

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

Acknowledgements

I want to thank Gary Zola, Kevin Proffitt and the Fellowship Awards Committee, and the spirit of Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, zal, who resides here. Thanks to the staff of the Archives and to my former colleagues at the library who brought me everything I requested and to David Gilner who provided me with a key to a dormitory room where I could take an occasional siesta. I think it is the same little room I occupied when I was a Franklin Fellow in 1979!

I also want to thank Dov Bloom of Kfar Yattir for coming to my home in Ganei Omer with a satchel full of materials he had collected about his great grandfather Joseph Selig Glick. I thank my daughter, Batya Selavan, for her hospitality at her home in Greenhills, who could not come to hear this talk because she had to work. A special acknowledgement to my parents, Esther Malka and Tsevi Moshe Cohen, aleyhem hashalom, especially my mother who worked in a factory into her late sixties so that my brother and I would have a solid Jewish education.

In 1969, when I was living in Pittsburgh and both my children, Barnea and Batya, were in school all day, I was approached by an old friend and former classmate at Dropsie College, Professor Ailon Shiloh, of the Graduate School of Public Health of the University of Pittsburgh. Would I be interested in working as his research assistant on a local oral history project for \$400 a month? That was more than I earned as an afternoon Hebrew school teacher so I said yes. My employer was the Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Jewish Women. My main asset, it seems, was my knowledge of Yiddish and Jewish history.

My involvement in the project led to the publication of two books, *By Myself I'm a Book!* and *My Voice was Heard*, my enrolling as a full time student at the University of Pittsburgh and an M.A. and Ph.D. with theses based on the history of the Jews of Pittsburgh. I became friendly with some of the women in charge of the project and with many of the respondents.

In talking about their early years in Pittsburgh, some respondents had mentioned the name of Bobbe Hannah Sandusky, the midwife. I was intrigued and asked for more information. I was told that her granddaughter, Jennie Lencher, wife of Judge Benjamin Lencher, lived in Oakland. I phoned Mrs. Lencher and she invited me over. While we were talking about her grandmother, Bobbe Hannah, she asked me if I could read Hebrew. When I said yes, she brought me a copy of a book written by her father, Ralph B. Raphael, *She'elat Hayehudim*, and asked if I would be interested in reading it. Years later when the late Dr. Abraham Karp visited Pittsburgh, he asked me to introduce him to Mrs. Lencher, and she presented her father's writings to Dr. Karp for the American Jewish Historical Society.

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

One of the women who had worked on the questionnaire used for the Oral History Project was Evelyn Bloom. I knew her as the mother of a classmate of my son's and the wife of Al Bloom, editor of the Jewish Chronicle, who published my book reviews and letters to the editor. She told me that her grandfather, Joseph Selig Glick, had published a Yiddish newspaper in Pittsburgh, Der Volksfreund and she had some of his books. I discovered that he had published a second newspaper, Di Idishe Post, of which there were no copies extant in Pittsburgh. I found the hard copy in the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library and looked for a way to have the newspapers microfilmed. When I saw a notice of a Fishman Foundation Grant in Yiddish Culture, I applied, and was given money to microfilm the newspaper, a copy of which was housed at the University of Pittsburgh, and enough left over for a formal ceremony at which the head of the German Department, Professor Neubauer, where I taught Yiddish (as a non-tenure stream lecturer) spoke and which was attended by grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Joseph Selig Glick. We even had enough money for kosher refreshments!

As I became more and more involved in the history of Jewish immigrant life in Pittsburgh and vicinity I encountered the name of Isaac Kahanowitz of Greensburg. I taught at the Hebrew Institute where one day I found pamphlets and books, bearing his bookplate, in the trash. I asked the woman who had been hired as librarian (she was not a librarian, but her daughter taught Sunday School) if I could have these books and she was happy to get rid of them. The librarian at Hillel Academy, my children's school, a real librarian, showed me shelves full of volumes completely unsuited to the needs of the students, and asked me if I wanted them. So I borrowed a cart from Giant Eagle Supermarket and trundled home bound volumes of Hatsefira, Die Welt, HaToren, the complete works of Sholem Aleichem, and other books, all bearing the bookplate of Isaac Kahanowitz. All the plates were numbered. Some of the books had comments in Hebrew on the flyleaves. I asked around and discovered that Mr. Kahanowitz's niece, Gertrude Shapiro lived in Greensburg, thirty miles east of Pittsburgh. She would be happy to talk to me. I visited her, and she told me a little about her uncle. He had a large library of books of Jewish interest and allowed her to use his encyclopedias when she had a school assignment. She explained that he uncle had died suddenly and his heirs, his nieces and nephews, did not know how to dispose of his library. They donated some books to various synagogues in the area and some to Jewish educational institutions, i.e. Hebrew Institute and Hillel Academy. Since many of the synagogues in the small towns of Western Pennsylvania had closed or combined with others, many of the books disappeared. Then she mentioned that she still had several hundred volumes in her basement. Would I like them? I was not dressed for the occasion but I could not resist and I went down to the basement and saw cartons full of bound and unbound volumes in Hebrew and Yiddish and English. I picked up various books and when Miss Shapiro heard me oohing and ahing she decided that maybe there was "gold in them thar dust covered papers" and took back her offer to give them to me. She asked me for advice on how to sell them. I could not help her there, but I persuaded her to donate them to her Alma Mater, the University of Pittsburgh. Pitt sent a truck and picked them up. However, Hillman Library did not have a Judaica Bibliographer so some of the books spent some years in an obscure corner of the library's basement. The Judaica Bibliographer finally

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

hired, I shall not mention her name, had padded her c.v. She had taught Sunday School and barely knew the alef bet. I visited her once and found her method of "cataloging" items she could not find on OCLC. They were deposited in the circular file. I again inherited some of the Kahanowitz library, given permission by the Acquisitions Librarian to take anything I wanted from the "v" varf avek section.

I was invited by Maita Levine, aleha hashalom, of Pittsburgh, granddaughter of the late Rabbi Moses S. Sivitz, to look at a ledger her grandfather had left. I told her it was a pinkas, the record book of an organization of young men in her grandfather's birthplace, Zhitovian, Lithuania. She checked with her cousins and they all decided to entrust me with the pinkas, Kinyan Torah, to be deposited at the American Jewish Archives when I went there under the auspices of the Harvey Franklin Fellowship in 1979. Some of you may remember Blessing Sivitz, widow of Moses Sivitz, the rabbi's grandson, and a granddaughter, Miriam Mann, aleha hashalom.

Some years before his death, Dr. Marcus wrote and asked me to write him whatever I knew about Zionism in Pittsburgh. I collected various notes I had accumulated through the years and sent him a four page single spaced document. This was the genesis of my decision to apply for a Fellowship with the very ambitious title: The Early Zionist Movement in Western Pennsylvania. I shall be confining my study to Pittsburgh with only minor mentions of its satellite towns. But anyone desiring details of names of organizations and their slates of officers can consult the paper I sent to Dr. Marcus (there are some errors which need to be corrected) or Jacob Feldman's The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania which lists all the Jewish organizations he could find in the small towns he visited. He actually went from place to place to track down his data and it is all there in meticulous detail. My approach will be anecdotal and based on the lives of some of the leaders of early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania.

The early Zionists in Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania were Hovevei Tsiyon, Lovers of Zion. They were adherents of groups that sprang up like mushrooms after the terrible " storms in the south", the pogroms in Russia of 1881-1882. Their progenitors were Hebraists, like Avraham Mapu (1808-1867) whose Ahavat Tsiyon (1853) became the model for the name of the movement, Hibbat Tsiyon, Love of Zion. This book is considered the first modern Hebrew novel and it and Mapu's other works were read voraciously by the generation of yeshiva bakhurim who joined the Hovevei Tsiyon. According to Eisig Silbershlag, "...to a large extent, Zionism was the creation of Hebrew literature."

Other precursors were Moses Hess (1812-1875) who in Rome and Jerusalem (1862) wrote about a future Jewish state in Palestine.

Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai (1798-1878) of Serbia taught that all of Israel should return to the land of its fathers and that the settlement of Erets Yisrael would solve the Jewish question.

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by
Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

Another rabbi, Rabbi Tsevi Hirsh Kalischer, (1795-1874) of Thorn, Poland was a strong advocate of settlement in Erets Yisrael. He believed that the redemption of the Jews would come as a result of observing the laws of the Torah in Erets Yisrael. His book, *Derishat Tsiyon*, (1862) was the basic document explaining the return to Zion to Orthodox Jews.

Although Hess, Alkalai, and Kalischer laid strong ideological foundations for Hibbat Tsiyon, more immediate leaders were members of the next generation. Moshe Leyb Lilienblum (1830-1892) reacted to the horrors of the pogroms by saying, "we are strangers and will remain strangers in this environment." His book, *The Jewish Question and Erets Yisrael* (1881) presented three alternatives: to remain in the present condition of helplessness; to assimilate completely; to live normal lives in Erets Yisrael, the land of Israel's fathers.

Rabbi Shemuel Mohliver of Bialystok (1824-1898) signed an announcement that aliya to Erets Yisrael was preferable to emigration to the United States because only in Erets Yisrael could the Torah be fully observed. From 1876 he had argued that the time had come to return to our land. Mohliver founded Benei Tsiyon, one of the first Hovevei Tsiyon groups.

More and more groups were organized, outside Russia as well. Between 1882-1884 sixty Hovevei Tsiyon societies were organized in Russia. Hibbat Tsiyon was not a homogeneous movement. Only a few groups actually realized the ideal of aliya. BILU (Beys Ya'akov Lekhu Ve-Nelkho) was founded in Kharkov by a group of intellectuals in February 1882. BILU published its call to aliya in *Ha-Melits*, the first modern Hebrew periodical, founded by Alexander Tsederbaum in 1860. The society grew to a few hundred but failed to collect enough money and could not get official backing. Nevertheless a nucleus went to Erets Yisrael and settled there, enduring disease, famine, and attacks by Arabs. Considered part of the First Aliya, the members of BILU had an important role in the national Jewish movement.

There was a strong need for central leadership. Yehuda Leyb (Leon) Pinsker (1821-1891) saw no future for Jews in Russia. Their only hope was Auto-emancipation (1882) Pinsker's ideas were a central force in the formation of the Hibbat Tsiyon movement at the Kattowitz Conference in November 1884. There an organizational framework was set up and methods of spreading its ideas were formulated. The tens of societies from all over Russia and Europe with their many names, e.g. Miklat le-Yisrael, Admat Yeshurun, She'erit Yisrael, etc. united under the banner of Hibbat Tsiyon.

However, after Ahad Ha-am visited the colonies in Palestine, he wrote "Lo zu ha-derekh" This is not the way. He felt that Erets Yisrael should be a merkaz ruhani, a spiritual center, and that efforts should be made in the galut to teach and inspire Jews.

Most Hovevei Tsiyon did not go to Erets Yisrael. They went to western Europe, England, South Africa, and the United States. There they founded Hibbat Tsiyon societies as well

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

as societies for the advancement of Hebrew education. Joseph Isaac Bluestone (1860-1934) [note born the same year as Herzl] of Kalwarya, came to New York in 1880. In 1882 he advocated the founding of a *hibbat tsiyon* organization. In 1884 there was a unified group in New York called *Hevra Hovevei Tsiyon*, *Hovevei Tsiyon Society*. Groups appeared in many cities with large Jewish populations: Baltimore; Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, and even Omaha Nebraska. In his autobiography Hillel Malachowsky wrote " I founded the *Hovevei Tsiyon* and the *Hovevei Sefat Ever* in Pittsburgh in 1890"

Hillel Malachowsky (1860-1943) [born same year as Herzl] was born in *Novy Mush*, part of the estate of Count *Baranovich* which later became the *shtetl Baranovich*, province of Minsk. His cousin, *Yitshak Ya'akov Weissberg*, (1840-1904) the writer, was born in nearby *Polonka*. These names resonate with me because my late mother-in-law *Batya* was born in *Polonka*. Her father, *Yehiel Starobinsky*, was a *hovev tsiyon* and a Hebrew teacher. He must have known *Weissberg* and possibly also *Malachowsky*. In 1885 *Malachowsky* left *Polonka* for fear of being drafted into the Russian army. He first went to London where he met a group of *Hebraists*. *Nahum Sokolow* advised him to go to America. *Malachowsky* wrote in his autobiography, " I had the address of an acquaintance from *Berdichev* in Pittsburgh who had preceded me by one year. After two weeks aboard ship I came to smoky dirty Pittsburgh ". *Malachowsky* was appalled to discover that his friends, observant Jews in *Berdichev*, had completely thrown off the yoke of *Yiddishkayt*. They worked on *Shabbat* and mixed milk and meat dishes. His friend told him that the only way to start out was to peddle. So *Malachowsky* bought some merchandise on credit and went out to the outlying settlements as a peddler. He was miserable. He wrote that the Jews in Pittsburgh were boors and ignoramuses, peddlers and shopkeepers. There were no Jewish newspapers or schools. He was very lonely. His cousin, *Y.Y. Weissberg* wrote and asked him to send money for a ticket for his daughter *Rivka*, and he would pay him back. (He never paid) *Rivka* came to Pittsburgh. What could he do with a single girl?, so he married her. He writes of her admiringly. She kept a good Jewish home. He wrote. " I am what I am, but I want my table to be strictly kosher, so that if pious relatives or friends visit they will not refuse to eat at my table." Unfortunately his wife's three pregnancies ended in stillbirths and she could have no more pregnancies. This too, may have added to *Malachowsky's* bitterness. A failure as a peddler, *Malachowsky* opened a small stationery, tobacco, and newspaper shop.

The *Hibbat Tsiyon* group he founded did not thrive. He wrote in a letter to *Ha-Pisgah*, Volume one, number 19, 1890, "The *Hovevei Tsiyon Society* is in a deep sleep and is there still a breath of life to waken her from her slumber? Who is at fault?" He wrote to his cousin *Y.Y. Weissberg* "Would you believe that not one issue of *Ha-Melits* or *Hatsefira* can be found in Pittsburgh this year, for the Hebrew language has sunk so low in America and particularly in Pittsburgh." He sent satirical sketches to the Hebrew periodicals published in Europe, some of which seem to be about Pittsburgh.

In 1894 *Malachowsky* published a Yiddish periodical, *Di Toyb* (The Dove) in which the best writers of Russia participated. "...which lasted only three months and ceased publication because of the economic depression." *Malachowsky* left for Philadelphia in

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

1895 and in 1902 moved to New York, where he found congenial company. He was close to Joseph Bluestone and was involved with him in the formation of the Central Board of Jewish Education.

[I found a penny postcard written by Hillel Malachowsky to Rabbi Jacob Raisin, informing him that he was sending him volume two of his autobiography and would soon be celebrating his eightieth birthday. I have given the postcard to the Archives.]

There was another Malachowsky in Pittsburgh, Hillel's cousin Jacob, who came with his family in 1887, worked as a printer, and was very active in Zionist affairs. Jacob was very observant. He knew many languages, Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, English, German, French, and even Italian. But his most unusual acquisition was Esperanto. He was one of the United States delegates to the World Congress of Esperanto in Constantinople in 1914. However it was cancelled because of the outbreak of World War One, so Jacob returned home to Pittsburgh. The story is told that during Esperanto meetings where lectures and discussions were conducted in Esperanto, when the members went out to the corridor for a break, they spoke another international language, Yiddish.

On February 17, 1893, a notice appeared in the local Yiddish weekly *Der Volksfreund*, about the reorganization of the *Hibbat Tsiyon* organization *Dorshe Tsiyon*. Everyone was invited to attend the meeting at eight, on February 18, at the home of Ralph B. Raphael, 32 Townsend Street. The president was R.B. Raphael; secretary M. Rubin; treasurer J.S. Glick.

Der Volksfreund was the peculiarly personal production of a man of wit, learning, and great magnanimity. He was not a stylist in either Yiddish or Hebrew, but his readers did not require great style. The newspaper was a one man operation by a one man dynamo.

Yosef Selig Glick (1852-1922) was born in Patsenel, Province of Kovno, Lithuania. His mother died when he was three years old and his stepmother was not kind. He began the study of Hebrew at a very early age. He believed that if he prayed to God in good Hebrew, his stepmother would not treat him so harshly. He was also known for his fine penmanship --people would come to him to write their letters when he was still a child, and for his artistic ability. At age eight he was sent to Grinkeshok to study with a melamed who beat him cruelly. Later he studied at various yeshivot and was certified as a *shohet* (ritual slaughterer) and *bodek* (inspector of slaughtered animals), but did not work at this very long. He got a job teaching Hebrew and Torah in Boguslav, in Ukraine. There, at age twenty he married Hava Devora Rabinowitz, of the Karlin Lithuanian hassidic dynasty, a very unusual match in those days --a Litvak misnaged with a hassid's daughter!

His father-in-law promised the young couple a year's *kest*, that is board and lodging. However, while looking through Glick's books, he found a book of Hebrew grammar. This marked Glick as a *maskil*, hence an *apikoyres*, a non-believer, and the *kest* ceased.

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

Glick tried a number of ventures, a lending library, teaching, dealing in precious stones, etc.

In 1887 the family immigrated to the United States and settled in Pittsburgh. There were members of the Glick family already living in Western Pennsylvania in Delmont and Mount Pleasant. (Peter Glick, a second cousin, was the first Jewish Secretary of Labor in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.) Glick started out by teaching Hebrew, but in 1889 he began publishing his Yiddish weekly, *Der Volksfreund*. He wrote the stories, mostly in Yiddish but also in Hebrew, in the section called "Bei Doar Ivri" also borrowed some items from European periodicals, set the type, edited, printed the pages with a foot press, and he and his son Shabtai (Sam in America) folded the pages and sent out the newspapers to subscribers for \$1 a year. From April 1903 to July 1909 he published another weekly, *Di Idishe Post*. *Der Volksfreund* appeared on Fridays, and was more of a journal. The *Post* appeared on Tuesdays and was oriented more to local news. His style, in both Hebrew and Yiddish, was the style of the *Haskalah*, somewhat flowery, depending for its figures of speech on quotations from the Bible, the Talmud, and other books of learning. He assumed that his readers were, like himself, observant Jews, lovers of Zion, and conversant with the various sources from which he quoted. His newspapers were platforms for Zionism. He was an indefatigable versifier, turning out two to three occasional poems a week, in two languages, many of them using acrostics or other medieval Hebrew literary devices. Glick loved to pun. Some of his puns were in five languages --Yiddish, Hebrew, Aramaic, Russian and English. For example, in a humorous article on Passover, a hassid addresses him as Reb Yosef Selig. He explains that he is not yet Mister Glick, because his mother-in-law is still living and "ein mistor me-hamoto" (there is no hiding from His wrath) which he translates as "there is no mister from one's mother-in-law." Not only that, he continues, his mother-in-law did not consider him "der miester" (the ugliest) for, she said, there were people who would like to look on Shabbat as he looked during the week. He wrote occasional poems as well, an ode to Herzl on Tamuz 24, 1905, the anniversary of his death; a long poem on the sinking of the Titanic; a poem dedicated to the twenty first Zionist convention in 1918, with the refrain, "Ki ke-amur akh tov le-Yisrael selah, where akh, alef khaf, equals 21 numerically, "For as it is said, it is only good for Israel." When Ze'ev Shur, the editor of *Hapisgah* died in 1910, Jacob Kabakoff noted that "Only Yosef Selig Glick, editor of the Yiddish weekly *Der Folksfraynd*, in Pittsburgh, published an eight stanza eulogy."

Glick was a well known figure in the community in his top hat and frock coat. He eked out a living by doing job printing, and selling ship tickets, books, and Jewish ritual items. Glick was quite ill in 1908 (perhaps that is why he ceased publishing *Di Idishe Post* in 1909) and was in financial difficulties. His friend, Charles Sachs, wrote a plea for help which was published in the *Jewish Criterion* January 1, 1909. As the years went by he collected many of his articles and poems and published them as books, twelve books in Hebrew at \$2 each and eight in Yiddish at \$1 each.

On February 2, 1894, Glick notes. "A young man in Pittsburgh plans to publish a Yiddish newspaper. Good luck. We dedicate this poem to you." He quotes a satirical poem by

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

Adam Hakohen Levinson: " Not every thread can make a coat nor every oak become a mast, not every plant can be ground into flour, nor can every blood give birth to Mandelstam." [The poet may have been referring to Mandelstamm the Zionist] Obviously Glick is referring to Malachowsky. Since Glick could barely scratch out a living he wondered if there was room for another Yiddish newspaper.

The Dorshe Tsiyon Society reorganized in 1893 flourished. Young women joined the Daughters of Zion. The Jewish Criterion, the organ of Reform Jews in Pittsburgh, carried notices of the meetings of these groups. In 1897, after the World Zionist Congress, the Dorshe Tsiyon became the nucleus of the growing Zionist movement in Pittsburgh which was again reorganized. A Hebrew Reading Room was opened. When the Federation of American Zionists was founded in 1898 the Pittsburgh Zionist groups joined. The Jewish Criterion had to admit in May of 1899 that "The Zionistic movement in this city is making great progress...One society, Dorshe Zion,.contains among its members some of the most prominent and most intelligent citizens of the Hill District, Mr. Joseph Glick, the editor of the Volksfreund, being its president. This society did much to promote the sale of shares of the Jewish Colonization Bank..."

In May, 1899, a group of young, English speaking men, founded Tiphereth Zion. Sam Glick was one of the leaders as was the lawyer Yeshayahu Sachs. [I think this is Charles Sachs, whose sisters Flossie and Jessie were the mothers of Bud Yorkin and David Selznick of Hollywood]. In Hapigah, in September 1899, there is a letter in Hebrew from Benny Lichter (later Rabbi Lichter) praising Joseph Selig Glick and his son Sam. Benny was a member of Pirhei Tsiyon (Blossoms of Zion) a group for young people aged twelve to seventeen. Benny Lichter was the president and William Sivitz, son of Rabbi Moses Simon Sivitz was financial and corresponding secretary.

In 1900, at the dedication of the Tiphereth Zion Society Hall, seven hundred young people enthusiastically sang and cheered for the cause of Zion.

In 1903 the Federation of American Zionists Convention was held in Pittsburgh and given much publicity by Der Volksfreund and The Jewish Criterion. There are lists of the preparations for receptions and mass meetings and the performance of a choir of fifty voices. The Honorable Josiah Cohen (a member of Reform Rodef Shalom) would preside. There would be a banquet on Monday, June 8, and a lawn fete and tour of the city on June 9. There would also be a discussion of Jewish education.(Unfortunately the complete report on the convention, in the Criterion, June 12, is missing pages 7-8 in the volume at HUC Library. I am unable to read microfilm because of my vision)

The convention was dedicated to the memory of Ralph B.Raphael, who had died a month before.

Raphael Dov Ber Wizansky was born in Kalwarya, Lithuania, in 1856. Although he was only fifteen years old when he came to Pittsburgh in 1871, he had already studied in yeshivot. He changed his name to Ralph B. Raphael because he wanted to emphasize his

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

love for Hebrew. Although he had no formal education after his arrival in America, he taught himself English, astronomy, how to play the violin (he also composed music) and continued to read and write Hebrew. He was a frequent contributor to the Hebrew press and wrote English well enough to have numerous articles printed in the Jewish Criterion. He married young into one of the best known families in Pittsburgh's growing Lithuanian Jewish community. His mother-in-law, Bobbe Hannah Sandusky, presided over 3,500 live births between 1870-1910. Raphael and his wife had ten children (one died young) and he supported his family by practicing a now forgotten art -- the fashioning of human hair into brooches and watch fobs. According to his daughter, Jennie Lencher, "he could do anything with his hands," and once wove an entire house and its furnishings out of hair.[After his death many of the things he had made were thrown out. His wife continued the business but made wigs and toupees instead of watch fobs. She would go out on the road and sleep at the homes of her customers who prepared special dishes for her.]

Raphael was a firm believer in working the soil as part of one's education. In the 1890's he bought a farm in Baden, in Beaver County, about 21 miles north of Pittsburgh where he, his oldest sons, and a farm hand, raised cows and chickens and vegetables. Ill health forced the family to return to Pittsburgh where he opened a men's haberdashery shop.

When Malachowsky was complaining about the lack of intellectuals in Pittsburgh he seemed to be unaware the presence there of the Hebraist Raphael. Raphael worked for many years on his book, *She'elat Hayehudim* published in 1893 by Ephraim Deinard on his press in Newark, New Jersey. The book had three parts, "She'elat Hayehudim", "Nahlat Avot", and "Emek Yehoshafat". It is prefaced by a 12 stanza poem in a rather pessimistic vein.

In the first part of his book Raphael deals with the various aspects of the Jewish Question. He sees only one hope for the survival of the Jewish people.

" The only hope which remains for us is to create a national center... and there is no land under the heavens which is better suited for this than the land of our fathers, for it has great power to draw to it most of the wise men of our people from the diaspora."

He repeats the criticisms which may be raised to oppose this idea.

"...why should not Israel settle in the lands of Europe or America, why should it pick a wasteland ruled by Asiatic barbarians? ...how can we give our lives, property and peace into the hands of barbarians, and who will guarantee that they will not attack us in their constant wanderings as they sometimes do their Christian neighbors? ...who will guarantee that the Ottoman kings and their sons after them will be as merciful as the most righteous Sultan Abdul Hamid now sitting upon the throne in Turkey?...how can we settle all of Israel on the lands of our fathers, it can hardly hold one fifth of our people who today number eight million, and can this wasteland provide sustenance for its Jewish residents who have never learned to work the soil which requires skillful hands and

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

labor?. Will the Christian nations allow us to settle the land which is holy to them too, where we will be as an open refutation of their belief and their messiah?...Do we ourselves lack superstitions and nonsense that we should add to them the meanderings of the fanatics in Jerusalem?... how can we unify all the different parties in Israel that differ in their temperaments and philosophies as the east from the west?"

Raphael presents reasonable and logical answers to each of these questions. As to the last question he answers that it is the Hovevei Tsiyon party which will unite all the Jews "for it is the party of moderation in its beliefs in the Torah of Israel and in the future of our nation ... but does not put all its hopes on miracles and wonders only."

In the last part of his book Raphael projects into the future a situation in which representatives of all faiths will sit in a body, and they will decree that the Jews will have all of Palestine under Ottoman rule with a Christian committee in Jerusalem to guard the Christian holy places. Any Jews who wish to leave their homes and settle in Palestine may do so. The Jews would raise a national guard and be completely independent in internal affairs, as a republic. Turkey would be responsible for foreign affairs. Jews would be ruled by a Sanhedrin elected for ten year periods under a Jewish president and vice president. All the members of the Sanhedrin must be Jews from birth. [I have translated this decree into English, but it is too long to read it here.]

After publication of his book, Raphael was free to devote his time to the reorganization of Dorshe Tsiyon. He practiced what he preached and his older children, boys and girls, were given good Jewish educations. (Jennie Lichter was only four years old when her father died so she did not know any Hebrew) His older children were also active as officers in the various Zionist societies in Pittsburgh. On June 21, 1900 there was a mass meeting at Sha'are Torah Congregation, of the Dorshe Tsiyon, the Tiphereth Zion (the boys' group) and the Daughters of Zion (the girls' group). The Jewish Criterion reported: "Mr. Glick, president of Dorshe Zion, opened. Rabbi Sivitz gave an address as did Mr. Morris Neaman, president of Tifphereth Zion. The surprise of the evening was an address by Miss Rose Raphael, one of the foremost young ladies of the Daughters of Zion, on Zionism and what Jewish women have done for our race which was a masterpiece! This was perhaps the first time in the history of an Orthodox Congregation for a young lady to ascend the pulpit and address the assembly." {The Criterion reprinted her talk. I have a copy if anyone wishes to see it.]

It is no accident that this meeting was held at Sha'are Torah and was addressed by Rabbi Sivitz. According to Eisig Silberschlag in "Zionism and Hebraism in America," ..."the bulk of the Orthodox rabbinate in this country and in Europe was anti-Zionist at the turn of the century." However, Abraham Beck, in Exponents and Philosophy of Religious Zionism claims that "from all indications one may conclude that traditional Jews were the first Zionists in the United States. They launched the movement of political Zionism in America." This was true in Pittsburgh. Joseph Selig Glick and Ralph B. Raphael were Orthodox and the earliest Zionist groups were formed by Orthodox Jews. Rabbi Moses Simon Sivitz, and later, Rabbi M. Ashinsky, were strong supporters of Zionism.

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

Professor Kimmy Caplan, who did his research at HUC Library when I worked there, wrote a long article, "The Concerns of an Immigrant Rabbi: The Life and Sermons of Rabbi Moshe Shimon Sivitz," which I have drawn upon. Sivitz was born in Zhitovyan, Kovno Province, Lithuania, in November, 1855. He studied at various yeshivot, including Telz Yeshiva, where he received rabbinical ordination from its head, Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, and in Kovno, where he received ordination from Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spektor, for whom Yeshiva University's rabbinical school is named.

Sivitz came to the United States in 1886 and served in Baltimore for a few years. In 1888 the Sivitz family moved to Pittsburgh where Rabbi Sivitz served a number of congregations, finally at Sha'are Torah, where he remained (except for a brief stint in Cleveland because of shul politics) until his death in July 1936. [He was followed by Rabbi Bernard Poupko who was president of the Religious Zionists of America, and who was rabbi of Sha'are Torah for many decades.] He was a noted scholar and wrote an important work on the Jerusalem Talmud. [If you have seen the Israeli movie "Footnote" you may remember that the scholarly feud in the plot deals with the Jerusalem Talmud]

Rabbi Sivitz was a strong supporter of Jewish education. In Pittsburgh children were taught by private melamdim in their homes, and the melamdim were not always pedagogues or scholars. He proposed the idea of opening a community school 1885. This led to the establishment of the first Talmud Torah in Pittsburgh in 1886. The school moved around a number of times but in 1889 had its own building. [In 1924 the student body had grown from 100 to 500]

Rabbi Sivitz served as a friend and advisor to some of the Zionists in Pittsburgh, although he himself was not a member of any organization. He had a "unique interest in language" which brought him close to such Hebraists as Raphael. He was very critical of Reform Judaism and often preached against its adherents. He often spoke about how wealth was detrimental to religious observance. Of course Orthodox rabbis in particular were paid very poorly. "Honest people respect Reform rabbis more than the pious rabbis, saying they are great rabbis, the proof being that their salary is ten thousand dollars a year." [Caplan] It is interesting to note that Benjamin Gordon, in his autobiography, "Between Two Worlds: Memoirs of a Physician", mentions meeting Rabbi Sivitz of Pittsburgh. Gordon was then a theology student in New York. "One afternoon, while the rabbi and a few of his students were at the study table engaged in studying the tractate "Hulin", Rabbi Moshe Sivitz of Pittsburgh came in...to get an endorsement from the rabbi for his book Hekar Da'at...I knew the subject well...After the study session was over, Rabbi Sivitz congratulated me cordially. When I told him that I derived my livelihood by going from house to house teaching children, he remarked, 'This is a waste of time; such a profession is for older persons tied down with family ties, and not for a young man like you.' "Rabbi Sivitz sent him to his wealthy sister, Mrs. R. Isaacs, where he was invited to live with her family to teach her children.

Dorshe Tsiyon added the word Mizrahi to its name in 1902. Yosef Salmon writes in AJA, 1996, "By the time that the central Mizrahi organization was founded in America,

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

various Zionist societies in New York, Pittsburgh, and Saint Louis had already identified themselves with the Mizrahi mode of Zionism and practical work, such as the purchase of land in Eretz-Israel, had been undertaken. As a purely East European movement the American Mizrahi was inclined to active involvement in settlement and education rather than to the 'spiritual' issues of the Ahad-Ha'am type." However there was no central Mizrahi organization until 1914. In 1913 Rabbi Meyer Berlin came to the United States and in 1914 called a national convention of Mizrahi in Cincinnati with 73 delegates. In the photograph of the delegates Joseph Selig Glick is sitting next to both Rabbi Berlin and Rabbi Ashinsky of Pittsburgh. Rabbi Sivitz never affiliated with Mizrahi, perhaps because of his dislike of Rabbi Ashinsky. [The feeling was mutual. Rabbi Ashinsky did not attend Rabbi Sivitz's funeral]

The Federation of American Zionists was aware of the need to organize Zionist groups in the smaller towns of the United States. Manuel F. Lisan, who had come to Philadelphia at age 17, and had joined the Zionist group there immediately, had shown his organizational ability. A few years later he was sent to various towns in Western Pennsylvania to encourage the Jewish communities to form Zionist groups. The Archives has his memoirs and correspondence. A letter dated April 22, 1907, from Ida Rosenthal, Punxutawney, Pennsylvania, thanks him for his visit and mentions that a Zionist society, B'nai Zion Society of Punxutawney, had been organized. By June 24 1907 they had more than forty members.

You probably know the name Punxutawney because that is where the groundhog, Punxutawney Phil, comes out of his den every February 2 to see his shadow. He is greeted by a delegation from town which used to include the Jewish mayor, Mr. Pete, in his top hat. I know the name Punxutawney because I lived in Indiana, Pennsylvania from 1961-1963, and I knew people from there. Ida Rosenthal's husband, a merchant, served as the religious leader of the small Jewish community. He had studied shehita, ritual slaughter, so that the Jews of Punxutawney would have kosher meat. Ida's father was Rabbi Moses Simon Sivitz of Pittsburgh.

Another town on Lisan's list was Greensburg, Pennsylvania. He did not have to work hard there, because Greensburg was the home town of Isaac (Ike) Kahanowitz, a leading Hebraist and Zionist. Ike Kahanowitz (1874-1934) was born in Antopol, White Russia. He was educated by private melamdin and also at yeshivot. At age 14 he organized a hovevei tsiyon society in Antopol and was arrested for posting a Zionist broadside without first receiving permission from the authorities. Ike, like the other men I have discussed, was a prodigy. He taught himself Russian and modern Hebrew. He borrowed issues of Hatsefira edited by Nahum Sokolow from local maskilim and patterned his Hebrew writing on the essays he read. (In 1917 when Sokolow was feted at a meeting in Pittsburgh Kahanowitz addressed the gathering in Hebrew and told about his admiration for Sokolow and how he had learned Hebrew from Hatsefira) While still quite young Kahanowitz began his lifelong hobby, or obsession, of book collecting. He even opened a private lending library. On the fly leaves of his books he wrote his name and little notes, for example, that the books were available to all who wished to read them, for no charge.

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by
Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

All of his books were numbered, but the numbers were sometimes updated with stamps and bookplates from Greensburg. This leads me to believe that he eventually cataloged his books, but no catalog has ever been found.

Antapol was often devastated by fire. In the 1880's it was almost completely destroyed by fire. The Kahanowitz family decided it was time to leave. The family settled in Greensburg, thirty miles east of Pittsburgh, probably because there were landslaid in the area. (We know from the late Rabbi Leonard Winograd's thesis, "The Horse Died at Windber," and his history of the Jews of Johnstown, east of Greensburg, that Antopoler landslaid settled there.) The older Mr. Kahanowitz was involved in building the synagogue in 1886. Ike was young, but not young enough to be sent to school. He had to work, so he started out as a peddler, then opened a newspaper and tobacco shop, and finally became a prosperous merchant with his New York Bargain Store. In 1898 he organized the Beni Zion of Greensburg and in 1899 the Greensburg Jewish Colonial Share Club. He also organized the teen aged boys and girls into "Young Flowers of Zion" He and one of the boys, Simon Davis, would go from door to door to collect dues.

In two issue of Hamelits of 1894 there are articles about Greensburg by Y.Kahanowitz. In the first article he describes the town, its thirty Jewish families who make up a quarter of the entire population. Most of the Jews are from Kovno and work as peddlers. They work on Shabbat and Yom Tov . The children do not receive a Jewish education. He describes the terrible economic conditions due to the strikes of the miners. The tone of the letters is very pessimistic.

However his work in Zionism seems to have given him much encouragement. Kahanowitz was self taught in English and could speak the language quite well, but his spelling was quite bad. The Archives has his correspondence with Rabbi Stephen S. Wise (whom he addresses as Rev.) from January through May 1899. It is mostly about the local Beni Zion, election of officers, and sending of shekels. He takes the FAZ to task for not explaining "in the Jewish speaking language the real aim of zionism; therefore the most of our people, who speaks only the jargon, did not give us yet their hand. ...I would propose that the Federation of American Zionists should have a Jewish -jargon- paper where they should talk to the majority of our people. they ought to publish circulars or pamphlets regarding the zionists movement and to distribute the same free of charge in every jewish house to light the fire of patriotism where it was blown out...try to unite all the zionist societies of the United States into one body. We all should work together hand-by-hand then light may shine upon those of our brethren who are dwelling in the lands of the shadow of death and it may be verified; 'Jerusalem thou shalt be inhabited and the cities of Judah ye shall be built and I will raise up the decayed places thereof' "(February 3, 1899, in his spelling)

The fact that he was a bachelor may have made it possible for Kahanowitz to involve himself so fully in Zionist activity. He attended many of the Zionist conventions in the United States and Europe and visited Palestine half a dozen times. His death at age 60 cut off the possibility of many more years of activity.

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

The early Zionist movement in Western Pennsylvania was blessed with outstanding leaders. A Zionist Institute was established for meetings and athletic events. The basketball team (one of whose trainers was Abe Warner, who later moved to California where he became one of the Warner Brothers) had a number of successful seasons. As the Hill District, where most of the Jews lived, changed population, the leadership of the Zionist Council saw the handwriting on the wall. The Zionist Institute was sold and the proceeds donated to the Jewish National Fund. There is a plaque to "Nahlat Pittsburgh" in Kefar Barukh in the Jezreel Valley.

I did not discuss the Labor Zionist movement whose members came after 1905. That is a whole other subject.

Bibliography

Beck, Abraham. Exponents and Philosophy of Religious Zionism. (New York: Hashomer Hadati of America, 1942)

Caplan, Kimmy. "The Concerns of an Immigrant Rabbi: The Life and Sermons of Rabbi Moshe Shimon Sivitz," in Polin 11 (London: Littman Library, 1998)

Davis, Moshe. The Emergence of Conservative Judaism (Philadelphia:JPS, 1962)

Davis, Moshe. Bet Yisrael be-Amerikah (Jerusalem:Magnes, 1970)

Early History of Zionism in America edited by Isidore Meyer (New York: AJHS, 1958)

Entsiklopediah shel ha-tsiyonit ha-datit (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1958)

Feingold, Henry. Zion in America (New York: Twayne, 1974)

Feinstein, Marnin. American Zionism, 1884-1904 (New York: Herzl Press, 1965)

Feldman, Jacob. The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh: Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1986)

"Glick,Joseph Selig" in Who's Who in Pennsylvania (New York: Hamersly, 1904)

Goldshteyn, Yossi. Bein tsiyon le-tsiyonut) Tel Aviv: Everyman's University, 1979)

Gordon, Benjamin. Between Two Worlds: Memoirs of a Physician (New York: Bookman, 1952)

Grinstein, Hyman. "The Memoirs and Scrapbooks of the late Joseph Isaac Bluestone of New York City," in Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (New York: AJHS, 1939)

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

Grinstein, Hyman. "Orthodox Judaism and Early Zionism in America," in Early History of Zionism in America, edited by Isidore Meyer (New York: AJHS, 1958)

Halperin, Samuel. The Political World of American Zionism (Detroit: Wayne U.,1961)

Kabakoff, Jacob. Halutsei ha-sifrut-ha-'ivrit be-Amerikah (Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1966)

Kabakoff, Jacob. Shoharim ve-ne'emanim: masot u-mehkarim 'al ha-sifrut ve-hatarbut ha-'ivrit be-Amerikah (Jerusalem: R. Mas, 1978)

Kelskay, Joseph M. "Pittsburgh Hebrew School: Pioneer Talmud Torah," in Jewish Criterion, September 24, 1924 (Pittsburgh: The Criterion, 1924)

Lichter, Benny. "Letter to the editor," in Ha-Pisgah, Volume 6, no. 45 (New York: Ha-Pisgah, 1899)

Lisan, Manuel F. "Correspondence...1907-1928, 1952" AJA Correspondence file.

Lisan, Manuel F. "Memoirs...1897-1905" AJA Memoirs file.

Malachowsky, Hillel. Kitvei Hilel ben Ze'ev Malakhovski 2 vols (Brooklyn, NY: Shulzinger, 1939-1940)

"Moses Simon Sivitz" in Orthodox Judaism in America: a Biographical Dictionary, edited by M. Sherman (Westport,CT: Greenwood, 1996)

National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section. By Myself I'm a Book! (Waltham, Mass: AJHS, 1972)

National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section. My Voice was Heard , edited by Ida Cohen Selavan (New York: Ktav, 1981)

"Pitsburg" in Der Juedische Emigrant (St. Petersburg: Information Bureau for Emigrants, March 14, 1910)

Salmon, Yosef. "The Mizrachi Movement in America," in American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati: AJA, 1996)

Selavan, Ida C. " Bobba Hannah, midwife," in American Journal of Nursing (New York: American Nurses Association, 1973)

Selavan, Ida C. "The Education of Jewish Immigrants in Pittsburgh, 1862-1932" in YIVO Annual , (New York: YIVO, 1974)

Early Zionism in Western Pennsylvania

by

Dr. Ida Selavan Schwarcz, USA

Selavan, Ida C. "A Pre-Herzlian Jewish State," in *Journal of the American Jewish Historical Society*, (Waltham, Mass.: AJHS, 1977)

Selavan, Ida C. "The Yiddish Press in Pittsburgh," in *Yiddish* (Queens, N.Y.: Queens College, 1976)

Selavan, Ida C. "Ike Kahanowitz of Greensburg: Jewish Bibliophile in the Boondocks," in *Listen to our Words: Oral Histories of the Jewish Community of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania* edited by Richard David Wissolik, Jennifer Campion, Barbara Wissolik. (Latrobe, PA: Saint Vincent College, 1997)

Silberschlag, Eisig. "Zionism and Hebraism in America, 1897-1921" in *Early History of Zionism in America* edited by Isidore Meyer (New York: AJHS, 1958)

Urofsky, Melvin. *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (New York: Anchor, 1975)

Wise, Stephen S. Collection Box no. 919 American Jewish Archives