me how I was doing.

10 "Sir, you don't know me, but I have read much about you. Furthermore, I have had the pleasure of hearing your preaching

at the Bet Ha-Midrash Ha-Gadol. My name is Adolf Radin. I was the preacher in the large Temple in Lodz<sup>150</sup>. Now I am the rabbi of the People's Synagogue at the "Institute". We have founded here an organization called 'The Russian-American Hebrew Association'. On behalf of this organization, I would like to extend to you an invitation to speak."

17 I had heard the name Adolf Radin while I was yet in Lodz, and that he was a learned and superb preacher. I willingly accepted his invitation. This was to be the beginning of my position as a permanent speaker at the "Education Alliance".<sup>151</sup>

21 Dr. Radin was a unique man in and of himself. He was an exceptionally kind individual, and hardly a day went by without Radin performing some act of kindness toward a fellow human being. Many immigrants were literally saved by Radin when they arrived in this country. He helped many find work, and others he aided financially. He was ever-ready to write, speak, and act on behalf of his fellow countrymen coming from across the sea. Radin had only one fault: he was a disciple of the Mendelssohnian enlightenment<sup>152</sup>. He was a supporter of the Reform movement, and was devoted to the German language to the extent that he would preach in German to groups of Russian Jews who did not understand him, and therefore could not appreciate his greatness as a speaker. Radin was the chaplain for the New York prisons. He was a sympathetic father to the prisoners,

and he served as an intermediary between them and their families. He struggled to sweeten the prisoners' bitter lives.

33 One time, at a public forum at Cooper Union<sup>153</sup> on the  
 pg. question of immigration, Dr. Radin rose to the defense of  
 201 the immigrants and, in the presence of government officials,  
 1 thundered: "It is not the immigrants who are the law-  
 breakers and moral offenders, but the idle, disobedient sons  
 of the rich who live on their parents' wealth and corrupt  
 the children of the immigrants." In those days, before the  
 American newspapers had become poisoned with chauvinism and  
 the venom of anti-Semitism, Radin's words echoed in all the  
 papers.

6 Radin and I became devoted friends. We worked together  
 for fourteen years, and we developed a lasting admiration and  
 love for one another. In recent years, I have derived great  
 satisfaction from certain philosophic changes I have dis-  
 cerned in him. After the Kishinev Pogroms (1902), Radin's  
 views changed one after the other. He believed less and less  
 in the philosophy of Reform, and more and more in nationalism.  
 Eventually, he attended a Zionist Congress where he was in-  
 fluenced by the spirit of Dr. Herzl and Dr. Nordau. He became  
 a total Zionist, forming various Zionist organizations and  
 speaking passionately on behalf of Zionism until his dying  
 day in 1909. Thousands of mourners and admirers attended  
 his funeral.

15

I was drawn like a magnet to the "Hebrew Institute". Several times I rented out the hall in order to speak, just for the cost of admission. However, to even think that I would be appointed to be a permanent lecturer on a fixed annual salary--such a thing boggled the mind. The President of the "Hebrew Institute" and the Directors were American through and through, and they abstained from speaking the Yiddish language. The wall signs which publicized the lectures, meetings, and dramatic presentations, did not contain a word of Yiddish. How could I have possibly hoped to be engaged to be a permanent Yiddish speaker? Yet, what the mind cannot conceive of, time will accomplish. Time changes everything; it tears down old monuments and builds new ones, time changes ideas and brings about new points of view. New people come, powerful people, to bring about innovations. Such a man as this was appointed to direct the "Hebrew Institute" and he changed its name to the "Educational Alliance".

## (Chapter 44)

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One of the most gifted immigrants--"(Be heedful [not to neglect]) the children of the poor, for from them Torah goeth forth"<sup>154</sup>--was Dr. David Blaustein<sup>155</sup>, the new Director of the "Educational Alliance". He was dedicated to the institution in heart and soul. He was a nationalist in

spirit. Blaustein was born in Lida (near Vilna), in Poland. There he learned Talmud in various yeshivot until he was eighteen years of age. He then traveled to Germany where he studied history and philosophy from Dr. Feilchenfeld<sup>156</sup>. Due to the fact that he was a native Russian, Blaustein was not granted domicile in Germany, and consequently he came to America in 1886 and went to Harvard University where he completed his studies. However, he could not find satisfaction in science and dead books alone. His heart was drawn to the needs of his fellow immigrants. He threw himself into their world in order to help those more unfortunate than himself to achieve their aspiration of becoming "Americans" while remaining faithful to their people and their traditions. In the year 1896, he was appointed professor of Semitic languages at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

15 While he was a student at Harvard, Blaustein met Jesse Straus<sup>157</sup>, the son of Isidor Straus<sup>158</sup>, the founder and president of the "Educational Alliance". The younger Straus introduced Blaustein to his parents, and he made a good impression upon them. In the year 1898, Dr. Blaustein was appointed to be the Director of the "Educational Alliance". In this organization, Blaustein found ample opportunity to do whatever he wished in order to help the immigrant Jews. It was under his leadership that the institution became a center for Russian Jews, young and old alike. The organization

became a bridge between the Downtown Jews and the Uptown Jews. Or, as I would put it: "those who live below" with those who "live on high".<sup>159</sup>

24 We became acquainted with one another in Boston, and when he arrived in New York, Blaustein invited me to give a series of lectures on Sabbath Eve for two months running. Blaustein had invited the institution's officers to these lectures: the President, Mr. Isidor Straus; and the Board of Directors (including Professor Seligman<sup>160</sup>, Jacob Schiff<sup>161</sup>, Louis Marshall<sup>162</sup>, Samuel Greenbaum<sup>163</sup>, and a few other Uptown German Jews). Not everyone understood my lecture, yet those who did not understood everything! It was sufficient for them to grasp the importance of such lectures for the Jewish public. Though they did not comprehend everything, they saw enough! They saw how the hall filled up an hour before the lecture. They saw how the two streets, East Broadway and Jefferson, were full of people crowded around the hall because there was no more room to enter. Police were needed to maintain order. They saw a crowd of a thousand people standing spellbound, straining both eye and ear to see and to hear, to learn and to understand. They saw that in the space of an hour the mood of the audience changed drastically. One moment the listeners were so sad and gloomy that they were in tears. The next moment their faces were shining with delight. They saw and they felt how the audience looked at me lovingly. Finally, they saw how this very same

hall stood empty--in a mournful mood--during lectures given in English. All of this convinced them that one must speak to a Jewish audience in their own tongue.

11 Mr. Jacob Schiff said warmly one time: "It's amazing. I understand Yiddish with difficulty, but when Mr. Masliansky speaks I understand perfectly by listening to him and by observing the faces of the listeners."

14 Dr. Blaustein perceived the feelings of the officers of the "Educational Alliance". The press lent its support as well. Yet, in order to make sure that their project would succeed, Dr. Blaustein suggested to one of my closest friends, Reverend Philip Yachus<sup>164</sup>--a learned man who was faithfully involved in the welfare of the community, as well as being a first-rate speaker--that it would be helpful if hundreds of my followers would sign a petition addressed to the heads of the institution, asking them to appoint me to be a regular speaker in Yiddish at the "Alliance". My friend did not sit with hands folded, he energetically initiated this idea, and within two weeks he presented the institution's leadership with a petition bearing hundreds of signatures. This document sealed my fate and led to my affiliation with the "Educational Alliance" for over twenty years until this very day. Dr. Blaustein sent a telegram to my home and congratulated me, on behalf of the president and the directors, upon my appointment to be the regular Yiddish speaker at the institution.



26

The president of the "Alliance's" committee on Religion and Culture, Mr. Louis Marshall, invited me over to his home one evening to discuss with him the program of my speeches at the "Alliance". At this time, Mr. Marshall was a young man, yet his name was well-known, not only in New York but throughout the United States. In the general community he was known as a superb lawyer, an expert on constitutional law. The greatest legal minds of the country paid attention to his writings. In Jewish life (he was a loyal Jew), he fought for the rights of Jews. He was a first-rate community servant.

34

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Mr. Marshall greeted me most cordially in his private library. For two hours straight, we sat and discussed the Jewish situation in various countries. He was particularly interested in what I had to tell him about the awful conditions under which Jews lived in Russia. I beheld a great man before me--and, more than this--a great Jew with a big heart, a sharp mind, and knowledgeable about Jewish history and Jewish literature. His knowledge of Hebrew was weak, yet he read Yiddish fluently. He was interested in anything which was written or spoken in Yiddish, and he himself could write and speak in Yiddish if he needed to. I found this great American Jew had a solid personality with the brain of a genius, a good heart, and a poetically sensitive spirit.

8

The program I suggested to Marshall was succinctly put: The "Educational Alliance" had a sacred duty to perform a

two-fold task: (1) In our role as American citizens it is incumbent upon us to help our immigrant brethren become Americans. That is to say, we must ease them from their state of extreme tension due to the pressure of oppressive governments. We must help them shake off the "dust of the Diaspora" so that they may see themselves as free men; citizens of a free country. Thus they can enjoy for themselves the blessings of liberty, and they may live tranquil, beautiful, and fulfilling lives as is due to free people.

(2) In our role as Jews, it is incumbent upon us to protect with all our strength their Jewish souls and their Jewish tradition. Thousands of Jewish martyrs fought and gave up their lives in the lands of the Diaspora for their Jewish heritage. The Jew will never be a faithful American if he abandons his Judaism. Their souls, their ethics, and their standards of justice need no alteration to accommodate to the American spirit since its values are based upon the highest ethical code: The Law of Moses. The souls of Jews from Vilna, Berdichev, and Bialystok are not inferior to the souls of Americans who live in New York or San Francisco. The immigrants do not lack ethics, rather they lack a bit of aesthetics, manners, and knowledge of local customs. The countries from which they came offered them nothing from which to learn! It is our responsibility to Americanize the bodies of the older generation and to "Judaize" the souls of the younger generation. Indeed, this is Elijah's mission:<sup>165</sup>

to turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and the hearts of the sons to the fathers and to unify the two generations.

29 Mr. Marshall expressed his satisfaction with my program. I left him that evening with these words: "In order to prevent any misunderstanding between us, I would like to emphasize this item: The leadership of the "Alliance" has the right to encourage me to speak on certain matters, but they must never tell me what not to say."

34 Mr. Marshall understood me. We left each other in  
pg. friendship, and he wished me luck in my new role. I work  
205 according to this same program to this very day. Further-  
1 more, I have never been censored regarding my pro-Zionist, pro-nationalist, and pro-traditionalist leanings.

3 On the following day, the press offered its congratulations to the "Alliance" and to me. My new position had been officially confirmed and validated!<sup>166</sup>

5 In the name of the "Educational Alliance", I aided the development of all of the great Jewish institutions in New York: various hospitals, sheltering homes, old-age homes, yeshivot, orphan asylums, Talmud Torah schools, synagogues, nursery schools, social welfare organizations, and so forth. I also supported the Congregation Adath Israel through my work. However, as they (the immigrants) grow and develop, they will likewise become Americans, and their ears will be unaccustomed to hearing the Yiddish language. They would then invite former aldermen and the future assemblymen to their annual meetings.<sup>167</sup>

"(The Creator of the fruit of the lips;"...  
He will forgive them all.<sup>168</sup>

(Chapter 45)

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It is generally believed that the written law precedes the oral law. This is an error. Even prior to the giving of the law, there was an oral tradition amongst the children of Israel which was passed from generation to generation, from Abraham to Moses. So, too, were the Mishnaic Laws which the people knew as early as the days of Shamaiyah and Avtalyon. This law developed and expanded until the time it was ordered and set down in writing by Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi.

6

After twenty years of "verbal work", I said: "The time has come for me to begin my 'written work'." In other words, instead of speaking before hundreds of listeners, I decided to publish a newspaper for thousands of readers!<sup>169</sup>

9

No sooner said than done. In the year 1902, I began to publish a large paper in Yiddish and in English entitled "The Jewish World", with the help of my friend Dr. Blaustein. Blaustein served as a liaison between me and those who I was working with from the Downtown area (Israel Wolf<sup>170</sup>, Mr. Brody<sup>171</sup>, and my son-in-law, Philip Turberg<sup>172</sup>) and those from the Uptown area (Louis Marshall, Frederick Stein<sup>173</sup>, and Cyrus Sulzberger<sup>174</sup>), who formed a corporation called "Lebanon Printing Company".

16 Money was no obstacle. We immediately purchased a printing house and the typeset of the socialist newspaper "Abendblatt" on 9 Rutgers Street. We invited the best writers and journalists to be on the staff. Mr. Bucanski ("Ben-Porath") was appointed editor. Bucanski had previously been the editor of the "Herald" and the "Folksadvokat". His assistants were: A. Tannenbaum, Philip Krantz, the poet Morris Rosenfeld, M. Katz, A. Frumkin, the Hebrew poet M. M. Dolitzki, M. D. Hermalin, Ziony, and Z. Kornblit.<sup>175</sup> In addition to these men, each week one of the following would contribute a poem or a short satire: L. Zolotkoff ("Zakoff Gadol"), and the philosophical poet "Yehoash"<sup>176</sup> from Denver. The English section was edited by the renowned scholar Joseph Jacobs<sup>177</sup> along with Jacob de Haas<sup>178</sup>, who was the former secretary of the Zionist organization, and also I. L. Brill<sup>179</sup>, who was at that time the editor of the English section of "The Tageblatt".

29 Mr. Joseph Jacobs was the first to make a scientific census as to the number of Jews living in the United States.

pg. 207 This story was published in "The Jewish World". He proved  
1 that there were, at that time, only 600,000 Jews living in America. His front page stories made a name for him in the English press, and his views were accepted by the papers.

3 "The Jewish World" built a great reputation as a literary newspaper. It had substantial content and it was edited thoughtfully and tastefully. It was the first newspaper to

faithfully and truthfully advocate Zionist ideology at the time of transition from the "Hibbat Zion" movement to the Zionist movement. It was the first newspaper to dedicate (without any remuneration) a special section listing the names of those who donated to the Keren Kayemet Fund. The paper was also the first to publish a translation of Herzl's Altneuland.

9 Two famous authors at that time wrote short stories and novels for the paper: N. M. Shaikevich<sup>180</sup> and M. Seifert<sup>181</sup>. Some of the finest authors from across the sea also contributed short stories (i.e., Berdyczewski<sup>182</sup>, etc.). Our brilliant and significant bibliographical talent, which is invaluable in a daily paper, was my son-in-law, Philip Turberg, who was well-versed in every aspect of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, and blessed with a great critical sense.

15 I am proud to say that "The Jewish World" elevated the estate of the Jewish author by the decent fees which were paid to him, and by the attitude of concern and compassion which existed between the writers and the publishers. This was truly a miracle! We had staff members who contributed to the paper who held radically different viewpoints. There were loyal nationalists, as well as radical leftists who had formerly written for the socialistic "Abendblatt". Each and every staff member maintained different ideas and opposing points-of-view. Nonetheless, when they came together as a staff, an atmosphere of friendship united them together and

they would work faithfully as one staff to complete the task.

24 Typical was the following conversation between two staff members who were unaware that I was listening to them. I was sitting in my office at dusk, working in silence. Almost everyone else had already gone home. Only two leftists, "K" and "P", remained. They sat in the next room and initiated a conversation about me without knowing I was sitting in my office.

29 "Tell me, 'P'", asked "K", "What went on between us and Mr. 'M' (Masliansky), why did we malign him so when we worked for "The Abendblatt"? This is the second year that we've worked closely with him, and we have yet to find fault with him! On the speaker's platform he storms and rages, yet with us on the staff he is soft-spoken, restrained, mild, and good natured. I have never heard him utter a word of condemnation toward anyone!" "True!", Mr. "P" responded, "This is the unfortunate nature of parties and factions: divisions occur along principles. Prejudices become so deeply rooted, and fanaticism so wild, that eventually every member of one party believes that only those who agree with them are human beings. Those who are not a part of their faction are to be excluded from the human race. If they would only try to understand one another, prejudices and foolish exaggeration would disappear to the benefit of our world and the improvement of our lives."

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8        Their discussion had come straight from the heart. These words were said in the spirit of "we are verily guilty".<sup>183</sup>

10        It should be self-evident that "The Jewish World" became involved in the rivalry which existed between the other Jewish newspapers already in existence. These other papers were not pleased to see the new paper's success. Of course, in all forms of business there is rivalry. In every profession one must compete with his colleagues. However, their rivalry is generally not on the surface. Those who are not involved do not sense it. This is not the case with rivalry between newspapers. When a quarrel breaks out between two newspapers, it bursts upon the city's main streets, before the eyes of thousands of people. The journalist does not lack weapons to attack the "enemy" and to defend himself. Journalists "sharpen" their pens and go out to do battle. These "warriors of the pen" wait for the right moment to shoot their arrows, which are at times dipped in poison, at the enemy's camp. When else would they have the opportunity to fight battles and bombard fortresses in front of thousands of onlookers? Perhaps the publishers can control their spirit, but "the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water!"<sup>184</sup> It is very difficult to stop a rushing river which has overflowed its banks. Each and every day the "war" increased in fervor. The number of readers increase in times



of war. The loyal readers of one paper begin to read the other paper, in order to see how the paper will respond to an attack. Unfortunately, it is human nature to derive pleasure from another man's insult and injury. Who knows better how to insult than does a rival newspaper?

29 As a neophyte publisher, who had for over twenty years taken special care not to be offensive in my public speaking, I was very disappointed when fate had brought me to written work in which the pens of colleagues were dipped in poison<sup>185</sup>. Twelve o'clock was a difficult hour for me each day, as I would read the last proofs of our newspaper which was ready to go to press. It was difficult to read the piles of abuse and criticism which were being leveled against my long-time  
pg. 209  
1 friends with whom I had always gotten along well. More than once I erased whole sections, and I changed them. Then I would hear a voice calling: "We must go to press! It's late already!" I would ask my few "soldiers" to go easy, and be more cautious and courteous in their expressions. Yet, I always received the same answer: They would show me a copy of my opponents' papers from the previous day which was overflowing with insult and scorn toward me. I would acquiesce in silence.

7 One time I traveled to Chicago. Upon my return, I found that a terrible scandal had occurred. The poet, "Burning Mountain"<sup>186</sup>, erupted with a blast of indignation toward one of my faithful friends who also published a daily

paper. I was beside myself. I sat alone and sullen in my office until late in the evening.

12 It was 10:00 o'clock in the evening, and I was still sitting alone. Suddenly, the door opened and--lo and behold--there stood Mr. Jacob Saphirstein, publisher of the "Evening Post"<sup>187</sup>. He stood there looking at me, shaking his head and chuckling pleasantly. I was astounded, I couldn't believe that I was really awake and not dreaming.

17 "Please, Mr. Saphirstein, have a seat", I said. "I have no strength to even lift my eyes to look at you, especially after the lambasting you received in columns of the current issue of 'The Jewish World'. Please believe me", I said, "I just now returned from Chicago, and..."

21 He didn't even allow me to finish what I was saying. He hugged me and said to me in his hurried manner:

23 "It seems to me that you are still as green as you were the day you came off the boat! You are sorry about something that is of no consequence! Take it from me, one who is quite experienced in the newspaper business. Yesterday, I enjoyed the 'dunking' you got from my 'Evening Post', and I was ready to get mine in return today in 'The Jewish World'. The entire ugly controversy is, in my estimation, like the verse: 'Let the young men, I pray thee, arise and play before us.'<sup>188</sup> Those who write will surely take this lightly. A good laugh lengthens one's life! When the day is over, its conflicts end with it. When the evening comes, it's

time to have a good time. Let's go out for a bit and take in the evening breeze and clear our dull heads."

32 I left immediately, arm-in-arm with my former "bitter enemy". I learned a great deal from this practical and clever businessman. I learned that innocence does not necessarily bring a blessing. Oftentimes, it is necessary for a man to see life from a different perspective.

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1 Truly, Saphirstein was an interesting character. He was full of strength, vigor, and love-of-life. To a stranger, he appeared to be impatient and irascible. Yet those who knew him closely found him to be very easygoing. He cared about his fellows as much as himself. No wonder that those who worked with him closely loved and respected him like a father. When he died (before his time), they cried and wept bitterly over him. His memory still lives on in the hearts of his friends and associates.

7 "The Jewish World" existed for two and a half years. It did not last a third year. Those who were from "Uptown" and those who were from "Downtown" could not agree on the policy of the paper. Yet, I must also confess that I was partially responsible for the paper's death, in that I was unable to increase the revenue to what was needed for publication.

12

I lost thousands of dollars (not to mention much of my health) on that newspaper. I turned my attention away from the "written work", and returned again to the "oral work".<sup>189</sup>

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"Athens of America"--Boston, Massachusetts--was inscribed in my mind while I was yet in Russia. I was a devoted reader of "Ha-Meliz" and "Ha-Zefirah", and I read the eloquent letters of authors from places outside of Russia. Any time they would mention Boston, they would add the compliment: "Athens of America". In other words, Boston does not belong to the immigrants: the Jews, the Italians, the Polish (all of whose numbers are great there); but to the veteran "Yankees"--the descendants of the Puritans--the Pilgrims who escaped England at a time of oppression. These people crossed the Atlantic Ocean and built a new England. Boston took a leading role and American literature refers to Boston by the name of the capital of ancient Greece: Athens.

12 Boston is the oldest of the American cities. It was the cradle of the American freedom which threw off England's yoke. A row of historical homes still stands in which the fervent colonists gathered at town meetings in order to throw off England's military yoke. One can still hear the echo of the call: "Give me liberty or give me death!"<sup>191</sup> as it pierced through the historic "Faneuil Hall". "Faneuil Hall" was center stage for the first dramatic scenes of the revolution.

19 The historic spirit of old Boston can be sensed in its old homes and in its narrow crooked streets. A stranger

could easily get totally lost! The streets wind around in a circle, meeting one another; "It's end becomes its beginning".<sup>192</sup> It is a symbol of eternity--never ending...

23 I have experienced it myself. One time I was walking to give a speech at a synagogue on Baldwin Place. My hotel was not very far from the synagogue. I left my hotel in order to take a walk for about an hour down the western length of the road. I had no idea where the road led. I said to myself, "I'll walk for about half an hour to get some fresh air, and afterwards I'll head back for the synagogue in order to be there at the set time." While I was walking, I became immersed in my thoughts concerning the content of my speech. Without realizing what I had done, I walked an hour! I was absolutely flabbergasted. I was more than an hour away from the synagogue, and the audience was waiting for me. Punctuality is one of the most important principles of my life. I quickly hailed down a carriage.

pg. (This was before the time of the automobile!)

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"Where to?", the Jewish driver asked me! "To the synagogue on Baldwin Place", I answered. "You appear to be a greenhorn", smiled the driver. "Do you know to what this may be compared? It may be compared to a man who is standing in a river and asks for a little water! You are standing next to the synagogue, and you ask me to take you to it!"

6

I liked the driver's parable. I asked him: "How could this be? I walked an hour without realizing it from the

synagogue, and now I am standing near the synagogue once again!"

8 "Don't be so surprised", the driver answered. "Those early architects who built old Boston had twisted minds and they built twisted roads! If you would walk for another whole hour, you would end up here in the same spot. The road goes around and around!"

12 Boston is very proud of its Harvard College. Harvard is the university of universities, which raised up most of the great Americans--amongst them the great Jewish Americans, such as Louis Brandeis and his friends. Many of them were immigrant children, or students of yeshivot across the ocean. They were geniuses who were steeped in Talmud and Rabbinic lore, and now they were glowing stars in the field of science. At that time (thirty years ago), America did not know about the infectious anti-Semitism which is currently spreading its wings--obscuring the rays of freedom's light--even from its shining shrines of science, like Harvard College and its leaders, who are not ashamed to manifest the anti-Semitism in their hearts.<sup>193</sup> In those early days, Harvard did not distinguish between Jews and non-Jews. Friendship and comradeship reigned amongst the students without distinction of race or religion. When I was honored by a group of Jewish students who asked me to visit the College, I was greeted most cordially by the non-Jews and the professors. The professor of Semitic languages spoke to me in fluent Hebrew!<sup>194</sup>

27      The Jewish neighborhood on Salem and Hanover Streets, and the adjoining roads, formed a unique ghetto, similar to the Jewish ghetto of Amsterdam and Vilna. It was a totally Jewish neighborhood, full of Jewish life. There were large synagogues, outstanding rabbis, and various groups studying Talmud, Mishna, and Psalms. Almost every place of business was closed on Sabbath. In the great synagogue on Baldwin Place<sup>195</sup>, several minyan groups prayed at the same time in different parts of the synagogue. I also found "cheders" with "melammeds" who taught young children--the same type of melammeds found in the old country. The Jewish life in Boston was actually greater, relatively speaking, to the one in New York.

pg.  
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I gave more than twenty speeches in Boston. The community displayed its interest in all aspects of the nationalist movement. Zionist groups, Talmud Torah schools, city-wide institutions (such as the old age home, the orphanage, and the Travelers-Aid Society), all sent their delegations to me to thank me for encouraging them through my speeches. I almost forgot I was in America! I thought for a moment that I was back in one of my beloved home towns, such as Bialystok, Minsk, or Brisk.

10

While in Boston, I was assisted greatly in my work by friends I acquired there: Rabbi Shachor, clever and overflowing with Jewish knowledge<sup>196</sup>; the talented Hebrew and Yiddish author, Mr. S. Freedson (known as "Shafan Ha-Sofer")<sup>197</sup>;

and the industrious community leader, Mr. Zalman Margolies<sup>198</sup> (who later was to become the rabbi of Cleveland). Margolies held an important position in Cleveland. He was an excellent speaker, and was beloved by all those in his city and state. He accomplished a great deal in his short life, and a brilliant future lay before him. Tragically, death cut his life short. May his memory be a blessing. One of my friends was A. S. Waldstein<sup>199</sup>, who was a student at Harvard College as well as an outstanding Hebraist. These, along with many others, were my faithful assistants and comrades every step of the way. They did not only help me in Boston proper, but they traveled with me to neighboring cities, such as Worcester and Providence, which had important communities.

22 I found a devoted friend in that great, thoughtful, generous, learned man--Mr. Baruch Isaac Reinhartz<sup>200</sup>. He is truly what his name proclaims: a pure heart and a pure soul. His home was a meeting place for scholars. No matter what sorrow might befall someone, Reinhartz was there ready to help and to support. He was a brilliant scholar, and steeped in both ancient and modern Hebrew literature. He was one of the most renowned Jews of wealth. He was wise and prosperous, learned in Torah, and a doer of good deeds. He had no equal in Boston.

29 The Boston Maskilim and students formed an organization called "Kerem Yisrael"<sup>201</sup>. This organization was the crowning glory of Boston. All of the members were learned in



Torah. They would gather to hear lectures and speeches on different historical subjects. They would debate different questions in Jewish life. They also helped support their poorer members and institutions that were in need. They would attract young people to their group and attach them to their "vine", which served as a bridge between the generations. Mr. Reinhartz was the president of this organization.

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1 With his upright stature, his leonine head, his full beard (like that of Herzl), Reinhartz was most suitable to be the "vinegrower" of "Kerem Yisrael".

4 I spent two months in Boston. They seemed like only a few days to me, and to my listeners and friends. My day of departure finally came. As was customary, I was asked to deliver my last speech at the Great Synagogue. After my speech, they took me to a large restaurant. I was stunned to see long tables with many sitting around them. At the head table sat the rabbi of Boston, his elegant face full of Jewish charm, Rabbi Moses Zebulun Margolies<sup>202</sup>, who now serves as a rabbi in New York and the head of the Agudath Harabbonim of the United States and Canada<sup>203</sup>. He was surrounded by the city's most outstanding citizens. They greeted me warmly, and I immediately understood that this entire meal, this banquet, was being held in my honor!

## (Chapter 47)

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"Philadelphia" in the ancient Greek means "brotherly love". In our history, we know the name from the days of King Agrippa. The Romans called the city "Rabbath bene Ammon" in Transjordan by the name Philadelphia.<sup>204</sup> I had been in the United States for two years. Several times I passed through Philadelphia--I heard the train conductor call out the name "Philadelphia"--but I never had any desire to visit the city with my bag of "spiritual wares". In those days, Philadelphia did not have the good reputation that it currently enjoys. The number of Jews was very small, and the Jewish institutions were small in quantity and quality. The spiritual state of the Jewish community was pitiful and spiritually weak.

11

By chance, I happened to learn that Philadelphia had a congregation of Russian Jews, and that the congregation's rabbi was young in years, but very great in his wisdom, like one of our older scholars. He had recently come to Philadelphia in order to replace his father-in-law, Rabbi Eleazar Kleinberg<sup>205</sup>, who had been the rabbi of Vilna and was in his later years the rabbi of Philadelphia. I was told that this young rabbi was not only knowledgeable in Torah, but he was also wise, enlightened, and understood life deeply. He knew everything, understood everything, and was involved in everything. My soul yearned for such a rabbi. I knew such rabbis, great and learned, but I left them when I left Russia...

20 When I heard this, I immediately travelled to Philadelphia. I found even more than I had expected in this young rabbi. When we met one another, we established a faithful and devoted friendship between us and our families which continues to this day.

23 Philadelphia is the exact opposite of Boston. Its streets are as straight as on a chessboard: squares up and down. As hard as it is for a stranger to find his way along Boston's twisted, meandering streets and alleyways, that's how easy it is for him to travel around Philadelphia from the first day without losing his way. One who knows the number of the house can find it easily, and without having to ask anyone for assistance. The style of the homes is new and modern. The City Hall of the municipality is a large building which is not the least bit inferior to the great and majestic buildings of Paris and Berlin. Only a few streets are full of life, bustling and noisy like a great metropolis. The rest of Philadelphia is quiet. It is tranquil and silent, as though it were asleep. Therefore, people say: "Philadelphia is asleep". This adds to its charm. Should you want it--you may be in the tumult of a city like New York. Should you want quiet--go down a few blocks from Broad Street and there will be complete tranquility as if in a small town.

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5 Accompanied by my friend, the young Rabbi Levinthal<sup>206</sup> (who did not leave my side the whole time I was in Philadelphia), I visited the Sephardic Rabbi Sabato Morais<sup>207</sup>. I

beheld before me a dignified, saintly old man who was completely devoted to traditional Judaism (according to the pure Sephardic rite). His pride and joy was his Rabbinical Seminary in New York, which he founded.

10 I particularly derived great satisfaction when my friend and I entered the courthouse. My escort did not tell me who the judge was, just that he wanted to show me an American judge presiding over an American court of justice. I carefully looked over the judge, who was dressed in a long robe and seated on a high chair. He had black eyes which were large and bright, and his round head was covered with black curly hair. The black waves flowed over his head in absolute loveliness. A smile was on his lips as he looked penetratingly at the man who was standing before him answering his questions. The sight swept my heart away. In a whisper, I asked Rabbi Levinthal:

"Tell me, is this judge a Jew?"

20 "I was waiting for this question", Rabbi Levinthal answered with a smile. "I said to myself, I will test Masliansky, who came from dark Russia where a Jew is forbidden to be a mailman or a street washer, to see if he can recognize a Jew dressed in a judge's robe, sitting on the bench. Yes, my friend, you recognized him! This judge is a Jew, but not just any Jew. He is a learned and knowledgeable Jew, interested in the needs of the Jewish community,

who learns Gemara and writes in Hebrew; who owns a large Jewish library; who supports many Jewish authors, poor scholars, poets, and writers who are in need of his help. I am sure that in Europe you heard the name of Judge Mayer Sulzberger."<sup>208</sup>

31 "Indeed, rabbi, I have heard about this judge." What a glorious sight it was for me to see, for the first time in my life, a Jewish judge! I wanted to say the "Shehechiyanu" prayer and instead of reciting the words "La Z'man Ha-Zeh" (to this special time), I would have said "La Makom Ha-Zeh" (to this special place).<sup>209</sup> Blessed be the land of the freedom and equality!

35 When court was adjourned, Rabbi Levinthal introduced  
pg. me to Judge Sulzberger. Together we walked to his house  
217  
1 where we discussed Jewish studies. From this time on, Judge Sulzberger was one of my closest friends. We corresponded with each other for quite some time, especially during the period when he generously supported the nationalist Hebrew poet, Naphtali Herz Imber<sup>210</sup>.

4 It was in Philadelphia that I met my good friend, Hebrew author and educator, Mr. Hillel Malachovsky<sup>211</sup>, the son-in-law of the famous author, I. J. Weissberg, of Kiev<sup>212</sup>.

7 One of the most unforgettable times in my life was the hour I spent in the historical "Independence Hall" which stands in all of its majesty and glory in the center of the city. It was in this building that the thirteen colonies

declared their independence and heroically threw off England's yoke. In this historic place stands the "Liberty Bell", which announced to the world the results of the War of Independence and the victory of the courageous soldiers and their commander--George Washington. It was in this hall that the first sacred American document calling for freedom for all was signed by the founders of the greatest republic in the world--The United States of America. This document, the Declaration of Independence, hangs in its original form in this hall until this very day, where it is read with respect by thousands of visitors.

18 I approached the "Liberty Bell". With reverence, I stared at it, and read the translation from the scriptures written upon it: "Proclaim Liberty Throughout the Land"<sup>213</sup>. This holy phrase, a short sentence taken from our ancient Holy Torah, inscribed on this modern "Liberty Bell" barely a hundred years old, stirred within me feelings of national Jewish pride and the sacred sense of "chosenness". For I saw that when the young American nation wanted to grant immortality to its independence, they did not select a phrase from the Moslem Koran or from the Christian New Testament, but from our Ancient Holy Torah. May our future generations of America remember this.<sup>214</sup>

27 In Philadelphia, I am pleased to say, I helped every Jewish institution founded in the last thirty years. "Travelers Welfare", the orphanage, the old age home, Talmud

Torah schools, Sinai Hospital, Synagogues, the Sanitarium for Consumptive Relief, Zionist organizations such as "The Society for Hebrew Literature"<sup>215</sup>--all of these institutions I have assisted. Together with the help of Rabbi Levinthal and community leader Jacob Margolis<sup>216</sup>, I aided in the organization and growth of these institutions that they might become what they are today.

(Chapter 48)

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1

Canada is a little sister to the United States. Like them, Canada stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Although Canada is still subject to England as one of the British colonies, she has a certain independent authority with its own government, and its own Parliament. At one time, part of Canada belonged to France. There was a long war between France and England over Canada, and in the end, England emerged victorious. Within the English army which waged war on Montreal in the year 1724, there were several Sephardic Jews: Emanuel de Cordova, Hananiel Garcia, and Isaac de Miranda. After England's victory, Jews began to settle in Montreal. Among the earliest settlers we find names such as: Lazarus, Davis, Uriel, Orisko, Samuel Jacobs, Simon Levy, Abraham Franks, Fernandez de Fonseca, Joseph Bindona, Levi Solomons, and many others.<sup>217</sup>

14

In the year 1768, the first synagogue was formed in Montreal, named "Shearith Israel". Since the first settlers

in Montreal were emigrants from Spain and Portugal, they followed the traditional rite of Sephardic Jewry.

18. Until the year 1832, the Canadian Jews were deprived of their political rights. In that year, on March 5, the King of England signed the resolution of the Parliament to grant equality to the Jews and guarantee equal rights to all peoples living in Canada.

22. After the terrible oppressions in Russia began in 1882, many Jewish refugees came to Canada and settled in the large cities: Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, and Winnipeg. These Jews brought to these cities Jewish culture as it had been in Russia. A few hundred Jews tried their hand at agriculture with the help of the Baron de Hirsch Fund.<sup>218</sup>

27. When I visited Montreal in the year 1898, I found six thousand Jews living there. These Jews belonged to different congregations according to their country of origin. There was the Spanish Jewish community which belonged to "Shearith Israel", which was established, as I have mentioned, in the year 1768. The German Jewish community belonged to "Shaar Shamayim", which was established in the year 1858. The Russian Jewish community belonged to "Bene Yisrael", which was established in the year 1885. The Roumanian Jewish community belonged to "Beth David", which was established in the year 1888. The Galician Jewish community belonged to "Sharei Tephillah", which was established in the year 1892. The Hevra Kadisha was established in the year 1895.



There was a Bet Midrash Ha-Gadol: a Talmud study group, a fraternity, and a Psalm study group were also founded in 1895. Temple Emanuel was in existence from the year 1882. And so I found that these six thousand immigrants were divided into ten communities with ten congregations!

7 "Montreal" is a French word. In German it would be "Königsberg", and in Hebrew it is the name of our ancient city "Tur Malka" (King's Mountain).<sup>219</sup> Just like the city itself, the roads of the city also have French names. Every road is named after one of the Catholic saints. There is even a "Notre Dame" in Montreal. The ring of the French language is heard everywhere: in meetings, on the street cars, in the Post Office, and in every government institution. A large proportion of the population is French; descendants of the French pioneers who settled in Canada prior to the British. The French which is spoken in Canada is old French, which is different from the new French which is spoken today in France.

17 Since the time I visited France and Belgium, I had not felt the spirit of the Catholic religion as I did in Montreal. Catholic priests could be seen dressed in their religious garb in all of the streets. There were religious processions with holy pictures, and bareheaded and barefooted Jesuits walking with smoking incense. Bells were ringing, and there was singing and chanting. The French are not assimilating with the English, neither in language,

religion, nor in dress. Two peoples live within one country. In the United States there is no difference between Protestants and Catholics. They attend different churches, but outwardly they are all Americans.

26 Montreal is a magnificent place with her beautiful streets, buildings, and parks. A special majesty is added to Montreal by the beautiful mountain which rises in the center of the city. Like a king in all his glory, the mountain gazes majestically down on the city below in which lovely homes are built. There are beautiful wide paved streets and large parks full of the lush greenery of stately trees. These lofty and proud trees have flowers which give off a wonderful smell, and they can drink their fill of streams of water flowing from fountains and turning silver in the rays of the sun. This is the picture which the eye beholds when one stands on the mountain top, and it explains the city's name: "Montreal"--that is, "King's Mountain".

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Although I had been living in America for only two and a half years at that time, I was amazed at how strongly I felt the "bonds of love" between me and America, as though I were a native-born American. A native American does not sense the joy of freedom, for he has never experienced slavery and oppression. He has never had to bear the yoke of a malevolent rule, nor the oppression of a wicked government such as that in dark Russia. Such is not the case with me. I have tasted the bitter flavor of absolute exile.

When I was driven from my "step-mother Matushka-Russia" (Mother Russia), I was drawn by the strings of my sorrowful soul to the young United States of America--powerful and free!

10        I began to long for the United States almost as soon as I crossed the Canadian border. On the surface it was a free country, a country in which there were no passport restrictions. Nonetheless, when I saw the first Canadian flag waving from atop one of the government buildings, a surge of homesickness came over me for no logical reason, and I longed to see the flag with the Stars and Stripes. Of course, I realized that this feeling was just excessive sentimentality without any logic to it whatsoever. After all, what should it matter to me whether I was in Canada or the United States? Yet, these feelings are a matter for one's heart, and not for one's brain or logic.

18        I became extremely angry when I was in a Canadian Post Office in order to purchase some stamps, and the clerk refused to accept American money. Not only would he not accept American money, but he spoke to me harshly:

21        "Do you not know, sir, that we do not belong to the United States: You're in Canada now!"

23        This incident upset me. Afterwards, I laughed to myself, for I remembered that the same sort of incident occurred while I was in Königsberg, Germany. The clerk in the Post Office did not want to accept my Russian currency.

Yet, I was not angry or upset. On the contrary, I was glad!

27 In regards to my nationalist efforts in that year of 1898, I discovered Montreal to be "rocky ground" which was unfit for ploughing or sowing. The masses of the Jews were simple people; the type of people who had no concept of ideology, social concern, or concern for the (Jewish) people. Their philosophy on life was: "A man must live it up"--and that was the extent of it. Citizens of status, whether they were from the Sephardic synagogue "Shearith Israel" or whether they were from the Ashkenazic synagogue "Shaar Shamayim", they were all 100% British patriots. They shied away from the notion of Jewish nationhood so as not to violate (God forbid!) their British patriotism! Poor souls!

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1 Little did they realize that within several decades Britain herself would become a partner in Zionism, and that the Balfour Declaration would become one of the main tenets of the British Empire.

4 There were a few exceptional people in Montreal who understood and appreciated the rays of light which emanated from that great star, Dr. Herzl. One of these people was a young rabbi named A. M. Ashinsky<sup>220</sup>. Even at that time I found him to be a true and faithful Zionist. He was filled with a holy-love for his people, his land, his religion, and his language. He spoke superbly in Yiddish, Hebrew, and English. He was a diligent communal worker who cared for all the people's needs. He was beloved by both young and

old. The older generation respected him for his vast knowledge of ancient Jewish literature. The younger generation respected him for his knowledge of English literature and for his tolerance. He has served both generations faithfully: Before the elders who are in the Talmud study group he reads like one of the great rabbis from the old country; Before the young people he preaches in English on nationalism and Jewish history.

15        Second to Ashinsky was the prominent Jew, Mr. Lazarus Cohen<sup>221</sup>, president of congregation "Shaar Shamayim". Cohen was a wealthy merchant from Russia and a man of spirit. He was one of the first to lend his support to the Zionist movement. He and the well-known community leader, Adam Rosenberg<sup>222</sup>, were involved in the "Shavei Zion Society" in New York.<sup>223</sup>

20        Rabbi A. M. Ashinsky and Mr. Cohen were able to attract a significant and powerful ally to the nationalist movement-- one of the leading Sephardic Jews who later would serve as president of the Zionist Federation of Canada<sup>224</sup> for many consecutive years--Mr. C. de Sola<sup>225</sup>. These three men laid the foundation of the Zionist movement not only in Montreal, but in Toronto, Winnipeg, and Hamilton as well.

#### APPENDIX FOOTNOTES

1. Masliansky's memoirs were published first in Yiddish in 1924, and later he himself translated the Yiddish to Hebrew. The Hebrew version was published in 1929.
2. The Talmudic phrase, "מאי קא משמע לן", may literally be translated "What does he intend to let us hear?", or "What does he want to teach us, here?" (cf., M. Mielziner, Introduction to the Talmud). Masliansky frequently used Talmudic expressions which would convey a clear meaning to those who were familiar with them.
3. "Ulyitzah" is the Russian word for "street".
4. "Russian Nihilism" was a philosophy of skepticism popularized in the last part of the 19th century. Frequently, the Nihilists themselves were believed to be nothing but anarchists who wished to tear down the establishment.
5. Eugenie (1826-1920) was Empress of France from 1853 to 1870 when her consort, Napoleon III, was deposed. Her full name was Eugenia Maria de Montijo de Guzman.  
  
Grigori A. Potemkin (1739-1791), a Russian prince, army officer, and statesman, was reputed to be the lover of Empress Catherine II (Catherine the Great, 1729-1796).
6. Kasriel Hersch Sarasohn (1835-1905) was a pioneer in the world of Yiddish publishing in the United States. In 1876, he published the first Yiddish weekly in America, "Die Yidishe Gazeten" (The Jewish Gazette). In 1885, after numerous attempts, Sarasohn finally succeeded in publishing a Yiddish daily: "The Yidishes Tageblat" (cf., Charles A. Madison, Jewish Publishing in America, pp. 110ff).

7. Leon Kamaiky (1864-1928) was a significant communal leader in New York City. In addition to his work with "The Tageblat", Kamaiky was a vice-president of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society and a member of the American Jewish Committee. Kamaiky served on the Executive Board of the Kehillah of New York City.
8. Johann Paley (1871-1926) was the controversial editor of "The Tageblat" from 1892 until 1926, when he ended his own life. Paley helped forge "The Tageblat" into a widely read Jewish paper. His use of sensationalism and "yellow journalism" kept the attention of the paper's readers for months at a time (cf., C. A. Madison, pp. 110ff).
9. Moses Mintz (1860-1930) was the publisher of the socialist weekly "Yiddish Folk Zeitung" which appeared 1885-1889. Together with his brother Michael (of the Chicago Yiddish weekly "Courier"), Mintz published the "Daily Jewish Herald" in 1891.
10. BILU is an acronym for the biblical phrase Beit Ya-akov Lekhu Ve-Nelkhah (O House of Jacob, come let us go up, Isaiah 2:5). The BILU was an organized group of young Russian Jews who sought to return to Eretz Israel. The group began as a response to the pogroms of 1881. The members of this group, Biluim as they were called, actually immigrated to Palestine where they became pioneers in the rebuilding of the present State of Israel.
11. Hovevei Zion (The Lovers of Zion) was a widespread movement among Jews of Russia and Eastern Europe. Its members believed that the only solution to Jewish persecution and oppression was the eventual resettlement of Jews in their ancestral homeland. Throughout the last two decades of the 19th century, scores of local chapters

of the Hovevei Zion sprang up. The movement spread to Western Europe and North America as well.

12. Bet Ha-Midrash Ha-Gadol was the largest Orthodox Eastern European Ashkenazic synagogue in New York City. It long enjoyed a reputation of being the center for Jewish learning and culture. Founded in 1852 by the highly regarded European Rabbi Abraham Joseph Ash (1813-1888), it was for years the most prominent Orthodox congregation serving the Eastern European immigrant community.
13. Shammash: a salaried employee of a synagogue who performed a variety of religious functions; a beadle.
14. Alenu: since the 13th century this prayer has been recited as the closing prayer for the three daily services.

Kaddish: a well-known doxology which is said repeatedly throughout the Jewish worship service. It is most commonly thought of as a prayer for mourners to recite in memory of the departed.

Jahrzeit: the anniversary of the day a loved one died. Jahrzeit is a remembrance custom which originated in the 15th century in Germany and rapidly spread to all parts of the Jewish world. The Jahrzeit of a parent is observed by the lighting of a special memorial candle and the recitation of the Kaddish prayer.

15. Shiva money: Shiva refers to the seven-day mourning period one is required by traditional Jewish law to observe. During these seven days following the death of an immediate relative, it is forbidden to work or participate in other daily diversions. According to Jonathan Sarna, this "Shiva money" might refer to some sort of insurance program which would guarantee income so a poor individual could afford to observe the Shiva period.



16. Masliansky is referring to an occasion he mentions in an earlier section of his memoirs. While in England, Masliansky spoke with the Chief Rabbi Hermann (Naphtali) Adler before a large crowd (cf., Masliansky's Hebrew memoirs, pp. 137-138).
17. Berakhot 58a.
18. The Hovevei Zion group of Baltimore was one of the first such groups to be established in the United States. Following the organization of the Hovevei Zion groups in Russia in 1882, New York saw its first Hovevei Zion group in 1884, and Baltimore in 1889 (cf., Isaac M. Fein, The Making of an American Jewish Community: The History of Baltimore Jewry from 1773-1920, 1971, p. 194).
19. While there were several congregations situated on Eldridge Street on New York's East Side, Masliansky was perhaps referring to congregation Khal Adas Jeshurun/Anshe Lubz on 14 Eldridge Street. Established in 1887, this congregation's building was a prominent landmark of the Lower East Side (cf., Gerard R. Wolfe, The Synagogues of New York's Lower East Side, 1978, pp. 43ff).
20. The Sons of Israel Kalwarie Synagogue dates back to 1853 when a group of Russian and Polish Jews split off from another congregation. In 1895, this congregation still used the name Beth Hamedrash Livne Yisrael Yelide Polen. Sons of Israel Kalwarie was the result of a merger which occurred in 1899. It is likely that Masliansky used the name by which his readers could best identify the congregation.
21. The translation of the words " אהוב פועלים " as "Friend of the Worker" is idiomatic and it is certainly possible that other English derivatives could be used.
22. cf., Kiddushin 49b.

23. "Ha-Zefirah" (The Dawn) was founded in 1862 in Warsaw by Hayim Slonimski (1810-1904) and was to be intimately connected with the Zionist movement during the years 1876-1906 when Nachum Sokolow (1859-1936) was the paper's editor.
24. "Ha-Meliz" (The Advocate) was founded in 1860 and was the first Hebrew paper in Russia. Its frequent contributors were Mendele Mokher Seforim, Ahad Ha-am, and H. N. Bialik. The paper was also closely associated with the Zionist movement.
25. Rabbi Jacob Joseph (1848-1902) was brought to the United States in 1888 by an Association of American Orthodox Hebrew Congregations organized specifically to effect the establishment of a "Chief Rabbi".
26. It is interesting to note that Abraham J. Karp has convincingly demonstrated that it was not very hard for the Association of American Orthodox Hebrew Congregations to persuade Jacob Joseph to come to America. Apparently the rabbi was eager to come. Masliansky's version of this chapter in New York's Jewish history is clearly jaded by memory and emotion, and should be tempered by a documentary history of the events such as is provided by Karp (cf., Abraham J. Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi", P.A.J.H.S., Vol. 44, pp. 129-198).
27. The phrase " מִי יֹאכִילֵנוּ בָּשָׂר " (Numbers 11:4) is an obvious allusion to the rebellious Israelite nation who displayed their faithlessness by complaining to Moses about the lack of flesh available for them to eat in the wilderness.
28. Sanhedrin 52b.
29. Makkot 22b.

30. " אחרני מות " (Leviticus 16:1-28:30); " קדושים " (Leviticus 19:1-20:27); and " אמר " (Leviticus 21:1-24:23) are three successive Torah portions at the end of the Book of Leviticus. When said in one sentence, these four words (which are also the first words in each Torah portion) mean "de mortuis nil nisi bonum" or "Speak well of the dead".
31. Machzike Talmud Torah ("Supporters of Talmud Torah") was the name given to a reorganization of a previously established Eastern European Talmud Torah School in the 1880's. The earliest Talmud Torah school began in the 1860's, but were short-lived. The original objective of the Machzike Talmud Torah was to provide Hebrew instruction and religious education for the poor immigrant children. To meet their goal, the organization rented rooms on East Broadway and ran classes for the children every day from 4 o'clock to 8 o'clock p.m. There were weekend classes too. The Machzike Talmud Torah School was able to provide such satisfactory results that even well-to-do Jews began to send their children for instruction. Consequently, the school lost some of its charitable aspects. The program of the Machzike Talmud Torah served as a model for almost all of the Talmud Torah schools which later came into being (cf., Alexander M. Dushkin, Jewish Education in New York City, 1918, pp. 68-71).
32. A maskil is an adherent to the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This movement had its roots in the general Enlightenment movement in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and influenced Jews in Western and Eastern Europe.
33. "Ha-Ivri" was a Hebrew weekly founded by K. H. Sarasohn in 1891. Its attempt to provide the Hebrew reading

public with a journal of high literary quality ended in 1898 when the publishers ran out of funds.

34. A strong dagesh is also termed "dagesh forte", and a weak dagesh "dagesh lene". A shevah nah is also called "shevah mobile", and a shevah nach "shevah quiescens" (cf., A. E. Cowley, E. Kautzsch, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar).
35. Joseph Judah Lieb Sossnitz (1837-1910) was a maskil who came to the United States in 1891 and established a Talmud Torah school. Sossnitz was also a salaried lecturer in philosophy and ethics at the Educational Alliance. Sossnitz was very active in Hebrew circles and, in addition to authoring several books on philosophy, he infrequently contributed to Hebrew journals.
36. Abraham D. Dobsevage (Dubsewitz) (1843-1900) was a modestly known Hebraist who, while still in Russia, wrote a commentary on the Song of Songs. After coming to the United States in 1891, he barely eked out a living as an instructor of Hebrew.
37. Menachem M. Dolitzki (1856-1931) was one of the great Hebraists of his generation. Dolitzki achieved great prominence while in Russia, but after his immigration to the United States, he found it impossible to survive financially on his literary abilities. This man, who was once hailed by peers as one of the greatest Hebrew authors, spent his last years in obscurity and poverty.
38. Moses Reicherson (1827-1903) was renowned for his skills in editing and proofreading. Born in Vilna, Reicherson came to New York where he was employed by several Hebrew publishing houses. He frequently contributed to Hebrew journals in Europe and in the United States.
39. Zohar.

40. Max Bucans (Bucanski) (1848-1903) was a Yiddish journalist who came to New York from Lithuania in 1889. Bucans served as editor of "The Jewish Daily Herald" and the "Folksadvokat". He also wrote novels under the pen name, Ben-Porath ("a fruitful vine").
41. Isaac Rabinowitz (1846-1900) was also known by the pen name "Ish-Kovno". Rabinowitz was a pioneering modern Hebraist who contributed often to the Hebrew journals of Europe. After immigrating to the United States, Rabinowitz's infrequent literary contributions were of inferior quality when compared to that of his days in Europe.
42. It is difficult to say definitely to whom these initials belong. A reasonable guess is that "B.P." stands for Ben-Porath (Max Bucanski) (See supra, note 40). Masliansky refers to these initials below (see note 58), and once again he could mean Bucanski. This is not certain.
43. cf., note 18, supra.
44. Reuben Aaronson (?) was president and founding member of the first Hovevei Zion group in Baltimore, "Hevrath Zion", in 1894.
45. Phillip (Moshe) Falk Mirvis (?-1960) was a Zionist and a prominent member of Baltimore's Jewish community.
46. Dr. Fox -- We have not succeeded in identifying this man.
47. Horowitz -- We have not succeeded in identifying this man.
48. Senior Abel (?) was a pioneer Zionist and charter member of the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ). Abel founded the journal "Dos Yidishe Folk" (1909) which was the Yiddish organ of the FAZ.

49. The Friedenwald family was one of Baltimore's most prominent Jewish families. Dr. Aaron Friedenwald (1836-1902) was an eminent communal leader, and his son, Dr. Harry Friedenwald (1864-1950), drew national attention for his devoted leadership within the Zionist movement of America (cf., I. M. Fein, p. 196 passim).
50. The Levys were a wealthy merchant family. The family patriarch was Michael S. Levy (?), who first came to Baltimore in 1866. Levy established a hat manufacturing firm which earned him a great deal of money. His sons eventually joined him in the family business.
51. Schepsel Schaffer (1862-1933) was a rabbi and a prominent American Zionist. Schaffer, who came to the United States in 1893, was the only official American representative to attend the First Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897.
52. Tanhum Silberman (1863-1944) was an Orthodox leader in Baltimore and an active Zionist.
53. The Szolds, Benjamin (1829-1902) and his daughter Henrietta (1860-1945), were among the foremost Jewish families in Baltimore. Benjamin, born in Hungary, came to the United States, and became a respected rabbi of Baltimore's Oheb Shalom Congregation in 1859. Henrietta achieved even greater renown than did her father, being the founder of Hadassah--an international Zionist organization for women (See also, A. L. Levin, The Szolds of Lombard Street: A Baltimore Family, 1960.).
54. The Hebrew text reads 1896, but it is apparent from the context of his account that the year was in fact 1895.
55. Aaron Aaronson (?) was the father of Reuben (cf., supra, note 44).

56. "Die Zukunft" was established in 1892 as a monthly supplement to the "Arbeiter Zeitung". This socialist journal was published by the Hebrew Trades Union and edited by Philip Krantz. It achieved its greatest renown after 1913 under the editorship of Abraham Liessen (cf., C. A. Madison, pp. 131ff).
57. The title which Masliansky proudly carried, "הַמְסִיף הַלְאוּמִי", can be rendered in English several ways--each having a connotation of its own. We have translated the phrase exactly as Masliansky did on his personal stationery: "The National Preacher". Undoubtedly, Masliansky's title meant to convey that he preached the ideal of National Rebirth for the Jewish people. However, this phrase is not entirely restrictive, and also intimates the notion of a preacher who speaks for the welfare of Jews everywhere. Clearly, this, too, was Masliansky's intention.
58. cf., supra, note 41. Possibly Ben-Porath?
59. The descriptive name, "Queen City of the West" belongs to Cincinnati. If Chicago was ever called by this name as well, it certainly did not hold firm as the city's nickname. Most likely, Masliansky has confused the two cities with regard to this phrase.
60. Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatyev (1832-1908) was a Russian nobleman and diplomat who was known as Tzar Alexander III's "hatchet-man" during the period of the oppressive May Laws in 1881-1882. Amongst other disabilities, these laws resulted in thousands upon thousands of Russian Jews having to relocate their homes and families.
61. The "Hebrew Literary Society" ("Schochrei Sfath Eber") was an amalgamate of two earlier Hebrew societies: "Dorshei Safrut H'ibrith" ("Cultivators of Hebrew

Learning") and "Sofo Bruro" ("Chosen Language"). Many of its members were active Zionists as well (cf., Hyman L. Meites, History of the Jews of Chicago: 1924, pp. 549,550).

62. Peter Wiernik (1865-1936) was one of the most prominent Jewish journalists in his day. Under the sponsorship of close friend and ally, Leon Zolotkoff, Wiernik was able to contribute his skills to the Yiddish press in America. His work, The History of the Jews in America, bears a wealth of information about Jews who were Wiernik's contemporaries.
63. "The Jewish Courier" was published by Zionist leader Leon Zolotkoff in 1887 and was the first Yiddish paper to flourish in Chicago. The "Courier" began as a weekly and later established itself as a daily press (cf., H. L. Meites, p. 159).
64. Hosea 9:10.
65. Rabbi Abraham Jacob Gershon Lesser (1834-1925) was an outstanding Orthodox rabbi during the first quarter of the 20th century. Lesser first came to the United States in 1880 to serve the Bet Hamedrash Hagadol U-B'nai Jacob in Chicago. Lesser's labors on behalf of education and community gave his name prominence, and in 1898 he was called to serve the largest Orthodox congregation in Cincinnati, Beth Tephila (cf., Judah Isaacs' article in Leo Jung's Guardians of our Heritage, pp. 345-360).
66. Megilah 6b.
67. Max Shulman (1885-1937) was a prominent lawyer and leader of the Jewish community in Chicago. In addition to his various Zionist activities, Shulman served in other Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish



Congress, Denver Consumptives Relief Society, and the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (cf., H. L. Meites, p. 232).

68. Nathan D. Kaplan (1877-1952) was, like Shulman (supra), a prominent Chicago lawyer and Jewish communal leader (cf., H. L. Meites, p. 218).
69. "The Heroes of Zion" was a local Hibbat Zion chapter in Chicago which came into being between the years 1895-1900. "The Heroes", along with other chapters, were eventually absorbed by the "Knights of Zion", the first interstate Zionist organization in the Midwest. The "Knights" were led by L. Zolotkoff (cf., H. L. Meites, pp. 201ff.).
70. Bernard Horwich (1861-1949) was a prominent Chicago businessman and pioneer Zionist. Horwich and his brother, Harris, organized the first Zionist chapter in Chicago: "Zionist Organization #1" (See also, Bernard Horwich, My First Eighty Years, 1939.).
71. Marks Nathan (1845-1903) was born in Russia and immigrated to the United States in 1866. Nathan opened a business in waste material and he eventually went into real estate, amassing a substantial fortune. Upon his retirement in 1897, Nathan spent a year in Palestine in an attempt to help improve the living conditions there. His wife, Bessie (1841-1917), also devoted herself to philanthropic interests as her husband's personal fortune grew (cf., H. L. Meites, p. 214).
72. The Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home was incorporated with the assistance of funds left by Mr. Marks Nathan. Nathan bequeathed \$15,000.00 which he designated for use to establish a kosher hospital, or an Orthodox home for orphans. Rabbi Abraham J. G. Lesser was made trustee of the sum, and it was eventually determined

that the money should go towards an orphanage (For details leading to the establishment of the orphanage cf., H. L. Meites, p. 213ff.).

73. Solomon B. Komaiko (1879-1938) was a successful insurance underwriter and an active member of Chicago's Jewish community. He was particularly involved in Leon Zolotkoff's "Knights of Zion" organization (cf., H. L. Meites, p. 202).
74. The Orthodox Jewish Home for the Aged (or Beth Moshav Z'Keinim) was known informally by the initials B.M.Z. The B.M.Z. first opened its doors on May 3, 1903 and was supported faithfully by the Orthodox community for many years (cf., H. L. Meites, p. 634ff.).
75. Samuel Holdheim (1806-1860) was a great leader of Reform Judaism and served as rabbi of the Reform congregation in Berlin from 1847 until his death.
76. Abraham Geiger (1810-1874) was an outstanding scholar, rabbi, and acknowledged leader of the Reform movement in Germany.
77. David Einhorn (1809-1879) was an early leader and theologian of American Reform Judaism. He served as rabbi in Baltimore's Har Sinai Congregation.
78. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) was the renowned proponent of modern Orthodoxy in Germany during the 19th century (See also: Jakob Rosenheim, Samson Raphael Hirsch's Cultural Ideal and Our Times, 1951, pp. 11-29.).
79. Peretz Smolenskin (1840 or '42-1885) was a leading nationalist and maskil in Eastern Europe. His Hebrew monthly, "Ha-Shahar", furthered his reputation as a thinker and litterateur.

In "Ha-Shahar", Smolenskin frequently leveled criticism at ignorant Jews who attempted to portray themselves as scholars. These "בגלי תפילה", as he called them, were often derided in his editorials. Smolenskin's disdain for German Reform was also well known. "Ha-Shahar" carried numerous articles in which he vented his spleen against Reform layleaders who thought they were learned enough to change age-old Jewish practice (cf., Jacob S. Raisin, The Haskalah Movement in Russia. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1913. pp. 264-265).

80. Congregation Sinai of Chicago (1861 to present) is the oldest Reform congregation in the city of Chicago.
81. Exodus 20:9.
82. The Rabbinic tradition of adding a second day of observance to many holidays for Jews living in Diaspora originated out of the desire to insure correct observance in parts of the world where lunar calculations may give rise to error. Masliansky's sarcasm is a double-edged sword: 1) The Sabbath would never require a second day of observance, and 2) Reform, which at that time made a philosophic point of eliminating second-day observances as unnecessary in a modern world, were creating a second-day observance of the Sabbath.
83. Emil Gustave Hirsch (1851-1923) was the son of Rabbi Samuel Hirsch (rabbi of Luxembourg and later Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia). Emil was a famed scholar and leader of the Reform movement in the United States. He served Congregation Sinai of Chicago from 1880 until his death.
84. "The Reform Advocate" was an English weekly sponsored by Emil G. Hirsch. The paper was first published in 1891 and ceased publication in 1923 when Hirsch died.

85. Leon Zolotkoff (1867-1938) was among the most active communal leaders in Chicago, and the moving force behind the Zionist movement in the Midwest. In addition to publishing the Yiddish daily "Courier", Zolotkoff also put out a short-lived Hebrew periodical ("Keren Or"), and wrote many novels and plays. His pen name was "Zakoff-Gadol" (cf., H. L. Meites, p. 196).
86. Bernhard Felsenthal (1822-1904) came to the United States in 1854, and in short time emerged as a leading proponent of Reform in the Midwest. Felsenthal was the first rabbi of Sinai Congregation in Chicago and later served Zion Congregation in that city.
87. Gustav Gottheil (1827-1903) was a prominent exponent of Reform Judaism and rabbi of Temple Emanu-El of New York City. Gottheil was among the first American rabbis to openly declare support for Herzl's Zionist organization (See also: Richard J.H. Gottheil, Life of Gustav Gottheil, Memoir of a Priest in Israel, 1936, pp. 1-329.).
88. Kaufmann Kohler (1843-1926) was an outstanding leader of American Reform and President of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati (See also: Robert J. Marx, Kaufmann Kohler as Reformer, 1951 [unpublished rabbinic thesis at H.U.C.].).
89. Wolf (Zev) Schur (1884-1910) devoted his life to Hebrew literature in America. In addition to his frequent contributions to Hebrew periodicals in Europe, Schur published "Pisgah", a Hebrew journal, from 1889-1899 (See also: Jacob Kabakoff, Chalutzei Ha-Safrut Ha-Ivrit B'America, 1966, pp. 131-210; and also see E. R. Malachi, Igrot Soferim, pp. 88-122.).
90. George (Getzel) Selikovitch (1863-1926) was, among other things, a pioneer in the Yiddish press of the United States. Born in Kovno and educated at the

Sorbonne in Paris, Selikovitch spent time in Egypt serving as a translator for the British army. After coming to the United States in 1887, he took a position teaching Semitic languages at the University of Pennsylvania. Yet he spent the last quarter of his life writing for various Yiddish and Hebrew papers.

91. Saul Phinehas Rabbino~~w~~itz (1845-1910) was a Hebrew scholar and author. A frequent contributor to the Hebrew journals of Europe, Rabbino~~w~~itz translated H. Gratz's Geschichte der Juden into Hebrew. "Kenestet Yisrael" was a yearbook of the Hibbat Zion movement. Rabbino~~w~~itz served as its editor 1886-1890. In Hebrew his name is often symbolized by his initials: "שפ" (See also: J. Meisl's, Ha-Rav Shaul Pinhas Rabbino~~w~~itz, Ha-Ish U'fohalo, 1943.).
92. cf., note 61, supra.
93. See notes #62 and #70, supra.
94. Judeh Berman (?) was Cleveland's ritual slaughterer during the last two decades of the 19th century (cf., Lloyd P. Gartner, History of the Jews of Cleveland. Cleveland: Western Reserve, 1978. pp. 176-177).
95. S. P. Burstein (?) was a Russian Jewish physician who was active in Cleveland's Talmud Torah Schools. He and his wife were also involved with Zionist endeavors, Hebraica, and communal activities (cf., L. P. Gartner, p. 248).
96. I. J. Biskind (?) was another physician who was active in the same circles as Dr. Burstein (cf., supra, note 95) (See also, L. P. Gartner, p. 261.).
97. Ezra Brudno (1877-1936) was a child immigrant who studied law at Harvard, and wrote novels while practicing law in Cleveland. His novels reflect numerous

tensions inherent in the immigrant generation. Brudno himself advocated assimilation, believing that prejudice and violence were the only reasons this end had not yet been achieved (cf., L. P. Gartner, pp. 81, 343).

98. Joshua (Samuel) Rocker (1864-?) was the central figure in Cleveland's Yiddish Press. In 1908, he published the "Jewish Daily News", and in 1913 he began the "Yiddishe Velt", a weekly publication which was very influential in Cleveland. Masliansky recalls his name to be "Joshua", but he was also known as "Samuel" (cf., L. P. Gartner, pp. 214-215).
99. G. Laufman (?) was an active Zionist in Cleveland (cf., L. P. Gartner, p. 245).
100. cf., Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, Zichronot. New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1929. p. 133.
101. The Hebrew expression, "אִתּוֹ הָאִישׁ" (lit. "That Man"), is a euphemism for Jesus of Nazareth.
102. The "Litvak" (Lithuanian Jew) provoked a certain stereotype in the folk culture of the European Jew. According to these stereotypes, Jews of different countries (i.e., Russia, Poland, Hungary, Galicia, etc.) bore certain characteristics; some laudable and some uncomplimentary. The "Litvak" was typically thought of as being shrewd, cynical, and knowledgeable, yet also a sort of a "know-it-all".
103. The Hebrew text reads, "הָרֶאבִי נ", yet without a doubt this is a typographical error. Masliansky surely meant to have "הָרֶאבִי ג", and the "ג" stood for "Gries", as in Moses J. Gries (1868-1918). As a staunch advocate of radical Reform, Gries initiated some very anti-traditional innovations (i.e., Sunday Sabbath services, appointing women to the Temple's

board, and he did not use the Torah in the service).

104. Masliansky writes: "צוה הראבי . . . להוציא את ספר-התורה . . .  
 . . . וספר התורה יהיה נידון בגניזה במרתף ההיכל."  
 It is hard to say whether Masliansky was trying to assert that Gries wanted the Torah literally sealed in a "Genizah" (a burial place for holy books no longer usable), or whether he simply wanted it put away (hidden) in the basement. Masliansky most likely means the latter.
105. Jason was a 2nd century B.C.E. high priest who, according to Josephus, seized the priesthood for himself in a coup, and then proceeded to allow Hellenizational religious practices in the Temple. Josephus claims that Jason's treachery brought about the Hasmonean Revolt (168-165 B.C.E.).
106. A shofar is a ram's horn as well as an important Jewish symbol.
107. Isaiah 58:1.
108. This chapter on Masliansky's visit to the Hebrew Union College just before the turn of the century is fairly well known. An English translation has been published by Azriel Eisenberg in his book, Eyewitnesses to American Jewish History. (Part III, pp. 71-5). Our translation is new, and any resemblance to Eisenberg's paraphrase is purely coincidental.
109. Evidently Masliansky is referring to Mr. Schachne Isaacs, who was for many years a prominent Orthodox leader in Cincinnati. Schachne Isaacs, along with several associates, engineered a break-off from Cincinnati's first Orthodox congregation, Beth Midrash (established in 1859). Saying that Beth Midrash was too lax in its ritual observance, Isaacs led this splinter

group to formulate a new congregation called Beth Tephillah in 1866 (cf., Barnett R. Brickner, Jewish Community of Cincinnati: Historical and Descriptive, 1933, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation at University of Cincinnati, pp. 106-107).

110. "Hayye Adam", written by Abraham Danzig (1748-1820), is a short compendium of many laws dealing with prayer, benedictions, the Sabbath, and festivals. Its simple yet practical nature made the book extremely popular among observant Jews.
111. Isaac M. Wise (1819-1900).
112. Gotthard Deutsch (1859-1921) was a scholar and professor of history at the Hebrew Union College from 1891 until his death.
113. As to the precise date of this visit, there exists some interesting contradictions. Although no date is given, Masliansky suggests that it was in 1895 or 1896--logically following his Cleveland visit. However, in Max Raisin's book, Mi Sefer Hayai, he recalls that Masliansky's visit to H.U.C. took place in 1898-1899. Yet, it is even possible that Masliansky visited H.U.C. on two separate occasions. The author is grateful to Michael A. Meyer, who pointed out that the H.U.C. (Student) Journal, January 25, 1896, reported that Masliansky spoke in Hebrew at the College. Yet, the H.U.C. (Student) Journal, December 10, 1899, mentions that Masliansky was at the College in that year, and again it notes he spoke in Hebrew.
114. Jacob Z. Raisin (1877-1946) and Max Raisin (1881-1957) immigrated to the United States in 1893. Since their father was a maskil, the Raisin brothers were taught Hebrew as children. The brothers came to study at the Hebrew Union College, and despite their being Reform



Rabbis, they kept close contact with the Eastern European maskilim.

115. Judah Leon Magnes (1877-1948) was ordained rabbi by the Hebrew Union College in 1900 and went on to become one of the College's most illustrative alumni. He later became the first President of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (See also: Norman Bentwich, For Zion's Sake, 1954, and Arthur Goren, New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment 1908-1922, 1970.).
116. Jeremiah 1:5 "נביא לגוים נתתיך". However, Wise's implication is "I have given you as a prophet to the 'gentiles' ('גוים')". Wise's tongue-in-cheek remark is to assert that, for Masliansky, speaking at the College may be as if he were addressing gentiles.
117. Jeremiah 49:15 (See supra, note #116).
118. Genesis 37:1-40:23.
119. Berakhot 8a.
120. Jeremiah 2:13.
121. Jerusalem Talmud, Hagigah 81a.
122. cf., supra, note #103, and pages 154-156 of the appendix translation.
123. Genesis 38:25 (A subtle reference to the story of Judah and Tamar). Masliansky employs this phrase to convey to Wise the following: "She (the Torah in Cleveland) has been carried forth."
124. Genesis 38:26 (See supra, note #123). Once again Masliansky conveys: "She (the Torah) is more righteous (and important) than I."
125. The Yad Ha-Hazakah is another name for the great legal compendium, Mishneh Torah, written by the Rambam (Rabbi

Moses ben Maimon) in the last part of the 12th century.

126. The Kuzari, written by Judah Halevi in the first quarter of the 12th century, is a famous philosophical treatise.
127. "מקראות גדולות" refers to the Hebrew Bible with its Aramaic translations, and several commentaries.
128. Isaac M. Wise will not assume full responsibility for Gries' actions, but rather points the finger at Emil G. Hirsch (not a graduate of the College). Wise had previously expressed dissatisfaction with some of Gries' reforms--specifically the institution of Sunday Sabbath services (cf., "The American Israelite", December 30, 1897).
129. "היהלום השחור" means literally "black diamond", but the expression for oil or coal in English might be better rendered as has been done here: "black gold".
130. "Tiferet Yisrael" ("The Glory of Israel") is a well known commentary on the Mishnah. It was written by Israel Lifshitz (d. 1861), who was for many years the rabbi of Danzig. Lifshitz had acquired some secular education, and this is reflected in his use of mathematical demonstrations and German phrases to be found in the commentary.
131. The exact meaning of the biblical phrase "נחש עקלתון" (Isaiah 27:1) is uncertain as the word "עקלתון" is a hapaxlegomenon. The translator has employed here the new Jewish Publication Society's translation of the phrase.
132. Psalm 121:1.
133. "The Abendblatt" was a Socialist Labor Yiddish daily which lasted for almost a decade. It was the offices of the already defunct "Abendblatt" which were purchased by Masliansky in 1902.

134. Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864) was a German socialist influenced by Karl Marx. Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) collaborated with Marx on the Communist Manifesto, 1848.
135. Gershon Rosenzweig (1861-1914) was a prominent Hebraist who edited various journals including "Ha-Ivri" (1891-1902), "Kadimah" (1899-1902), and "Ha-Devorah" (1911-1912).
136. Joshua 5:13.
137. "The Deborah" was a German weekly published by Isaac M. Wise beginning in 1855 and continuing until shortly after his death. The paper, which attempted to reach the German immigrant population, was heavily influenced by Wise's philosophies and supporters.
138. The socialist paper "Abendblatt" was published at 9 Rutgers Street.
139. Numbers 2:3.
140. Proverbs 25:11.
141. Moses Rubin (?) was evidently a teacher and an active member of Pittsburgh's Hibbat Zion movement. He was the secretary of the "Dorshei Zion" branch in 1893. (The author is grateful to Ida Cohen Selavan for researching Pittsburgh's city directories.)
142. Bet Midrash (lit. "a house of study") was generally a room set aside primarily for study of holy texts, but would also serve as a synagogue. A typical Bet Midrash in Downtown New York might have been a modest room containing a table, chairs, and students in study or in prayer.
143. A "minyan" is a group of ten male Jews (usually) considered to be the minimum requirement for congregational worship and public Torah reading.

144. Masliansky is prone to using initials (such as "Mr. P.") when he has something unflattering to say and/or if he believes printing the full name may embarrass. Yet, he must have simultaneously wished to tip-off a knowing reader about whom he is speaking. Hence, he probably would say: "Ha-Mayveen Ya-veen" ("If you know what I'm talking about--you'll know who it is!").
145. The En Yaakov (אנאקוב) is a collection of various aggadot from both the Babylonian and the Palestinian Talmud. Compiled by Jacob ben Solomon (1445-1515(16)), the En Yaakov includes commentaries by Rashi, Asher ben Jehiel, and Solomon ben Abraham Adret.
146. The army of Tzar Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia.
147. Yoma 22a.
148. Adolf M. Radin (1848-1909) was a well known communal leader in New York City. Born in Lithuania, Radin came to the United States in 1886. In 1890 he was appointed chaplain of all the penal institutions in New York City and Brooklyn. From 1905 until his death, he was also the rabbi of the People's Synagogue in the Educational Alliance.
149. By "Hebrew Institute" Masliansky probably means "The Hebrew Technical Institute". The Educational Alliance was formed out of a coalition of several immigrant aid organizations. Three of the primary contributors to this effort were: 1) The Hebrew Free School Association, 2) The Aguilar Free Library Society, and 3) The Young Men's Hebrew Association. The amalgamation process occurred over a period of years. Although Radin was associated with the Hebrew Free School Association throughout the 1890's, he was officially made rabbi of the People's Synagogue of the amalgamated Educational Alliance in 1905 (cf., S. P. Rudens, "A

Half Century of Community Service: The Story of the New York Educational Alliance" in The American Jewish Yearbook, Vol. 46, 1944-45, pp. 73-86).

150. Lodz, Poland.
151. Louis Marshall (1856-1929), who was at that time the chairman of the Moral Culture Committee of the Educational Alliance, reported to the Board of Directors on January 8, 1900, that Masliansky had given some lectures at the Alliance in Yiddish. He reported that a petition had been handed him by Downtown residents requesting that Masliansky's lectures be continued. The Board agreed to pay Masliansky a salary of \$300.00 for a series of fifteen lectures (cf., *infra*, note 162).
152. By "Mendelssohnian enlightenment", Masliansky means to say the Reform movement in Judaism. Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) is often considered to be (yet not without challenge) the progenitor of the modern Reform movement. He remained an Orthodox Jew.
153. "Cooper Union" was built by inventor and industrialist Peter Cooper (1791-1883). "Cooper Union" was built to help provide education for the working masses and was frequently the meeting place for labor gatherings and the like.
154. Nedarim 81a.
155. David Blaustein (1866-1912) was an active communal leader, social worker, and Zionist. Born in Lida, Blaustein came to the United States in 1886 and studied at Harvard. He taught Semitics at Brown University prior to his appointment as Director of the Educational Alliance.
156. Gabriel Fabian Feilchenfeld (1827-?) was a scholar and rabbi in Germany. Feilchenfeld served as rabbi in

Kulm, West Prussia, from 1859-1876. From 1876 until his death, he was the "Landesrabbiner" of the grand-duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Feilchenfeld earned a Ph.D. from the University of Halle and served as head of a school for religious school teachers in Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

157. Jesse I. Straus (1872-1936) was the son of Isidor Straus (see infra note 158). Harvard-educated Jesse Straus worked for R. H. Macy's Department Store and was eventually elected its president, supervising its growth into the world's largest department store. Straus was very active in Jewish and general philanthropies and, in particular, donated much time and energy to the Educational Alliance.
158. Isidor Straus (1845-1912) was a retail magnate who built a merchantile empire which included R. H. Macy's and Abraham & Straus. As a philanthropist, Straus was extensively involved in the Jewish community. In addition to being a member of the American Jewish Committee, Straus was a charter member of the Educational Alliance and served as president of its Board of Directors for many years. Both he and his wife perished on the "Titanic" in 1912.
159. End of the "U'netaneh Tokef" prayer recited during the Musaf Service for Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur in the traditional prayer book.
160. Edwin Robert Anderson Seligman (1861-1939) was a professor of finance at Columbia University. As wealthy inheritor of his father Joseph's fortune, E.R.A. Seligman was a generous supporter of both Jewish and non-Jewish charities.
161. Jacob Henry Schiff (1847-1920) was among the most influential Jews in America. After building a powerful

banking firm, Schiff's attentions turned to helping fellow Jews. His name (like that of Louis Marshall's-- see infra, note 162) was associated with literally every major Jewish organization and activity during the first two decades of the 20th century (cf., Cyrus Adler, Jacob Schiff, His Life and His Letters [2 vols.], New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1928).

162. Louis Marshall (1856-1929) was a prominent lawyer and (like Schiff) an outstanding Jewish philanthropist and communal leader (cf., Charles Reznikoff, Louis Marshall: Champion of Liberty [2 vols.], Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1957).
163. Samuel Greenbaum (1854-1930) was a lawyer, judge, and communal leader in New York City. In addition to sitting on the bench of the Supreme Court of New York, Greenbaum served the Boards of the Educational Alliance, the Baron de Hirsch Fund, and the New York Public Library.
164. Shraga (Philip) Yachus (?) was a community leader and preacher on behalf of Zionism. Born near Kovno, Yachus received a traditional religious education and was for many years a teacher. He returned to Libau where he was a merchant and a Zionist preacher. He came to the United States in 1891, and settled in New York where he was involved in communal affairs (cf., Ben Zion Eisenstadt, Israel Scholars in America, New York: A. H. Rosenberg Press, 1903, p. 58).
165. According to the ancient rabbis, Elijah the Prophet-- as harbinger of the coming of the messiah--will perform a variety of functions which will bring peace and harmony in the world (See also, Louis Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, Vol. IV, pp. 233ff.).
166. The Hebrew phrase, " שריד וקים " generally appears at the conclusion of a traditional Jewish marriage contract.

Masliansky is therefore subtly implying that his relationship with the Educational Alliance was to be a "happy marriage".

167. The preacher was expressing his disappointment with the immigrant Jews who assimilated so well that they preferred hearing English speakers (i.e., Assemblymen and Aldermen) at their various functions. Clearly, when people wanted English speakers, Masliansky was no longer needed!
168. Isaiah 57:19.
169. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, in her fine article on "The Jewish World", postulates that David Blaustein urged Masliansky to publish a paper which would reach thousands in comparison to the hundreds reached by his orations. Dawidowicz goes on to demonstrate that while Masliansky and his associates were financially committed to "The Jewish World", Louis Marshall played a powerful role as fund-raiser and (vocal) silent partner (cf., Lucy S. Dawidowicz, Louis Marshall's Yiddish Newspaper, The Jewish World: A Study in Contrasts, in "Jewish Social Studies", April 1963, pp. 102-132).
170. Israel I. Wolf (1861-19? ) We have not succeeded in identifying this man.
171. Isaac Brody. We have not succeeded in identifying this man.
172. Philip Turberg (1875-1951) was Masliansky's son-in-law. Turberg was a scholarly gentleman who earned a living as a printer. According to E. R. Malachi, Turberg was especially knowledgeable in the area of Hebrew and Yiddish literature. His own writings appeared in journals printed in Europe and America (cf., E. R. Malachi, Kitvei Pinhas Turberg, 1953).



173. Frederick M. Stein (1880-1955) was the son of S. Stein, who had a successful wool business.
174. Cyrus L. Sulzberger (1858-1932) was president of a leading retail store (N. Erlanger, Blumgart and Co.) and a leader in Jewish communal life. Among Sulzberger's other association, he was a director of the Jewish Publication Society.
175. (For more detailed data regarding these Yiddishists, see Zalman Rejzen Leksikon Fun Der Nayer Yidisher Literatur, Congress for Jewish Culture, New York, 1956-1960.)
  - a) Philip Krantz (Jacob Rombro)(1858-1922) was among the many Yiddish essayists brought to the United States to stimulate growth in the fledgling press. Krantz dealt primarily as an editor, but he frequently wrote on religion and its negative impact on the masses.
  - b) Abner Tannenbaum (1848-1913) was the author of many popular science novels in Yiddish.
  - c) Morris Rosenfeld (1862-1923) was a poet and a tailor in the sweatshops of the Lower East Side. His poetry expresses the pain and despair of the Jew living in the tenements of the Jewish ghetto (See also, Hutchins Hapgood, The Spirit of the Ghetto, 1976, p. 103 passim.).
  - d) Moses Katz (1864-1941) was a Yiddish publisher and litterateur who wrote a number of works for the Yiddish press and theatre.
  - e) Abraham Frumkin (Feigenbaum) (1873-1940) was a socialist writer and political editor.
  - f) M. David Hermalin (1865-1921) was a Yiddish writer who claimed distinction as a translator of the works of Tolstoy and Zola into Yiddish.

g) Israel Ziony (1861-1927) was an Orthodox Yiddish writer.

h) Zissel Kornblit (1872-1929) was a writer for the Yiddish stage as well as a journalist.

(cf., H. Hapgood, for many of the above mentioned names).

176. Solomon Bloomgarden (pen name: "Yehoash") (1872-1937) was a Hebrew and Yiddish author whose contributions to the field of Yiddish literature include poetry, fables, ballads, and a Yiddish translation of the Bible. Bloomgarden contracted tuberculosis in 1900, and spent the next decade living in the Denver sanatorium for consumptives. Hence, Masliansky refers to him as "Yehoash" from Denver.
177. Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916) was an English scholar and author whose specialty was folklore and comparative literature. Jacobs came to the United States in 1900 to help edit the Jewish Encyclopedia. He was then invited to become the editor of the English section of "The Jewish World". Lucy Dawidowicz has pointed out how ambitious and incongruous it was for the fledgling "Jewish World" to appoint such a scholar to the position. However, Jacobs' tenure was short-lived and he resigned as editor of the English section after a few months. Jacobs went on to teach at the Jewish Theological Seminary while simultaneously editing the "American Hebrew".
178. Jacob de Haas (1872-1937) was a well-known journalist and Zionist. Contrary to what Masliansky recollects here, de Haas took over the editorship of the English section of "The Jewish World" after Jacobs' resignation. De Haas began his career as Theodor Herzl's private secretary, and it was Herzl who asked de Haas to settle in America in order to build a viable Zionist structure.

De Haas was very active in the Zionist Organization of America (cf., Louis Lipsky, A Gallery of Zionist Profiles, 1956).

179. Isaac L. Brill (1874-1936) was an author, journalist, and rabbi. Born in Mainz, Germany, Brill moved to London as a young boy in 1885. There he studied at Jewish College to become a teacher. Upon completing his formal education, however, he began to work for "The London Jewish World". In 1896, Brill came to the United States to work in the burgeoning world of the Yiddish press. In addition to the work he did on Masliansky's "The Jewish World", Brill later became the editor of the English page of "The Tagblat" until the paper ceased its publication in 1928. He also served as rabbi of Shaarei Zedek Congregation and later of Agudath Achim Congregation in New York (cf., B. Z. Eisenstadt, pp. 23-24).
180. Nahum Meyer Shaikevich (1849-1905), whose pen name was "Shomer", was a Yiddish novelist and playwright of considerable repute. Having achieved notoriety among the Jewish masses for his suspenseful Yiddish novels, he was persuaded to come to the United States in 1889 to write for the burgeoning Yiddish theatre in New York.
181. Moses Seifert (1850-?) was a scholar and author who came to the United States in 1887. Seifert was born in Kovno and was given a traditional religious education as well as substantial exposure to Russian and Polish literature. His broad education included training in medicine. After coming to America, Seifert was involved primarily in the Jewish press. He worked for "The Jewish World" and he was a contributor to a variety of Hebrew journals including "Ha-Meliz", "Ha-Carmel",

- "Ha-Ivri", and many others (cf., B. Z. Eisenstadt, p. 46).
182. Micha Josef Berdyczewski (1865-1921) was an influential Hebrew and Yiddish author. An exceptional thinker, Berdyczewski published prolifically, and was widely read and admired.
  183. cf., "Viddui" - Confessional from Yom Kippur service in the traditional prayerbook.
  184. Proverbs 17:14.
  185. Louis Marshall attests to Masliansky's self-description in a letter from Marshall to Masliansky in celebration of the latter's seventieth birthday, May 24, 1926:  
 "Of few men can it be truthfully said what must be said of you, that in the thousands of addresses which you have delivered. . .you have never made a remark which should be regretted. . ., (or) indulged in bitter personalities or vituperation. . .".
  186. "הר שרפה" is apparently a pseudonym for a poet on the staff of "The Jewish World". The expression means "a burnt mountain" or volcano (cf., Jeremiah 51:25). Perhaps this refers to "The Jewish World's" staff poet, Morris Rosenfeld (cf., supra, note 175c).
  187. Jacob Saphirstein (1854-1904) was significant in the development of the Yiddish press in the United States. Saphirstein was the founder and editor of the "Abend Post" ("Evening Post") and in 1901 he established "Der Morgan Journal".
  188. II Samuel 2:14.
  189. The Hebrew phrases "תורה שבכתב" and "תורה שבעל פה" refer to the Written Law and the Oral Law, respectively. Masliansky employs this play-on-words to describe the

cessation of his journalist endeavors and the return to his preaching.

190. It is fascinating to compare Masliansky's impressions of his visits to Boston to those of writer Charles Angoff (Memories of Boston. "The Menorah Journal", Valedictory Issue, Autumn-Winter, 1962. pp. 136-147). Angoff recalls the visits Masliansky made to Boston with great love and respect. Also, he paraphrases one of Masliansky's orations.
191. "Give me liberty, or give me death!"; a phrase used by the American Revolutionary Patrick Henry (1736-1799).
192. cf., Nedarim 48a.
193. Undoubtedly, Masliansky is referring to Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell's (1856-1943) 1922 announcement that he was considering a quota for Jews at that school. Shortly thereafter, many colleges and universities set up some sort of quota system designed to limit Jewish attendance.
194. Masliansky is perhaps referring to Professor George Foot Moore (1851-1931), who was the professor of Hebrew at Andover Theological Seminary at the time. Moore, whose great erudition in the Bible and in Rabbinic Judaism is admired to the present day, was later to become a Harvard professor of the history of religion.
195. The exact name of the synagogue to which Masliansky is referring is uncertain.
196. Hayim Sholom Shachor (?) was a rabbi who came to the United States in 1886 and served various congregations in Boston for many years. He obtained his rabbinical title in Kovno and served as a rabbi in Prussia prior to coming to the United States. He was a pioneer in

the establishment of Talmud Torah schools in Boston. He later served a congregation in upstate New York (cf., B. Z. Eisenstadt, p. 109).

197. Mr. S. Freedson ( "שפם הסופר" ). We have not succeeded in identifying this man.
198. Samuel (Zalman) Margolies (1878-1917) was the son of Rabbi Moses Zebulun Margolies (cf., infra, note 202). Samuel was born in Eastern Europe and came to the United States with his family in 1882. He returned to Europe in 1890 to obtain additional yeshivah training. In 1897, Samuel moved back to Boston to attend Harvard. After his graduation, he assumed the post of rabbi of Congregation Anshe Emeth in Cleveland. He was killed accidentally by an automobile in 1917. Masliansky evidently met Samuel prior to his becoming a rabbi in Cleveland.
199. Abraham S. Waldstein (1874-1932) was a scholar and an active participant in the Zionist movement in America. Constantly teaching Hebrew and contributing frequently to the Hebrew press, Waldstein spent many years living in Palestine where he taught at the "Herzlia" School.
200. Baruch Isaac Reinhartz (1848-?) was a successful businessman who devoted himself to philanthropy and support of Jewish scholars. Reinhartz received a traditional Jewish education in a yeshivah and came to Boston when he was eighteen years old. There, he made a living as a moneylender, and thereafter devoted himself to the welfare of Boston's Jewry (cf., B. Z. Eisenstadt, p. 102).
201. Kerem Yisrael (Israel's Vineyard). We have not succeeded in identifying this organization.
202. Moses Zebulun Margolies (Ramaz) (1851-1936) was born in

Kroza, Russia, studied in yeshivot, was ordained rabbi, and immigrated to the United States in 1882 in order to lead Boston's Jewish community. In 1906, Margolies was asked to become rabbi of New York's influential Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun. Margolies was President of both the Isaac Elchanan Yeshivah and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. The Ramaz School in New York was named after him.

203. Agudath Harabbonim is an Orthodox Rabbinical association established in 1902. One of its primary goals has been the establishment of Jewish day schools.
204. More precisely, it was the Greek generals who named Rabbath Ammon after the Emperor Ptolemy II (309-256 B.C.E.). Ptolemy II was known as Ptolemy Philadelphus, and the city was therefore called Philadelphia.
205. Eleazar Kleinberg (1832-1891) was already a distinguished scholar and dayan (judge) in Vilna when he was called to Philadelphia in 1889 to head Congregation B'nai Abraham. His sudden death two years later resulted in his son-in-law, B. L. Levinthal, being called to replace him (cf., Henry S. Morais, The Jews of Philadelphia, Philadelphia: Levytype Company, 1894).
206. Bernard L. Levinthal (1865-1952) was a noted rabbi in Philadelphia. A descendant of a line of respected rabbis, he was ordained by Isaac Elhanan Spektor (1817-1896) and Samuel Mohilewer (1824-1898) after studying in the Kovno Yeshivah. During his long career, Levinthal devoted much of his energy to the welfare of the Jewish community of Philadelphia.
207. Sabato Morais (1823-1897) was a founder of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Born in Leghorn, Italy, Morais immigrated to London to serve as a cantor in the

Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue. In 1851, he was called to Philadelphia to succeed Isaac Leeser (1806-1868) (cf., Moshe Davis, Sabato Morais, P.A.J.H.S., Vol. 37, 1947, pp. 55-93).

208. Mayer Sulzberger (1843-1923) was a jurist and Jewish communal leader. In addition to his involvement with the Baron de Hirsch Fund, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Young Men's Hebrew Association, Sulzberger was a founder and president of the American Jewish Committee.
209. The "Schehechyanu" is a prayer uttered when one has been permitted to live to another festival season, or another great moment in life. Its full text reads: "Blessed are you, O Lord Our God, Master of the universe who sustained us, preserved us, and caused us to arrive at this special time". Masliansky replaced the last clause that it might read ". . .and caused us to arrive at this special place"--meaning the United States of America.
210. Naphtali H. Imber (1856-1909) was a poet and author. His greatest renown came from his poem "Ha-Tikvah" which became the anthem of the Zionist movement and later the State of Israel. Imber travelled throughout Europe and settled in the United States where he spent his days as a struggling, eccentric poet barely eking out an existence.
211. Hillel Malachovsky (1860-1943) was for most of his life the head of a Talmud Torah school in New York. He first came to the United States in 1894, and lived in Pittsburgh working as a petty merchant. Later, he moved to Philadelphia where he taught Hebrew and contributed to the Hebrew press. Malachovsky moved to New York City in 1902 and was active in Hebrew circles there.



212. Isaac Jacob Weissberg (1841-1904) was one of the prominent Hebrew authors in Europe. In addition to his traditional religious education, Weissberg became fascinated by the Hebrew language at an early age. This interest drove him to becoming an expert on the language and its literature. In 1873, Weissberg established a school in Kiev for the study of the Hebrew language, and a large percentage of the great Hebraists of the subsequent generation studied with Weissberg. Weissberg was himself a frequent contributor to the Hebrew journals in Europe.
213. Leviticus 25:9.
214. Masliansky's description of the Liberty Bell is more fiction than fact. The Liberty Bell was not cast for the American Revolution, rather it was cast in London in the early 1750's and later purchased by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1752. When Masliansky first saw the Liberty Bell it was almost 150 years old.
- Also, the "sanctified concept of 'chosenness'" refers to the Judaic tradition that asserts the Jewish People were chosen by God to be the possessors of the Torah, and to be God's witness to all other peoples.
215. "The Society for Hebrew Literature". We have not succeeded in identifying this society.
216. Jacob Margolis. We have not succeeded in identifying this man.
217. Undoubtedly, Masliansky read or heard these names somewhere, but his unfamiliarity with the matter is all too obvious. In the first place, Masliansky breaks up names which refer to one individual, indicating he believes them to be the family names of two different individuals (i.e., Lazarus and Davis is actually one

name: Lazarus David). Second, he cites names incorrectly (viz., Uriel and Orisko must refer to one individual known as Uriel Moresco). Finally, as Jacob R. Marcus has carefully pointed out in his opus, The Colonial American Jew, 1492-1776, information pertaining to most of these names comes from late nineteenth or twentieth century sources, and cannot at present be documented by any known eighteenth century source (cf., J. R. Marcus, p. 1447, note 22).

The following is a capsule summary of the data known about the names Masliansky mentions which currently have no eighteenth century documentation:

- a) Joseph Bindona was a shopkeeper in Montreal in 1768. He married a certain Ann Wiggins in Church.
- b) Emanuel de Cordova was a fur trader in Montreal in 1768. He served the British during the French and Indian War.
- c) Fernandez de Fonseca came to Montreal in the 1760's upon invitation of the British.
- d) Hananiel Garcia was an army supply officer during the French and Indian War. He worked in Montreal in 1760.
- e) Simon Levy was a Canadian merchant who apparently worked in Montreal as late as 1778.
- f) Isaac de Miranda fought for the English in the French and Indian War. He worked in Montreal around 1770.
- g) Uriel Moresco lived in Montreal in the early 1770's.

The following is a capsule summary of the data known about the names Masliansky mentions which do have eighteenth century documentation:

- a) Lazarus David (1734-1776) was a prominent Montreal merchant (cf., Malcolm H. Stern, First American Jewish Families, 1978. pp. 276-277).

- b) Abraham Franks (1721-1797) lived in Quebec until 1771, and after that date in Montreal where he was a prominent Canadian merchant (cf., M. H. Stern, p. 75).
- c) Samuel Jacobs (d. 1786) was a shopowner who first came to Canada during the French and Indian War when he worked as a supplier for the British. He moved to Quebec after the war. His family became Catholic (cf., J. R. Marcus, p. 1448, note 30).
- d) Levi Solomons (1730?-1792) came to North America as a merchant about the year 1760. He eventually became a large dealer of furs in Montreal. During the American Revolution, Solomons was a supplier to the American forces (cf., M. H. Stern, pp. 276-7).

For further information on all of the above, see also: Joseph R. Rosenbloom, A Biographical Dictionary of Early American Jews, Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1960 and also see J. R. Marcus, Op. cit.

- 218. The Baron de Hirsch Fund was first established in 1891 with the goal of assisting Jewish immigrants to settle in the United States and Canada. The fund was especially interested in settling Jews on the soil.
- 219. Gittin 55b (cf., Pseudo-Jonathan of Judges IV:5).
- 220. Aaron Mordecai Ashinsky (1866-1954) was an early leader in the religious Zionist movement. After receiving ordination in Poland, he immigrated to the United States in 1895. He spent some months in Detroit and Syracuse, but left for Montreal to serve as rabbi of a congregation there. While in Montreal, Ashinsky organized Canada's first Zionist society, and he was extensively involved in the Zionist movement. He was a founding member of Agudath Harabbonim. After the turn of the century, Ashinsky left Canada to head the Beth Ha-Midrash

Ha-Gadol in Pittsburgh, where he remained the rest of his life.

221. Lazarus Cohen (1844-1914) was a chairman of the Colonization Committee of the Baron de Hirsch Fund (see supra, note 218).
222. Adam Rosenberg (1858-1928) was a pioneer in the Hibbat Zion movement. Rosenberg was among the first to join a Hovevei Zion group, doing so in New York in 1886. Rosenberg actually established an organization to help Jews return to Palestine, the Shavei Zion Society (1891). A tireless worker, Rosenberg struggled to unify the Hibbat Zion groups, and he called an international conference of the Hibbat Zion in 1891 and in 1894. Rosenberg was asked to address the First Zionist Congress of 1897 on the attitude of American Jewry toward Palestine.
223. The Shavei Zion Society (founded by Adam Rosenberg; cf., supra, note 222), sought to raise funds to aid in the actual settlement of Jews in Palestine. The society did have several locales (including Montreal), but its inability to raise monies greatly handicapped its effectiveness.
224. The Federation of Zionist Societies of Canada was organized by representatives of all the Hovevei Zion chapters who had gathered in Montreal, November, 1899. The name was officially changed to the Zionist Organization of Canada in 1923.
225. Clarence de Sola (1858-1920) was elected the first general secretary of the Federation of Zionist Societies of Canada in 1899 (cf., supra, note 224). He later became that organization's president.

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