

# The Kosher Butcher, the Shochet and the Broken Contract: An 1897 fight over religious standards and rabbinic authority in Jewish Baltimore

By Howard I. Schwartz, PhD (formerly Eilberg-Schwartz)

In 1897, a man named Levi Edlavitch made the Baltimore news embroiled in an interesting and somewhat hilarious legal case over kosher slaughtering that was covered in some detail in the *Baltimore Sun*. The case was described as “novel” and “an interesting case and the first of its kind in the city.” The case was also a kind of veritable who’s who of the emerging orthodox Jewish community.<sup>1</sup>

The very coverage of the case in the *Baltimore Sun* is part of what makes the case so fascinating, because a very technical discussion of Jewish ritual law ends up splashed prominently on pages of the *Baltimore Sun*. The fact that the *Sun* covered this kind of case in such detail, and worked hard to explain the case to those outside the faith, indicates that Baltimore was both recognizing and grappling with the large presence of orthodox Eastern European Jews who were now present in the city. This case also telegraphed an unfolding drama over kosher meat that would rock the Baltimore Jewish community in the following decade.

The coverage in the press also showed how American law could get entangled in what were religious squabbles and power moves in a religious establishment. Baltimore orthodox rabbis, as we shall see, were exerting their power to determine who was an authentic slaughterer of kosher meat and ultimately who had authority in the Jewish community. On display in the case is the convergence of the American legal system, Jewish dietary restrictions, and the politics of religiosity among orthodox Jews in the Baltimore community. The *Baltimore Sun*, for its part, did a pretty decent job explaining the technicalities of the debate to its audience.

The 1897 case involved one Levi Edlavitch, a kosher butcher, who in 1900 was living at 1136 E Pratt. The butcher’s name appears in the articles in a number of variations including Levi or Levy and at times as Edlavitch and as Edlewich. Based on the Baltimore census of 1900, Levi Edlavitch was born in about 1858 in Russia and was about thirty-nine years old at the time of the trial. Levi and his wife Minnie had been present in Baltimore for about twenty years having arrived in about 1882 from Russia.

In the case, Levy Edlavitch was sued by Isaac Salowitschick for having broken a contract and caused the loss of \$250 in income. Salowitschick had been hired by Edlavitch as a "schochet," a person trained to ritually slaughter animals according to the prescribed Jewish laws of keeping kosher (kashrut). A very prescribed process was needed to ensure that the meat was considered fit to be eaten by the orthodox Eastern European Jewish community that was growing rapidly in Baltimore as Russian immigration accelerated in the 1880's. The Jewish dietary laws consider an animal fit or "kosher" to eat only if it is slaughtered in a prescribed way that includes very detailed rules about the sharpness of the knife, the speed and method of slaughter, and the training of the person doing the slaughtering. The person who does the slaughtering is called a "schochet" in Hebrew and the *Baltimore Sun* displayed that term boldly at the top of some of the articles as it was recounting the case. At issue in the case was the question of whether Levy Edlavitch, the butcher, inappropriately broke his contract by firing Salowitschick, the schochet, when the butcher received a warning from two orthodox rabbis claiming Salowitschick was not competent or authorized to ritually slaughter beef.

The case broke into *Baltimore Sun* with a full-length column on Friday, April 2, 1897, the day the trial was to begin.<sup>2</sup> The headline reads "'Kosher' or 'Trefa': A Novel Suit Growing Out of the Jewish Methods of Killing Cattle." The article explains that "an interesting case and the first of its kind in this city involving the Jewish method of slaughtering cattle and the rites incident to slaughtering is assigned for trial in the City Court. A number of rabbis have been summoned to testify as experts as to the Mosaic rites and regulations as to what 'Kosher' means, what is a 'Schochet,' or killer, appointed by the chief Rabbi and what are his duties." The article goes on to summarize the role of the schochet or "killer" in the preparation of the kosher food, explaining how kosher meat differs from non-kosher meat, the technicalities of the killer's knife, and the authority by which he exercises the office. The article noted that only one case of this kind, "as far as known," had been tried some thirty years ago in England and the *Sun* had in fact reported on such a "curious" case in England twenty years earlier.<sup>3</sup>

The next day, a Saturday, the *Sun* summarized what had gone on during the first day of the trial.<sup>4</sup> The word "Schochet" was used prominently in the subtitle of the article and indicated that "Orthodox and liberal Hebrews of Baltimore were watching with a great deal of interest the peculiar case" which had begun the day before. Salowitschick had been hired by Edlavitch on February 27, 1896 to slaughter cattle at 25 cents per head and the contract was for three months.<sup>5</sup> Salowitschick was discharged after only one day of work and the suit was intended to recover the money he would have made had the contract been fulfilled.

April 2, 1897 p. 10

**DAY MORNING, APRIL 2**

**"KOSHER" OR "TREPFA."**

A Novel Suit Growing Out of the Jewish Methods of Killing Cattle.

**TO BE TRIED IN CITY COURT.**

A Number of Rabbis Summoned as Expert Witnesses.

**They Will Testify as to the Mosaic Rites in the Killing of Cattle and as to the Duties and Qualifications of a "Schochet" or Killer—Said to Be the Second Case of Its Kind on Record.**

An interesting case and the first of its kind in this city involving the Jewish method of slaughtering cattle and the rites incident to the slaughtering is assigned for trial today in the City Court. A number of Rabbis have been summoned to testify as experts as to the Mosaic rites and regulations as to what "Kosher" means, what is a "Schochet," or killer, appointed by the chief Rabbi, and what are his duties.

April 3, 1897 p. 10

**THE SU**

**SCIENTIFIC SLAUGHTER**

Description Given in Court of Hebrew Requirements for Killing Cattle.

**THE DUTIES OF A "SCHOCHET."**

Case of Isaac Salowitschick Against Levy Edlavitch.

Suit for Alleged Breach of Contract—Salowitschick Was Employed to Kill Cattle for Edlavitch, but Was Discharged, and Now Brings Action to Recover His Earnings.

Orthodox and liberal Hebrews of Baltimore are watching with a great deal of interest the peculiar case which began yesterday in the City Court before Judge Phelps, and which involves the Jewish method of slaughtering cattle.


Suit is brought by Isaac Salowitschick, by Attorney Samuel Rosenthal, against Levy Edlavitch, a Jewish butcher, who is defended by Attorney William H. Weissager.

The case began with Edlavitch's attorney for the defense, William H. Weissager, explaining some of the technicalities governing the ritual slaughter of animals and the authority of the chief rabbi to appoint the person to be a schochet or "killer," as the article sometimes described the role. The intent was to set the stage to show that Levi Edlavitch, the butcher, was complying with the rules of the orthodox community.

Attorney Weissager was no stranger to the pages of the Baltimore paper. He was involved in a series of cases that today we might expect to see on a TV show such as Family Court or Judge Judy. In 1896, he was involved in a bigamy case defending the husband charged with having two wives, a situation not so uncommon in Baltimore of the time. Weissager defended the husband arguing that there was no proof of his first marriage because a marriage document could not be produced from the old country. Weissager got so angry with the other lawyer in that case that he punched him in the eye outside the courtroom.<sup>6</sup> Weissager was also involved in a number of other contentious family court cases on the side of the plaintiff including a case in which one Mrs. Feizenfeld claimed a Mrs. Rosenberg

had alienated her husband's affections whereas the latter claimed that the former had offered to sell her husband for \$150.<sup>7</sup>

By 1903, Mr. Weissager was running for First Branch City Council which he apparently won. A photo and biography published in The Sun on the occasion indicates he came to the US in about 1881 at the age of 14 years and worked in car shops, clothing manufacturers and had been a cutter before joining a clothing manufacturer in New York City.<sup>8</sup> After two years there, he had returned to do his law degree in Baltimore and was admitted to practice in 1894. In 1897, he represented the United Garment Workers in their strike. By 1903 he was holding senior board positions in a number of Jewish philanthropic organizations including the Hebrew Free Burial Society, the Hebrew orphan and sheltering society, the Hebrew immigration society and other societies. In 1904, he promoted the development of a Yiddish Theatre in Baltimore adjoining his own property.<sup>9</sup>

<p style="text-align: center;">Feb 25, 1903, p.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MR. WILLIAM H. WEISSAGER</b> He would go to the First Branch from the Third ward.</p>	<p>William H. Weissager announces his candidacy by advertisement in THE SUN for the First Branch City Council. Mr. Weissager is 36 years old and is a lawyer. He came alone to America 22 years ago, then a lad of 14 years, and entered the employment of Miller Bros.' car shops, on Wolfe street. After two years he entered the employ of Rosenfeldt Bros., the clothing manufacturers, as a bundle boy, and subsequently learned the trade of cutter. He later became a member of the firm of A. &amp; S. Levy &amp; Co., clothing manufacturers in New York city, remaining with that firm for two years. He returned to Baltimore and entered at the Baltimore University School of Law. He was admitted to practice in April, 1894. Mr. Weissager was counsel for all the United Garment Workers during the strike in 1897. He is vice-president of the Hebrew Free Burial Society, a director of the Hebrew Orphan and Sheltering Society of Baltimore, a director of the Hebrew Immigration Society of Baltimore, belongs to the Hebrew Hospital and Asylum and other fraternal and political organizations. Mr. Weissager has been indorsed by both organizations of the Third ward.</p>
--	---

In his opening statements to the jury in the case of the butcher, defense attorney Weissager detailed the rules governing the role of schochet and the proper act of slaughter. "The killer is appointed

by the authority of the chief rabbi of a city, he explained, to kill the beeves [plural of beef] and calves, and after examining the carcasses brand them as 'Kosher' or as 'Trepha.'" The article continued to explicit: "Kosher means clean or wholesome, and is the only kind of meat which their religious laws will allow orthodox Jews to eat. Trepha, or unclean meat, is not of necessity bad or injurious, but it is not so good as kosher meat, and the orthodox believers may not knowingly partake of it."

Weissager explained that the "killer's" authority is derived from his appointment by the Rabbi who has the power to discharge a killer who is not correctly discharging his duties. To discharge his duties properly, "A knowledge of anatomy is requisite for the killer, and he must be able almost by sense of touch to tell whether an animal is diseased or not. The examination is made, as soon as a carcass is cut open, by the killer thrusting his arm in and feeling of the various organs and their relative position in the body."

In addition, Weissager explained that the animal is killed with an extremely sharp knife, called a "Cholof." The knife is drawn across the throat of the animal with one sweep in order to sever the great blood vessels so the animal may instantly bleed to death. The knife must be of certain dimensions and the cut must be made with precision, for the slightest hacking or nicking of the flesh makes the animal "trepha" or unfit in the killing.

Salowitschick, the schochet, was then put on the stand and testified via an interpreter in what sounded to the journalist like a mixture of Yiddish, Russian, Polish and German. "The mixture of [languages] was intelligible to a number of witnesses who sat in the court room and at times became so interested in the case that they interjected words and sentences along [with] the interpreter."

Salowitschick explained that he had served as a schochet for a year back in his native land, then for a year in Hampton Virginia, and for two years previously in Baltimore. He explained that he had been trained by older schochets and had received a "Cabala" or certification from a rabbi back in his native country. The opposing counsel objected to the certificate being admitted as evidence since there was no way to prove its authenticity since the rabbi who wrote it was living in Sager, Russia. Salowitschick explained that he was hired **at 25 cents a head rather** than the customary 50 cents per head because he was to be the exclusive shochet for Levi Edlavitch's business. Volume apparently would compensate for the reduced cost.

Salowitschick's first and only day of work he killed three animals at the "abattoir" or slaughterhouse. One of the three animals he had to declare unclean and the foreman apparently was

satisfied with his work. Salowitschick explained that a competent killer is able to kill twenty to fifty head of cattle a day. He estimated he would have killed about twenty-four cattle and fourteen or sixteen calves a week which would have enabled him to earn between \$6 and \$10 a day. His suit was for \$250 dollars, suggesting a compensation of between ten to twenty days of income, though the contract was apparently for three months.<sup>10</sup>

In his cross examination of the plaintiff, defense attorney, Weissager, lay the ground work for the butcher's case and brought out information that the journalist reported as "curious answers." Salowitschick was asked about his occupation during his life. He explained, "he did nothing when a child, then went to evening school, studied the Talmud, got married, then when he wanted to earn money came to the United States." Weissager pressed him on the importance of validating his status by showing the certificate to the rabbi of the city and getting an endorsement. When on the stand, Salowitschick also explained that the knife had to be twice as long as the width of throat to be cut and that fourteen inches was the norm.

Weissager was preparing the ground work for the next day of trial when he intended to introduce more detail about the Mosaic law and question the credentials of Salowitschick. The article ended that day with the journalist observing that the jury panel "included a colored man and a Hebrew who placed his hand on the Five Books of Moses and was sworn in orthodox fashion with his hat on his head."

\* \* \*

The second day of testimony, which took place on the Monday after the weekend recess, actually received a brief mention on the front page of the Baltimore Sun on Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> and a lengthy coverage of the case appeared on page 10 that same day.<sup>11</sup> The headline of that article read "Mosaic Butchering. Ancient Levitical Laws Regarding Cattle-Killing Aired in Court. Schochets' Cholofs Flash. The Sharp Knives Figure in Realistic Testimony." The minutae of Jewish law and the prominent display of knives caught the writer's attention, and reading the article one is reminded of an anthropologist who is first encountering an exotic tribe.

This coverage of the second day of the trial began with a summary of the case and some of the issues at stake, before passing onto the new points of contention. At issue in the case, the article explained, was the question of whether the butcher, Edlavitch, had violated a contract for improper reasons or whether the schochet, Salowitschick, was incompetent and lacked the authority to carry out

his duties by the standards of the religious law and the contract. One of the exhibits on the second day was the special knife used by the killer called a "cholof," a word signifying "changing from life to death." The knife has a broad blade of the same width throughout and is about fourteen inches long, cut square at the end, with a razor-like edge.

The knife belonging to Salowitschick was shown to Samuel Parahoff a witness for the defense. I identified one Samuel "Parelhoff" who appears in the Baltimore City Directory as a butcher at 205 s Central Ave by 1899, though in 1898 he is first listed as a tailor. He appears consistently as a butcher between 1900 and 1910. According to his 1910 census record, he arrived in about 1891 from Russia and had become a Baltimore meat inspector by that date.<sup>12</sup>

In the case at hand, Parahoff explained that Mosaic law charges Jews to kill with as little pain as possible. While the knife [on exhibit] might be used in the old country, and would come strictly within the law regarding its required length, it is not a good one to use in this country where the cattle are so much bigger. Parahoff produced two blades that he used at an "abattoir" which were 20 inches long, six inches longer than that used by Salowitchick. Apparently, the laws of slaughter had to be adapted to the more robust head of beef in America. It is interesting to observe these orthodox schochets arguing here for the adaption and change of slaughtering protocols to the American context, at the very time that orthodox congregations were resisting the introductions of various religious reforms in synagogue worship, a process that was causing many Baltimore congregations to fissure. Had they been asked to explain the expanded size of the knife, the schochets presumably would have argued that the intent of the laws was to kill the animal with one stroke and with minimal suffering and that the longer blade ensured the intent was achieved with the larger animals in America.

#### *Two Orthodox Rabbis Give Warning*

As the discussion progressed in the case, it became apparent that the day after he hired the schochet, Levi Edlavitch, the butcher, had received a warning notice from two rabbis, Rabbi Levinson and Rabbi Burman. The notice warned that "the services of the new killer were not satisfactory" and that unless Edlavitch suspended the new schochet he would not be able to sell kosher meat to Jews in the orthodox community. This consequence would be disastrous for Edlavitch, who would be finished as a butcher in the Jewish community.

Rabbi Levinson refers to Rabbi Abraham "Aba" Chaim (or Hymen) Levinson of B'nai Israel synagogue on Lloyd street. B'nai Israel, founded in 1873, was the first Baltimore congregation organized

by residents of Russian origin. In 1895, two years before the case we are talking about here, the congregation had purchased the building on Lloyd Street from congregation Chizuk Amuno, which for a time earned B'nei Israel the moniker of "Lloyd Street Synagogue" in the Baltimore Sun. The synagogue was also known as the Russisheh Schul (the Russian Synagogue) to distinguish it from the earlier German congregations.

Rabbi Levinson presided over this synagogue from 1891-1912.<sup>13</sup> It seems unlikely that those in the court that day knew that Rabbi Levinson had struggled with the schochets in his previous position as a rabbi in Rochester, New York, at a congregation called Beth Israel. Otherwise, I suspect, those earlier incidents would have been dragged into discussion in the Baltimore trial and used to question his credibility and motives. But no one apparently knew his history. The conflict Rabbi Levinson was embroiled in in Rochester was not so different than the one in Baltimore, though the outcomes would be somewhat different, as we shall see.

Rabbi Levinson's experience in Rochester was a "difficult one, economically precarious and spiritually unsatisfying."<sup>14</sup> Trained in Jewish Lithuanian yeshivot [schools of higher learning], he became primarily a functional supervisor of kosher slaughtering and butcher shops where he was involved in battles with the butchers on whom his livelihood dependent.

Levinson received a salary of \$150 based on \$50 payments per annum from each of the four butchers to whom he gave certification. But this arrangement did not always go smoothly. In 1890 a special meeting was called because "the rabbi cannot make a living because the butchers have stopped paying him." This issue was the result of longstanding challenges that Levinson had with some of the butchers. The local Jewish paper wrote in Dec. 1888 that "it appears that Rabbi Levison [sic]... has found the salary accruing from his pastoral services insufficient to meet his wants, and it is alleged that he has taken four butchers under his protecting wing for the consideration of \$50 each per anum, and declare from his pulpit that the meat sold by these four butchers was strictly kosher, but that the meat of all other butchers was trefe." The clear insinuation was that there was a quid pro quo going on. The rabbi would certify the specific butchers who would promise to pay a portion of his salary.

The local newspaper, the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, also covered the story and indicated that a break away congregation, B'nai Aviezer, took the side of one of the butchers, a Mr. Amdoursky, who had not been given certification by Rabbi Levinson. That upstart synagogue brought a rabbi of greater authority from Chicago and the butchers moved into his camp essentially ending Rabbi



Levinson's source of income. In 1891, Rabbi Levinson resigned and came to Baltimore. Within six years, he was embroiled in a similar conflict in Baltimore but this time his authority apparently held.

Rabbi Burman was the other rabbi who joined Rabbi Levinson in warning Edlavitch, the butcher, about his problematic schochet. There is, however, no record of what Rabbi Burman said, if anything, at the trial. I suspect Rabbi "Burman" refers to Rabbi Hirsch Berman who is found in the Baltimore City Directory in 1896 and 1897 as Rev[erend] Harris Berman on E Lombard St.

According to his 1900 census record, he was born in 1846, arrived in the US in 1891, just six years before this case, and had been naturalized by that date. We find both Yiddish and English versions of his name (Hirsch and Harris, also Hirsch Abraham) in the records.<sup>15</sup> In 1896 and 1897, Reverend Burman was living on 1028 and then 1131 E Lombard. In 1898, a Rabbi Harris Berman of the High Street synagogue performed a wedding in jail that was reported in the papers. In 1900, Reverend Berman was living at 38 S. High St. The same Rabbi Berman is found officiating at a wedding at the High street Synagogue and appears to be called the Rabbi of Exeter Street Synagogue at another wedding.<sup>16</sup> Rabbi Berman got involved in several interesting legal cases that subsequently made the Baltimore papers including one that involved him and Rabbi Levinson.

One of the cases involved a dispute between the congregation Adath Jeshurun and one Harry Fox who wanted to bury his child in the congregation's cemetery. The synagogue refused because Fox was not a member of the congregation. After two days of trial, the two sides agreed to settle the case through arbitration and Rabbi Berman was selected by a panel of both sides to play the role of arbiter. Rabbi Berman decided in favor of the congregation. Interestingly enough, the lawyer for the congregation was none other than our William Weissager, the same lawyer who is defending the butcher in our butcher and schochet case.<sup>17</sup> Lawyer Weissager and Rabbi Burman would also turn up together involved in a case in which Rabbi Burman mistakenly filed a marriage license for a couple who had broken off their engagement before they actually became married. Everyone agreed the submission was an accident and the license was revoked.<sup>18</sup> In 1896, just a year before the case of the butcher and schochet, we also find Rabbi H. Bearman and Rabbi Abraham "Levenson" taking part with other rabbis in the dedication of the Adath Jeshurun synagogue dedication.<sup>19</sup>

In 1902, Rabbi Berman would join Rabbi Levinson on a tribunal of judges in a rather unusual and highly visible case of bigamy that also involved an issue of Jewish Law.<sup>20</sup> In that case, Joseph Samuels and Oren Goldberg both laid claim to the same wife, Marie Roypen, of 2024 Christian Street. The case

made national news and was covered extensively in the Sun. That case too involved rules of Jewish law rubbing against the American legal system and bursting into public view as a result. Ultimately that case was too difficult to decide and the panel of three rabbis from Baltimore referred it to a national tribunal of sixteen rabbis. Ultimately, even they could not reach a unanimous decision and the American court system finally stepped in and ruled.

It is difficult to determine from the record if Rabbi Berman had his own synagogue or freelanced, as his name appears associated with the High Street synagogue, the Exeter Street Synagogue and when he died he apparently was with the Sadover synagogue.<sup>21</sup> In any case, Rabbi Berman was clearly well respected enough in the community to be selected as an arbitrator in cases and for the tribunal as well as one of the pall bearers for Rabbi Levinson, when the latter passed away in 1912.<sup>22</sup> Here in the 1897 case of the butcher and schochet, Rabbi Burman was apparently still in the process of developing and consolidating his reputation as was Rabbi Levinson.

\* \* \*

That second day of the butcher and schochet trial, there was a large interested audience of orthodox and liberal Jews present.<sup>23</sup> Levy Edlavitch, the butcher defendant, explained that he made the contract with Salowitschick expecting him to be a competent "schochet" and that he would be endorsed as such by some Baltimore rabbi. In Edlavitch's perspective, the burden was on the schochet to secure his authorization prior to signing the contract. When Edlavitch received the notice of warning from the two rabbis, he showed it to Salowitschick and told him he would need to bring a certificate from the two rabbis who had complained of his work. Edlavitch explained that "this was as near as he came to discharging the killer."

Salowitschick's prosecuting attorney, Samuel Rosenthal, had also argued cases that had caught the attention of the Baltimore Sun on prior occasions. In one, he brought suit against a man for disinterring the body of a "Chinaman" without the requisite paperwork from the cemetery of one of his clients. The "Chinaman's" body was being shipped back to China according to custom at the time. In other cases, reported by the *Sun*, Rosenthal represented an individual suing the Baltimore Manufacturing Company for noxious fumes that had been produced. In still another, he represented a chemist who had not been paid for work of discovery for which he had been hired and successfully completed. In this latter case, as in the case of the butcher and schochet, Rosenthal was representing a

plaintiff suing for "breach of contract." Rosenthal also represented one woman accused of using arsenic to poison another woman who claimed she was married to the first woman's husband.<sup>24</sup>

In the case at hand, attorney Rosenthal attempted to undermine the credibility of the butcher's story. He poked first at Edlavitch's claim that the rabbinic warning was handed to him sometime between Friday night and Sunday morning. That claim would have implied that the rabbis had written it or delivered it on the Sabbath, a violation of the Sabbath rules, thus throwing suspicion on Edlavitch's story. When cross examined, Edlavitch indicated his story held together because he must have received the warning on Saturday night after the Sabbath had ended, and thus no violation of the Sabbath had occurred. Prosecuting attorney Rosenthal also tried to show that the butcher, Edlavitch, had been influenced improperly in his firing decision by his wife, whose brother had previously been the schochet and whom she wanted reinstated. This line of examination was stopped, however, under objection from counsel.

The butcher's cousin, Joseph Edlavitch, who was living at 101 Albemarle, and who was also a butcher himself, was brought in as a witness. He testified that he had been present at the interview when Edlavitch, the butcher, had shown the warning notice he received to his new schochet, Salowitschick. He thus validated at least part of Edlavitch's account.

Other witnesses included one Rabbi Herman Schwartzberg who had written out the contract between the butcher and the schochet. Schwartzberg said he was to receive one dollar a week for

Schwartz Wm R, pressman, 1315 e Fayette Schwartz Wm V, carp, Mt Clare Schwartzberg Herman, butcher, 1132 Low Schwartzberg M & Co (Morris Schwartz- berg, Louis Braun), dry gds, 511 n Eu- taw and 815 Pa av Schwartzberg Morris (M Schwartzberg & Co), 815 Pa av Schwartze Frank, tinner, 1218 E. 1st	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50
---	---

Rochester. Rabbi Schwartzberg testified that he was also a schochet, but laughter filled the court when it developed he was only a chicken killer, not a slaughterer or cattle. Real men killed cattle, I suppose.

As far as I can tell, Herman Schwartzberg lacked any substantial standing in the orthodox community. According to the article, Rabbi Schwartzberg was involved in a small orthodox congregation called "Atz Chaim" (spelled Aitz Chaim and Eitz Chaim elsewhere) where he had been combining butcher business with rabbinical duties, just as Rabbi Levinson had been doing back in Rochester. Schwartzberg had been making five cents a week from each member which he collected himself but subsequently decided it was not "within his dignity" to do the collecting and he was currently without a regular salary.

The one dollar a week offer from the butcher Edlavitch must have looked very tantalizing to Schwartzberg whose source of income was so insecure.

Before his work at Aitz Chaim, Schwartzberg's earlier responsibilities had been at a congregation called "House of Jacob," which I assume is the congregation known as Beth Jacob, though I have not found evidence of Schwartzberg's association with that congregation.<sup>25</sup> But we do find records of his association with the congregation "Aitz Chaim." The congregation had started in 1889 and was clearly getting some traction in the mid-1890's as it purchased property for a cemetery and built a house of worship for \$8,000 which it dedicated in August 1896, less than a year before the trial of the butcher and the schochet.<sup>26</sup>

The building of that synagogue may be significant to this story, since in some ways, the congregation was visibly asserting its growth and ability to raise money. In two articles about the dedication of the synagogue just two days apart, the Rabbi of "Aitz Chaim" is referred to as "Isaac Schwasburg" and "Harris Schwartzberg" which I assume is the same man who is being referred to in this trial as "Rabbi Herman Schwartzberg." The inconsistency in the spelling of his name is presumably the unfamiliarity of the Baltimore Sun writers with this rabbi and the lack of an ability or failure to cross check for consistency, though one would think the *Sun* would have done better in articles that are only two days apart. From what can be gleaned from these articles, the Aitz Chaim congregation was developing a house of worship shortly after Rabbi Levinson's "Russian Shul," B'nai Israel, had purchased its new synagogue on Lloyd Street in September 1895. This was one of a number of orthodox congregations that were laying corner stones and building synagogues in the mid 1890's in east Baltimore, as some of the older more liberal synagogues were moving up to the northwest.<sup>27</sup>

It appears, then, that at play in this case over kosher slaughtering is much more than a contractual disagreement between a butcher and schochet. On display here appears to be a rivalry and contention between rabbinic authorities, and rival synagogues, who were competing for prestige and authority in the community. B'nai Israel, the first Russian synagogue, was the more mature congregation. But Aitz Chaim was clearly flexing its muscles with the construction of its new building and with a dedication of the synagoguge in which even the Baltimore Mayor participated. Rabbi Schwartzberg probably appeared to be an upstart rabbi who was vying for authority. The case of the butcher and schochet put this competition on display with one rabbinic authority questioning the power and authority of a rabbi from a rival synagogue that was just blocks away. The schochets and rabbis in

this case appear to be lining up behind the authority of Rabbi Levinson, unlike the way things had gone for him in his earlier post in Rochester. We don't know why the butcher Edlavitch chose the relatively unknown Rabbi Schwartzberg of Aitz Chaim to validate the contract, whether because he was involved in that congregation or because he was trying to drive down costs by going outside the "norm" of butchers who had already been authorized. It may also have been the case that it was not yet clear what the norm was in the Baltimore community or who would have power to enforce a standard.

For his part, Rabbi Herman Schwartzberg appears in the Baltimore City Directory of 1897 in the alphabetical listing of individuals and under the listing of butchers at 1132 Low St.<sup>28</sup> But after this date

Schwartz Wm V, carp, Mt Clare  
Schwartzberg Herman, butcher, 1132 Low  
Schwartzberg M & Co (Morris Schwartz-

he then seems to disappear from the city directories, censuses and newspaper entirely.<sup>29</sup> Despite searching

on all his name variations, and looking under the list of "clergy," I have been unable to identify what happened to him. It is tempting to think that the slap on the hand and public laughter in this case was the cause of him disappearing from town, but that is only a speculation based on the difficulty of determining what happened to him.

\* \* \*

### *The Schochets Testify*

After Schwartzberg testified, three expert schochets were also called to the stand: Mordecai L. Levin, Baruch Millenson and yes, would you believe it, even a man named Mordecai Schochet. I guess with such a last name, you have some good bona fides for the role.

The first schochet, Mordecai Levin, described the requirements of the "cholo" knife to be at least fourteen finger breadths long for killing cattle. He also acknowledged that Rabbi Levinson, who had signed the warning notice sent to the butcher, did indeed have the authority to certify the schochets. These Baltimore schochets were standing behind Rabbi Levinson.

Levin Max, tailor, 239 s Exeter  
Levin Meyer, pedler, 272 n Exeter  
Levin Mordecai L, butcher, 1107 Low  
Levin Morris, meats, 2011 Christian  
Levin Morris, tailor, 101 s Exeter  
Levin Philip, dry gds, 459 n Gay

Mordecai "L" Levin, like Rabbi Schwartzberg, can be found settled on Low St. as a butcher by 1896 in the Baltimore City Directory. He appears at 1110 Low St

before settling at 1146 Low St until about 1910. It is worth noting that Rabbi Levinson, the rabbinic authority in the case, also lived on 809 Low St. in 1895 and 1896 before moving to Exeter Street in 1897. We shall see that one of the other butchers also lived on Low street at the same time. The spelling of

Levin's last name vacillates in the records between Levin in the censuses and Levine in the Baltimore City Directories and he should not to be confused with Mordecai "S." Levin, who was not a butcher.

Based on the 1900 census, Levin was born in Russia in 1858, migrated to the US from Russia between 1885 and 1887, and was about forty-three years old at the time of the trial. Prior to their arrival in Baltimore, the family apparently lived in Pennsylvania where they had two of their children.<sup>30</sup> By 1900, Mordecai and his wife Ida had ten children though only seven were still living at that time. He is listed in the Baltimore City Directory as a butcher from 1896-1905. He apparently tried to get out of the meat business in 1906 and is listed in "shoes" in the 1906 city directory. That attempt must have failed because by 1907 he is listed again as a foreman, and by 1910, he is listed as a slaughterer in the stockyards in the census of that year. In the 1920 census, he has become an inspector of livestock. Levin apparently died in 1924 and his wife appears living with a few of their children in the 1930 census. He is buried in Beth Jacob Anshe Veshear Old Cemetery, a congregation that apparently started in about 1919.<sup>31</sup>

The second schochet to testify was Mordecai Schochet, the man who had his occupation as his last name. He explained that for cattle to be kosher, the animal must be killed with continuous strokes across the throat without hesitation. Mordecai Schochet was about forty-eight years old at the time of the trial. He too had been born in Russia and had come to the US in 1889. He first shows up in the Baltimore City Directory in 1895 thru 1897 in "meats" under the name Max Schokert at 409 S Bond St. In 1898, he appears as Max "Schochat," "butcher," and in 1899 city directory and census, he is Mordecai Schochet, butcher. The Schochet family stayed at 409 S Bond until 1909. He and his wife Ida had thirteen children, ten of whom were still living in the 1900 census. Mordecai passed away in 1910 and was buried in the cemetery of Mikro Kodesh Beth Israel.

The Baltimore Sun articles do not report whether the third schochet, Baruch Millenson, had anything to say on the stand. Like Schwartzberg and Levin, Millenson was also listed as a butcher in the Baltimore City Directories on Low street under quite a few name variations. In 1894, "Borack Millenson" purchased a property on Low Street. In 1895 "B. Milison" a butcher, is living at 1004 Low St. His son Meyer Millenson can be seen at that same address in 1893 specializing in cigars. In 1897, "Barich Milison" a butcher, is still at 1004 Low St. In 1898, "Borach Milison" is buying more property on Low St and we find "Baruch Milinson" at 1012 Low St. In 1902 Baruch Millenson bought a property on N. Exeter and in 1906, we find "Baroch Millison" is living at 240 N. Exeter St.<sup>32</sup>

Millenson apparently died in 1908 and was buried in Anshe Neisen Cemetery, which appears to be one of the small orthodox synagogues in Baltimore between 1895 and 1910.<sup>33</sup> While I can't determine whether Baruch Millenson had a relationship with Rabbi Levinson and Rabbi Burman, it appears that Baruch's brother was buried in the B'nei Israel cemetery of Rabbi Levinson's congregation and thus could have been a member of Rabbi Levinson's congregation.<sup>34</sup>

\* \* \*

### *The Plaintiff Defends Himself*

After the testimony of the schohets, Salowitschick, the plaintiff, defended his actions. Salowitschick claimed that since there was no chief rabbi in Baltimore any rabbi was competent to qualify a schochet, implying that Rabbi Levinson and Rabbi Burman did not have a monopoly on this authority. Salowitschick in fact raises an interesting question about how rabbinic authority should and is distributed. The chief rabbi position is not one that is authorized by Jewish or rabbinic law, but often an office appointed by secular authorities to designate someone as representative of the Jewish community. This is why the the chief rabbi position has sometimes been viewed as a puppet of the secular authority.<sup>35</sup> Various countries such as England and Turkey had a chief rabbi. In the US, cities such as Boston, New York and Philadelphia had chief rabbis who were elected. In Baltimore, an attempt to appoint a chief rabbi failed in 1915 when contending orthodox synagogues disagreed over who should be appointed.<sup>36</sup> At the time, twenty orthodox congregations in Baltimore tried to form an association to elect Rabbi R. G. Zucker of Machzidka Hadath congregation as chief rabbi of Baltimore. Congregation Shomrei Mishmeres congregation under leadership of Rabbi A. N. Schwartz resisted this move.<sup>37</sup>

Salowitschick was thus asking a good question in the case at hand. Who appointed Rabbi Levinson and Burman as chief rabbi and as a definitive authorities on kosher slaughtering?<sup>38</sup>

\* \* \*

### *The Schulcan Arukh Is Read*

The third day of the trial, reported on April 7 in the *Sun*, appears to have been quite the spectacle including the reading of relevant laws from the "Shulcan Orekh" (today spelled, Shulcan Arukh, which means "set table").<sup>39</sup> The Shulcan Arukh is a compendium of Jewish laws which was written by Joseph Karo 1563 in Safed and had become one of the most authoritative legal codes in Judaism.

On this day of the trial, Rabbi Schepschel Schaffer of the "Greene Street congregation," was called to the stand "to translate the laws of the Hebrew religion as set forth in the Chulcan Orech [sic]." "In orthodox fashion, with his hat on his head, the rabbi read extracts from the law as set forth in the big volume which he held, and then he explained its application to the case in question."

Rabbi Schaffer was at this point in his fourth year as the rabbi of Shearith Israel, frequently called the Greene Street Congregation. The congregation had formed in 1879 when two smaller orthodox congregations had merged with the intent of resisting reforming trends and purchased the building at Greene and German Streets.<sup>40</sup> The congregation had originally recruited Rabbi Schaffer in late 1892 from New York after operating for thirteen years without a rabbi. They had learned of Rabbi Schaffer when a well-respected rabbi in New York and Europe both referred the congregation to Schaffer in response to their letters of inquiry.<sup>41</sup> In that year, Rabbi Schaffer had himself graduated from the Berlin Rabbinical school but was unable to find rabbinical work in Germany or Russia and so he came to New York. Schaffer also had a doctorate degree and for this reason was referred to in the Baltimore papers as "Rev. Dr. [Reverend Doctor]."<sup>42</sup>

Rabbi Schaffer would stay with Shearith Israel congregation for forty years and became a well-known and beloved figure in the Baltimore Jewish community. He was acclaimed in Baltimore for being

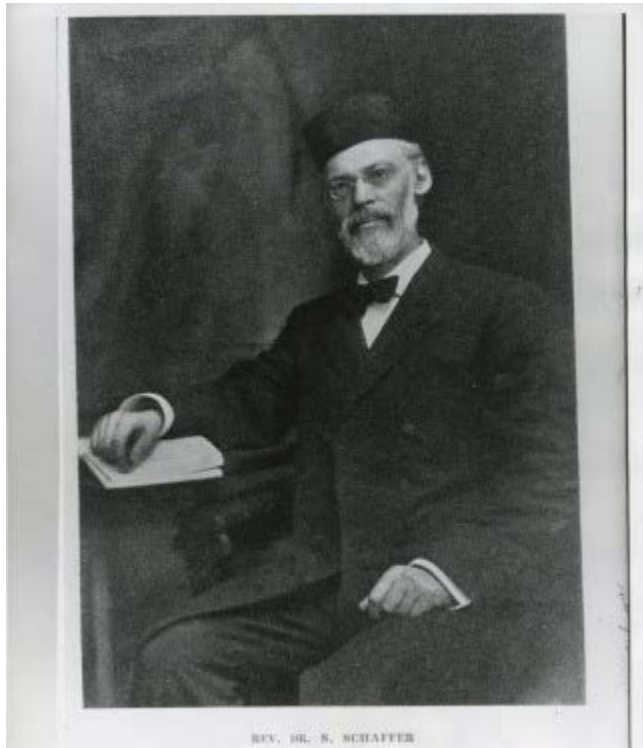


Figure 1 Rabbi Schaffer, From *The Jews of Baltimore*, p.

an early supporter of Zionism and helped found the Baltimore chapter of Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion). That role made him one of two delegates in the United invited to the first Zionist Congress in Basel Switzerland, though the Baltimore papers mistakenly called him the only delegate from the US. His participation in the first Zionist congress in 1897 made him a local hero of sorts and a delegate and vice president to the National Zionist organization in 1898.<sup>43</sup>

When he was called to testify in the case of the butcher and the schochet, he was still relatively new in the Baltimore community. It would be another six months before his reputation with



the Zionist Congress would hit the Baltimore papers. In the case of the butcher and schochet, it appears that he was nonetheless already respected as a religious scholar and is flexing his own authority in the emerging Baltimore Jewish community.

When called to the stand, he explained a rabbi has the power to forbid a schochet to pursue his advocacy for no other reason than his not having asked permission of a rabbi. He also said that "no written agreement (or contract) between a schochet and butcher is allowed because the schochet must be amenable only to the rabbi, who is his superior." Schaffer said he knew of only one case previously where an agreement such as this was entered into and it was annulled by the rabbis. A rabbi wouldn't rely on a certificate of authority from the old country but would examine the killer's capabilities in the present day. Rabbi Schaffer was thus questioning the contract itself and the right of Rabbi Schwartzberg to even create a contract. Essentially he was arguing that such a contract is invalid by Jewish practice.

Rabbi Schaffer indicated he recognized the orthodox authority of the two rabbis who had written the warning to the butcher Edlavitch and indicated that Rabbi Schwartzberg, who had written up the agreement between butcher and schochet, had no standing in the community.

Rabbi Levinson, one of the two rabbis who drafted the warning notice, testified that there had been not one, but two, warning notices to Edlavitch the butcher. He also explained that two months earlier, a list of recognized schochets was prepared and published, and that it was also decided that no other should be allowed to do the work of killing "kosher" meat. This step was taken because it was "against Mosaic law for one man to take away work from another...As there was not enough work to support all who might wish to engage in it, this action was decided upon by the rabbis."

If this sounds like Rabbi Levinson was helping to create a monopoly, that is exactly the argument made by Rosenthal, the attorney for the plaintiff schochet. Rosenthal tried to get the rabbi to admit there was a "combine" (monopoly) of the schochets which controlled all the work and which paid the rabbis to prohibit other schochets. The rabbi confirmed that such a combine had existed in past but had been broken up and he declined to say what the purpose of the combine had been.<sup>44</sup>

Rabbi Levinson testified that "He and Rabbi Berman...were the only orthodox rabbis in the eastern section of the city. He characterized Rabbi Schwartzberg as 'a butcher and a schochet who kills chickens, but not a rabbi.'" Rabbi Levinson seems to be casting doubt on not only Schwartzberg's credibility but his right to say he was a rabbi.

Rabbi Levinson also testified that Salowitschick, the plaintiff schochet, had in fact earlier come to him to get approval to be a killer of cattle, but Rabbi Levinson "refused him the privilege on the ground that he would be taking away the work of another." It is evident that Rabbi Levinson seemed to have no worry here about making a kind of argument for protectionism.

Another schochet, M. W. Rosenstein, threw doubt on Salowitschick's slaughtering capability and said he had seen him kill three cattle, two of which were "nawel," or "trepha," because he had not cut deeply enough. This testimony bolstered the claim that Salowitschick lacked the skill set to be a proper schochet and cast further doubt on Rabbi Schwartzberg's authorization.

M. W. Rosenstein appears in the records as "Moses W. Rosenstein Rev[erend]" He is identified as both a butcher and under clergy in the 1897 Baltimore City Directory. He can be found as a butcher on Exeter St. as far back as the 1880 census when he was living on N. Exeter St. In the 1986-87 and '88 city directories, he is identified as a "Rev[erend]" rather than a butcher.



Figure 2 Marble plaque from the shop of M. W. Rosenstein, c. 1900. Reads "Shochet" in Hebrew.

In 1898, at the ten-year anniversary of the Hebrew Young Men's Sick and Relief Association, Reverend Moses W. Rosenstein was presented with "a kosher knife with solid gold handle."<sup>45</sup> In his 1900 census, his occupation is listed as preacher. But in his 1910 census he is listed as a Reverend in an Abatoir [slaughtering] Co. In 1915 his wife passed away and the obituary describes him as "Rev. Moses W.

Rosenstein, rabbi of Moses Montefiore

Congregation." That congregation was located at 553 South Smallwood St. just around the corner from 2048 Wilkens where he and his wife had lived for some years. Under "occupation," his 1920 census still says he "kills cows" in a "slaughterhouse". As a humorous aside, you can see below that Ancestry's rendition of his 1920 census didn't know how to interpret "kills cows" and rendered it as "Dills Cous." Rabbi Rosenstein passed away in 1932 and is buried in the cemetery of B'nai Israel, which had been Rabbi Levinson's congregation.<sup>46</sup> The artefact above which comes from the Jewish Museum of Maryland reads M.W. Rosenstein "schochet" in Hebrew and was a gift of B'nai Israel Congregation also suggesting a relationship between Rosenstein and the congregation.<sup>47</sup>



Figure 3 Ancestry's rendition of M. W. Rosenstein's occupation. "Kills Cows" is interpreted as "Dills Cous."

\* \* \*

### *Closing Arguments and Verdict*

In the summation before the jury, defense attorney Weissager "quoted religious liberty under the constitution, by which people of any faith have the right to practice their belief and obey its doctrinal laws." In essence, Weissager was arguing that Edlavitch the butcher had the right to practice his religion and follow the religious rules about what constitutes a proper schochet. Since the rabbis said the schochet did not meet religious standards, the contract should be cancelled or annulled. In essence the argument appears to be that since this contract is for religious purposes, religious guidelines and authority should determine the result. Prosecuting attorney Rosenthal, for his part, made a plea to the jury to save the reputation of his client, the schochet, which he said would be "forever blasted by an adverse verdict." This is a pretty weak argument, so I suspect he made a stronger case than this, though there is no report of what else he may have said in the paper.

According to the article, the Judge in the case, Judge Phelps, "granted the prayers of the defendant," which I assume was the journalist's tongue-in-cheek way of describing the instructions to the jury. The judge instructed that the verdict should be for the butcher, if the evidence was found validate that "the parties were adherents of the orthodox Hebrew faith and that under the ordinance of the church it was requisite for the proper performance of the office of a 'schochet' that he should be subject to the disciplinary authority and official sanction of the rabbis of his particular place of residence." In other words, the judge seemed to be saying that if the termination was in accordance with religious practice, and not for other tangential reasons, than the butcher had a valid reason to break the contract or consider the contract null and void.

Despite these instructions to the jury, on April 8, p. 6 the *Baltimore Sun* reported that the jury returned a "Verdict for the 'Schochet'" in the amount of \$225 in favor of the plaintiff. That was nearly the full sum of \$250 asked for by the schochet as the estimated value of the contract. The jury clearly sided with the schochet. We do not know from these articles what the jury's thinking was. Did the jury

think it was the responsibility of the butcher to determine if the schochet was authorized before signing the contract? Did the jury think that the intricacies of Jewish butchering ritual were irrelevant? Were they worried about the schochet's right to make a living or about the possible monopoly implied by the rabbis' disqualification of Salowitschick?

In any case, Weissager, the defense attorney, immediately made a motion for a new trial.<sup>48</sup> On April 12, 1897 the judge decided to grant a new trial unless Salowitschick, the plaintiff, agreed to "remit" \$75 of the verdict, reducing the amount awarded to \$150. When Salowitschick agreed, the case came to an end.<sup>49</sup> The Sun doesn't report anything more about the case and one is left speculating why Judge Phelps took the position he did. He must have thought the jury's award was too heavily weighted towards the schochet but he presumably also thought that the overall decision in favor of the plaintiff was reasonable, for he did not grant the new trial.

The story of the butcher and schochet had a bit of a life of its own beyond Baltimore and was republished as a human interest story in the St. Paul Globe on May 28, 1897.<sup>50</sup> In many ways, the case foreshadowed developments and conflicts that would roil the Baltimore community over kosher meat in the coming decade. Not too long after this case, the orthodox congregations did in fact formally create an association (Agudath Hakehilloth) for supervising and authorizing kosher slaughterers. The purpose of the organization was to "obtain men competent to perform the work of a "schochet".<sup>51</sup>

Over the next thirteen years, there would be riots in New York and other cities over the cost of Kosher meat that would make its way to Baltimore and explode in 1910. The Baltimore orthodox community during this time imposed a requirement to buy Kosher meat locally in Baltimore in order to protect local jobs and quality, but the action also drove up the cost of kosher meat. The rising cost of kosher meat was one of the factors that fueled the riot. That riot and the contributing factor is another story unto itself.<sup>52</sup>

The protagonists who came together in the case of the butcher and schochet of 1897 continued to be visible in the records of Baltimore for the most part in subsequent years. We have seen that attorneys Weissager and Rosenthal continued to prosecute complex and interesting cases. Weissager went on to be a philanthropic leader in the community and ultimately held a political office in the City Council in Baltimore. Rabbi Levinson's stature continued to grow in the community with that of his congregation B'nai Israel. Not long before this case, B'nai Israel had purchased its building on Lloyd Street and until his death held the moniker of the Lloyd Street Synagogue. Rabbi Burman joined Rabbi

Levinson on a rabbinic tribunal to resolve a complex case of bigamy that made national news and which, in the end, had to be referred to an even larger panel of rabbis beyond those just in Baltimore.<sup>53</sup> Rabbi Schaffer, who also testified, was relatively new at Shearith Israel at the time, and was shortly to become famous as one of the only delegates from the US to the First Zionist Congress. Rabbi Schaffer would become a beloved figure in the community as well and stay with the congregation for forty years. It is not clear what happened to the other rabbi in the case, Rabbi Herman Schwartzberg, who was the chicken killer and who had written out the contract between butcher and schochet. As noted earlier, he seems to have disappeared from Baltimore records.

The four shochets who were witnesses all seemed to stay in the industry. Mordecai Levin tried his hands at shoes for a time, but in the 1920 census is still an inspector in livestock. Mordecai Schochet appears to have stayed a butcher until 1910 when he passed away. Baruch Millenson remained a butcher as well and passed away in 1908, before the outbreak of the kosher riots. Moses W. Rosenstein had been a butcher as early as 1880 and in the 1920 census, he is still a reverend in an abattoir (slaughter house).

What happened to our two original protagonists, the butcher Levi Edlavitch, and the schochet Salowitschick? Edlavitch stayed in the butcher business until 1902 when he expanded into the coal business. At first, Levi's name appears associated just with his new business. But by 1905 it is clear that he is involved in both meats and coal at the same time. In the Baltimore City Directory, his meat business is next door to his home address at 1136 E Pratt and his coal business address is just around the corner at 124 S Central Ave. In 1905 Levi is mentioned as the president of "Mikra Kodosh," an orthodox congregation, when a law suit was brought against the congregation for burying people in the cemetery of a lodge without prior permission.<sup>54</sup> Mikro Kodesh Synagogue had started in around 1887 with twenty members and held services on E Pratt street until it built its synagogue in 1892 on South High Street near Watson, only a few blocks from where Levi was living in 1905.<sup>55</sup> Levi passed away in 1923 and is buried in the cemetery of Mikro Kodesh Beth Israel.<sup>56</sup>

What happened to the schochet in this case, Isaac Salowitschick? From what I can piece together, after numerous name variations, he became Isaac Salowitch. The earliest reference I can find to him is the 1900 Baltimore City directory where Isaac "Schalowitz" is living on 206 S High street. His wife, Mina, is listed at the same address as a grocer. As far as I can tell, Isaac is not listed in any of the city directories after the 1897 case involved in the meat, beef or poultry industry which suggests that

even though he won the case at hand it may have in fact ended his career as a schochet. In 1910, there appears an Isaac "Salowitch" still at 218 S High St, listed under "Paper-Retail." In the 1910 census from the same year Isaac and Minnie "Shalowicz" appear at 225 [S.?] High listed as a wholesale grocer and in 1911 an Isaac Solowitch is listed as a grocer at 225 s High St. By 1913, Isaac has formed a wholesale grocery company called "Isaac Salowitch & Sons" with his sons Isaac, Harry, Louis and Moses, at 250 s Eden and they still appear at that same address in the 1920 census.

Perhaps the final irony of this entire story is Isaac Salowitch's end. Isaac passed away in 1933 and is buried in the cemetery of B'nai Israel, the very same congregation of Rabbi Levinson, who had condemned his skills as a schochet. Rabbi Levinson had passed away much earlier in 1912 and it is not clear whether Salowitch had joined the congregation when Levinson was still alive or had joined after the rabbi had passed. In the end, the spelling of his name reverted much closer to the original version under which we originally met him: Isaac Salawitch. His tombstone reads: "A man who fears God and does righteousness. Isaac ben rav Tzvi." He was 70 years old.<sup>57</sup>

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> After researching much of this essay, I discovered there was some coverage of this story by the Jewish Museum, see <http://jewishmuseummd.org/2017/03/processions-debates-and-curbstone-encounters-the-struggle-over-kosher-meat-in-baltimore-1897-1918-pt-2/>

<sup>2</sup> "'Kosher' or 'Trepah:' A Novel Suit Growing Out of the Jewish Methods of Killing Cattle." *The Baltimore Sun* (hereafter *Sun*) April 2, 1897 p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *The Baltimore Sun* had actually reported on a "curious case" in England less than a decade before on Jan 4, 1869, p. 3, concerning a case of a Hebrew butcher bringing a case against the chief rabbi of England for ruining his business by declaring his meat "tripher".

<sup>4</sup> "Scientific Slaughter" *Sun*, April 3, 1897, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> The fact that the contract was for three months is stated in the last article of the series "Verdict For the 'Schochet'," *Sun*, April 8, 1897, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> "Two Women Claim Him," *Sun*, Feb 1, 1896, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> "News Of The Courts", *Sun*, Jan. 27, 1899, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> "Mr. William H. Weissager," *Sun*, Feb 25, 1903, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> "For Yiddish Theatre," Dec 14, 1904, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> He is asking for \$250 dollars in lost income. He can earn between \$6-\$10 dollars a day. That means that he is asking for a loss of between 10 and 25 days of income.

<sup>11</sup> "Mosaic Butchering" *Sun*, April 6, 1897, p. 10 and page 1, no title.

<sup>12</sup> See Baltimore City Directory, 1898, p. 1157, and under "Parehoff" in 1899, p. 1113. His 1910 census indicates his arrival in 1891 and his 1930 census suggests his arrival in 1895.

<sup>13</sup> On Rabbi Levinson's background, see <https://www.jewishdowntown.org/history.html>, Abraham J. Karp, *Jewish Continuity in America: Creative Survival in a Free Society*. University of Alabama Press, 1998, 69-71 and Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner, *On Middle Ground*. 2018. Loc 2755-2779.

<sup>14</sup> For the background on Rabbi Levinson in Rochester, see Karp, *Jewish Continuity*. 69-71.

<sup>15</sup> The reference to him as Rabbi Hirsch Abraham appears in a case of bigamy that made the news. "Before Tribunal of Rabbis." *Sun*, Mon. Nov. 10, 1902 p. 12

<sup>16</sup> "Nachlas-Kessler" Aug 14, 1911, p.8, refers to a "Rabbi A Berman" of Exeter Street Synagogue who is officiating. From an earlier article we know Rabbi's middle name was Abraham. So it seems that this may be the same person.

"Not Good in Law," *Sun*, Nov. 29, 1904, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> See "Verdict for \$14.50." *Sun*, March 1, 1900, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> See "They Are Not Married." *Sun*, Feb 22, 1901 p. 7

<sup>19</sup>"Dedicating A Synagogue," *Sun*, May 30, 1896.

<sup>20</sup> "Before Tribunal of Rabbis." *Sun*, Mon. Nov. 10, 1902 p. 12

<sup>21</sup>"Rabbi Berman Dies From Penumonia" *Sun*, April 9, 1927 p 20

<sup>22</sup> "Throng At Rabbi's Funeral," *Sun*, June 10, 1912, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> "Scientific Slaughter," *Sun*, April 3, 1897, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> "Chinese Burial Customs", *Sun*, Jan 10, 1896, p. 8; No title, Sept. 17, 1897, p. 10; "Alleged Breach of Agreement." *Sun*, April 23, 1900, p. 7; "Powders Contained Arsenic," *Sun*, Jan. 28, 1901, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> There is only one cursory mention of the "House of Jacob" congregation. "Prayer of the Jews." *Sun*, July 21, 1898, p. 3 mentions the "House of Jacob" congregation holding special prayers at the Wailing Wall for the cause of America in the present war. No mention is made of Schwartzberg in the article. There are a number of references to Beth Jacob Congregation between 1895-1905 but none of those articles refer to a Rabbi Schwartzberg.

<sup>26</sup> The Trustees of the Aitz Chaim board paid \$200 to another congregation for interest in a cemetery property. On May 2, 1896, p. 10, the *Sun* reports that the trustees gave a contract for the new synagogue construction and hired an architect. The building was to be built on the existing site of the congregation at 16 and 18 N. Exeter between Baltimore and Fayette Streets. According to a later article, this site had previously been the location of Exeter Street Hall. On Aug. 20, 1896, p. 8 the *Sun* reports that the dedication of the building was scheduled for the next day and reported that the congregation would process to the new building and that the mayor would take part with an address, followed by an address of "Rev. Harris Schwas-burg [sic], rabbi of the congregation." On Aug 22, 1896, p. 8, the *Sun* reported that the new building had been dedicated with a procession of twelve carriages carrying the trustees and officials of the congregation. The procession passed by city Hall where it was reviewed by Baltimore Mayor Hooper. The article reports that "Rabbi Isaac Schwartzburg who has charge of the congregation" took part in the proceedings. While the building was under construction congregation had worshipped around the corner at 10 N. High St.



---

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, the following articles in the Sun, "Mikru Kodesch Synagogue," Jun 20, 1892 p. 8; "To Be Rededicated" Sept. 5, 1894, p. 8 on Ahane Amuno Synagogue; "The Beth Jacob Anshe Curland Hebrew Congregation" incorporated July 3, 1895, p. 8; "A Congregation Moves" Sept 11, 1895 p. 8 regarding B'nei Israel takes possession of Lloyd Street Synagogue; On dedication of Aitz Chaim Congregation, "A New Jewish Temple" Aug. 20, 1896, p. 8; On dedication of new synagogue on Exeter, see notice Aug 7, 1885, p. 2; On dedication of Adath Jeshurun, see "Dedicating A Synagogue," May 30, 1896, p 8. On the growth of Beth Mamedrosh Schlavowsky Agudath Achim Congregation in 1899, see Fitting Up A Synagogue: Ragidly Orthodox Congregation To Occupy Old High Street Church" July 15, 1899, p. 7.

In 1905, Cyrus Adler and Henrietta Szold estimated that between 1878-1905 there were twenty other congregations that started up, many of which did not have their own buildings. See "Baltimore." Jewish Encyclopedia. 1901-1906. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2420-baltimore>.

<sup>28</sup> See Baltimore City Directory 1897, p. 1397.

<sup>29</sup> I did quite a bit of extensive searching trying to determine what happened to Rabbi Schwartzberg. I searched on his name variations (first and last) and was unable to find him in Baltimore or determine if he was a person of the same name living in another state. In the end, I couldn't determine if he changed his name or moved on to another city, perhaps in response to this case.

<sup>30</sup> In the 1900, census his immigration year is given as 1885. In 1910, his immigration year is given as 1887.

<sup>31</sup> See Lauren R. Silberman. *The Jewish Community of Baltimore*. Arcadia. 2008, 67.

<sup>32</sup> See the Baltimore City Directory (hereafter BCD), 1895, p. 984; The Baltimore Sun, 25 May 1894, p. 7; BCD 1897, p. 1978; On real estate transaction: The Baltimore Sun - 30 Oct 1902 - Page 11. BCD, 1906, p. 1260.

<sup>33</sup> I haven't been able to find much information about this congregation. There is one financial transaction where they appear to purchase a property (possibly cemetery) in 1896. See *Sun*, March 11, 1896 p. 7 and another transaction, see *Sun*, June 11, 1902 p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> According to family trees online, Baruch Millenson had a brother Hirsch Abramson who was buried in the Russian Hebrew Congregation (i.e., the congregation of Rabbi Levinson). I have not been able to independently verify this family relationship from obituaries or other records so far. If this family relationship is correct, it suggests that one of Baruch's family members may have been a member of Rabbi Levinson's synagogue. See The Baltimore Sun, Thursday, Dec. 1 1910, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, "Crown Rabbinate." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, ed., by Adele Berlin p. 195. Online <https://bit.ly/2rEIPbS>.

---

<sup>36</sup> "Jews To Incorporate" July 13, 1915, p. 7. and "The Chief Rabbi of the Orthodox Jews" July 14, 1915, p. 6. On chief rabbis of other cities see, "Chief Rabbi Josephs Dead" July 29, 1902. On Cincinatti's chief rabbi, "Rabbis Elect Officers" Aug 4, 1905, p. 7. On Philadelphia's chief rabbi July 28, 1906, p. 1

<sup>37</sup> "Jews To Incorporate." Sun, July 13, 1915, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> "Jews To Incorporate." Sun, July 13, 1915, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup>The Sun, "Shulcan Orech Read." April 7, 1897, p. 10

<sup>40</sup>German Street no longer exists today on Baltimore maps. At the time, the congregation was on Greene Street between what today is E Baltimore and W Lombard. For an old map of Baltimore with German Street on it, see

<sup>41</sup>Yitzchak Levine, "Forty Years As Rav Of Baltimore's Congregation Shearith Israel."

<http://www.jewishpress.com/sections/magazine/glimpses-ajh/forty-years-as-rav-of-baltimores-congregation-shearith-israel/2008/01/03/>

<sup>42</sup> See "Rosh Hashanah," *Sun*, Sept 5, 1896, p. 10. See also "Autobiography of Rev. Dr. S. Schaffer," *The Jews of Baltimore*. Isidor Blum. Historical Review Publishing Company. Baltimore. 1910, pp. 59-61.

<sup>43</sup> "Jews and Palestine," Oct 4, 1897, p. 7. First Zionist Congress (Hebrew: הקונגרס הציוני הראשון) was the inaugural congress of the Zionist Organization (ZO) (to become the World Zionist Organization (WZO) in 1960) held in Basel (Basle), Switzerland, from August 29 to August 31, 1897.

<sup>44</sup> There had been one attempt by congregation Chizuk Amuno to organize a Ritual Slaughtering Board (a "Shechitah board" ) of orthodox congregations in 1872 but that attempt had failed quickly. *On Three Pillars: The History of Chuzk Amuno Congregation. 1871-1996*. Jan Bernhardt Schein. Chizuk Amuno Congregation, 2000, p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> "Hebrew Sick and Relief Association." Sun, Jan 13, 1898, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> See his tombstone, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/99838778>

<sup>47</sup> Marble plaque from the shop of M. W. Rosenstein, c. 1900. Reads "Shochet" in Hebrew. Gift of B'nai Israel Congregation, JMM 1993.148.1. <http://jewishmuseummd.org/tag/federation-of-orthodox-hebrew-congregations/>

<sup>48</sup>"Verdict For The 'Schochet.'" Sun, April 8, 1897, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup>"Remitted \$75 of the Verdict." Sun, April 12, 1897, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup>"The Schochet." *The Saint Paul Globe*, May 28, 1897, p. 7.

<sup>51</sup>"To Supervise Slaughtering." *Sun*, June 10, 1899, p. 12.

<sup>52</sup>"Processions, Debates and Curbstone Encounters: The Struggle over Kosher Meat in Baltimore, 1897 – 1918 Pt. 8." <http://jewishmuseummd.org/tag/federation-of-orthodox-hebrew-congregations/>

<sup>53</sup>See, for example, "They Are Not Married," *Sun*, Feb. 22, 1901, p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> "Would Enjoin Burials." *Sun*, Oct 14, 1905, p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> "Mikru Kodesch Synagogue," *Sun*, June 20, 1892. p. 8.

<sup>56</sup> See [https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2015/308/127199522\\_1446756010.jpg](https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2015/308/127199522_1446756010.jpg)

<sup>57</sup> For his tombstone, see <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/99788341/issac-salawitch>