

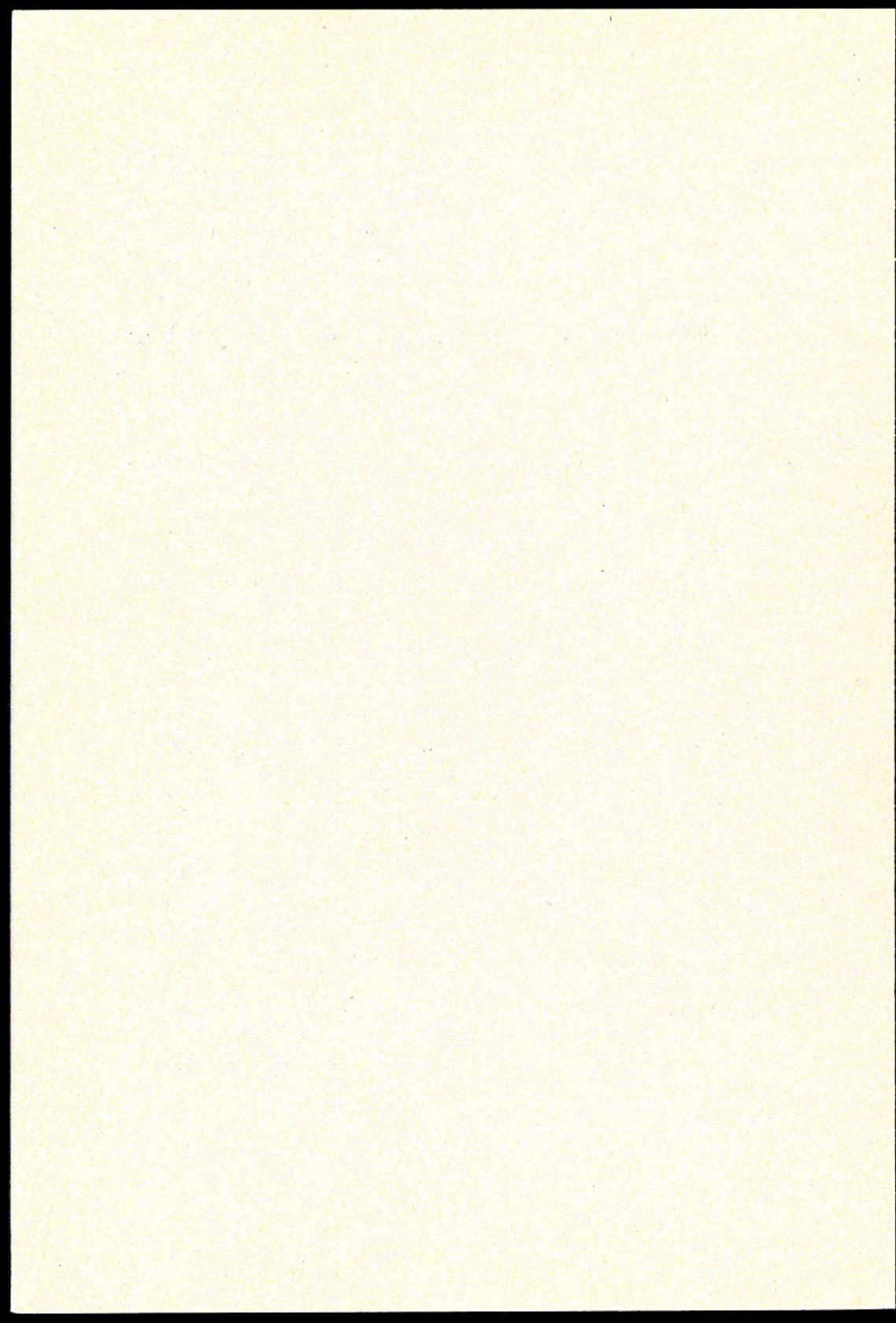
# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



---

Volume I      Cheshvan, 5721 — November, 1960      Number 2

---



... אשר ישאלון בניכם מחר את אבותם ... (יהושע ד:כא)

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come . . ."

—Joshua 4:21

# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

Emanuel Applebaum, *Editor*

---

Volume I      Cheshvan, 5721 — November, 1960      Number 2

---

Jewish Child Placement Services  
in Detroit, 1933-1944 . . . . . *Harold Silver* 2

Detroit's First Communal Talmud Torah . . . . *Irving I. Katz* 15

Cultural Progress Report of the  
Greater Detroit Jewish Community . . . . *Allen A. Warsen* 20

Book Reviews . . . . . 23

Biographical Notes on Contributors . . . . . 27

---

The Editors and the Board of Trustees assume no responsibility for opinions expressed by contributors.

Address all communications to the *Editor, Rabbi Emanuel Applebaum*, 18632 Hartwell Street, Detroit 35, Michigan.

# *Jewish Child Placement Services in Detroit, 1933 - 1944*

by HAROLD SILVER

This article will deal with a successful attempt to coordinate and rationalize Jewish child placement services in Detroit in the period 1933-1944. The writer had been in very close touch with the developments from the beginning. The data are based on the writer's recollections plus numerous documentary materials which include correspondence, minutes of 135 meetings, and 11 annual reports. Other sources used will be cited in the article.

## BACKGROUND

In 1926 a reorganization was effected in the United Jewish Charities which up to that time was the major Jewish philanthropic body in Detroit. Five separate, autonomous agencies emerged: (1) Jewish Welfare Federation for financing, budgeting and community-wide planning; (2) the Fresh Air Society; (3) Jewish Centers Association; (4) North End Clinic; and (5) Jewish Social Service Bureau (JSSB). The JSSB was responsible for relief, family welfare and for child placement. The child placement function was carried out through the medium of foster homes. Institutional care was being provided through two other agencies, both of them supported by independent fund raising: the Hebrew Orphan Home organized in 1918, and the Hebrew Infants Orphan Home, organized in 1922.<sup>1)</sup>

There were thus three different agencies providing care for children who needed care away from their own homes. The quality of that care was on a low plane, even by the standards of that day if we are to accept the accuracy of a study made by an outside child care specialist.<sup>2)</sup>

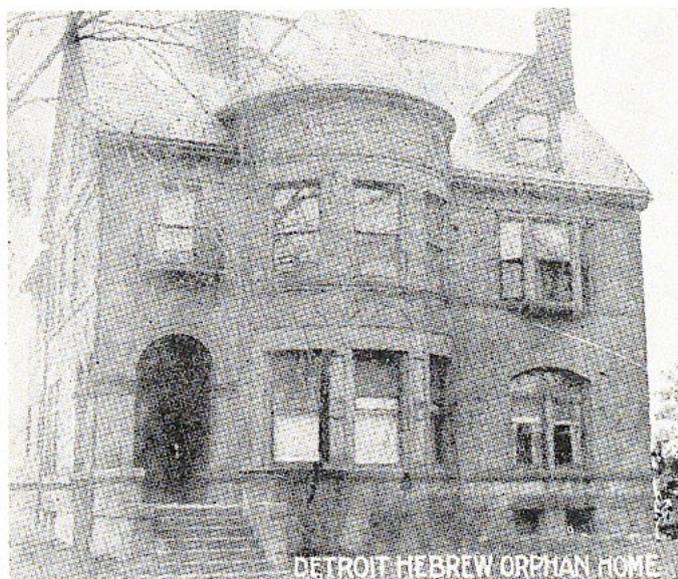
The JSSB had 48 children under its care, 12 of them in a subsidised home which was originally intended as a reception center but which had become "an institution for the permanent care of children." The physical care being given the children in the foster homes was poor, and "there is absolutely no evidence of the knowledge of child placing nor the technique of home finding being displayed."

The two institutions combined had a population of 65 children.

1) The early history of Jewish philanthropic activities in Detroit is described in S. D. Weinberg's *Jewish Social Services of Detroit* (Yiddish), Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit, 1940.

2) Ethel D. Oberbrunner of Cleveland, full report of a survey on *The Jewish Child Care Situation in Detroit*, October-December 1928, (typewritten manuscript).

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT



The Former Detroit Hebrew Orphan Home on Rowena Street

Mrs. Oberbrunner had no comments on the physical care in these institutions but she found the record keeping in a deplorable state and the social service all but non-existent.

The study also found lack of coordination and an "abnormal amount of antagonism that exists in the community against the Children's Bureau" (JSSB).

Even while the study was in progress efforts were being made to correct some of the weaknesses. The major step taken was the establishment in January 1929 of the Jewish Child Care Council. The Council was to have a dual function. On the one hand it took over from the JSSB the task of providing care to children in foster homes. On the other it was to have been a clearing and coordinating body for the child care program of the community. In this latter capacity the Council had the responsibility of deciding the merits of every application for the placement of Jewish children away from their homes and of arranging the placement of such children as were in need of foster care either in one of the institutions, or in a foster home.

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

### *The Kepecs Study*

The organization of the Council was an important step forward in the development of foster care services but, understandably, it did not solve all of the problems. A study by Jacob Kepecs<sup>3)</sup> of Chicago, an outstanding child care expert of that day, found the development to be uneven. The two institutions (Hebrew Orphan Home and the Hebrew Infants Orphan Home), although not bound to accept the decisions of the Council, in general did accept them and "there has been developed a rather wholesome give and take attitude between the institutions and the Council." In part this was due to the fact that the institutions (which, it should be remembered, were outside of the Federation and represented the more recent immigrant-Orthodox groups) had members on the Council board which was made up solely of three representatives each from the two institutions, JSSB and the Jewish Welfare Federation. Perhaps a more weighty reason, however, was the absence of a conflict of interests between the Council and the institutions. The Council had not developed foster homes for infants (under 4 years of age) and such children were automatically assigned to the Hebrew Infants Orphan Home. The Hebrew Orphan Home, on the other hand, because of the admitted inadequacies of its building, did not press for the admission of new children.

Among the favorable developments in the child care field, listed by Kepecs, were:

1. Strengthening and extension of foster home service.  
On July 1, 1930 the Council had 84 children foster home care.
2. Acceptance by the two institutions of approved methods of casework in connection with intake and discharge, these services being rendered by the staff of the Council.
3. The acceptance of the two institutions and of the Council for support by the Community Fund (now known as United Foundation).

The situation with respect to the relation between the Council and the JSSB "was considered unsatisfactory by all parties concerned." Altho the JSSB no longer had the job of child placement

3) *Report of a Study of Jewish Child Care Council of Detroit, Submitted September 25, 1931.* (mimeographed manuscript.)

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

it was very closely involved with it due to the fact that some of the families applying to the JSSB wanted child placement and on the other hand, most families applying to the Council for placement were not in need of it. There was thus an active flow of case referrals between the two agencies. In the absence "of a clear definition and understanding of the division of responsibility between the two organizations" conflict and duplication of effort resulted, "and this had its unpleasant influence on the relationship with other organizations as well, especially the Juvenile Court." The study recommended, and the interested parties adopted, a set of proposals designed to demarcate lines of jurisdiction, and set of procedures, the major one being that the JSSB was to make the investigation on *all* child placement applications with appropriate recommendations to the Council.

### *New Agencies Emerge*

As the Kepecs report pointed out the character of the Jewish Child Care Council board (being made up of designated representatives of other organizations) was helpful in accomplishing the clearing and coordinating functions of the Council. But by the same token it led to it "neglecting to a large extent the foster home task of the organization." The solution proposed by Mr. Kepecs was "to consolidate all of the foster care service of the Jewish Community of Detroit under one Board and a single administration." As events proved this was premature and did not come about until 13 years later after a good many more changes had taken place. However, the immediate outcome was the establishment in January 1932 of a new agency, the Jewish Child Placement Bureau (JCPB). In effect, this was a new corporation with a new board that took over the foster home function, the staff and the budget of the Jewish Child Care Council. The Council continued the operation of the clearing and coordinating machinery, utilizing the staff service of the JCPB to the extent necessary.

In the meantime the Jewish Children's Home came into being by the merger of the two orphan homes previously mentioned. It began operations in July 1931 in a newly constructed building at Burlingame and Petoskey.

## THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILD CARE

### *New Coordinating Machinery*

When the writer of this article came to Detroit in February 1933 as the director of the Jewish Social Service Bureau (now the

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

Jewish Family and Children's Service) the coordinating machinery for child care services was in quite a battered condition and the relations between the three major agencies exhibited signs of serious strain. The JSSB was still making investigations of applications to the Jewish Child Placement Bureau, but there were frequent, and sometimes acrimonious, disagreements between the two agencies. To resolve them a bi-agency committee of board members was set up, aptly and frankly named the Controversial Case Committee. The relations between the Jewish Child Care Council and the Jewish Children's Home had been severed altogether. The Home was under a serious handicap because it had no caseworkers to arrange for admissions or discharges or for casework services to the children during their stay. There was an underlying competition between the Home and the Jewish Child Placement Bureau for children, and a marked difference in their philosophies of child care.

By May 1933 two separate agreements were entered into by the JSSB. One, with the Jewish Children's Home, called for the JSSB to investigate and make recommendations on all applications for admission to the Home. All such cases were to be reported on both to the Home and to a Joint Committee on Child Care which was empowered to make allocations of children to one or the other of the two placement agencies. The JSSB was also made responsible for arranging for the discharge of children from the Home. The second agreement, with the Jewish Child Placement Bureau (JCPB), confirmed the existing practice of the JSSB making investigations on JCPB cases and accepted the machinery of the Joint Committee for determination of allocations. In effect, then, the Joint Committee on Child Care replaced the Jewish Child Care Council, with this important difference, that the staff which carried out the tasks of the Committee was not the staff of a competing child placement agency, but that of a family agency whose biases were all in favor of maintaining families and avoiding placement altogether where possible.

The Joint Committee consisted of representatives of four agencies—the executive and a board member of each of the following:

- Jewish Child Placement Bureau (JCPB)
- Jewish Children's Home (JCH)
- Jewish Social Service Bureau (JSSB)
- Jewish Welfare Federation (JWF)

In the light of prior experience it was natural that all parties

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

approached the new arrangement with their fingers crossed, and the two children's agencies in particular had reservations and insisted on various safeguards. The JCH wished to have a veto over the Joint Committee's decision, and the compromise agreed on stated that the consent of the JCH to the Joint Committee's decisions was to be taken for granted, unless the Home challenged any decision within 5 days in which event the matter was to be decided by the Home board provided a representative of the Committee was present at the meeting. There was also a paragraph in the agreement that the JSSB "will not interfere in any manner with the internal management of the Jewish Children's Home, either in administration, discipline, health, feeding and clothing, or religious training, but will serve in an advisory capacity within the scope of preparing the child for its future standing in life." The JCH was the most sensitive agency, professionally the least secure, and with a board that was highly jealous of its autonomy and prerogatives. It was in deference to these factors that the representation of the JCH on the Joint Committee was in 1935 increased to 6 — a number equal to the combined representatives of the other 3 agencies. The reservations of the JCPB, as expressed by its board, had to do with its fear that the pressure by the Home to keep per capita costs down by admitting the maximum number of children and "the desire of some important members of the community to conciliate the group representing the Jewish Children's Home," may result in allocations being made on the basis of expediency rather than on the basis of children's needs. The JCPB board decided, however, not to press for amending the agreement "because of the fine casework anticipated of the Jewish Social Service Bureau," and because of their view that the JSSB-JCH agreement contained "all the freedom necessary for constructive casework, an agreement that was never achieved by the Jewish Care Council."

### *The Role of the JSSB*

The acid test of any coordinating device or machinery is how well and to what extent it succeeds in its objective. Coordination implies the existence of more than one agency operating in the same general area and the need for having their operations gear into an overall plan. The existence of more than one agency generally indicates differences in philosophy, approach and methods of work. Coordinating the agencies does not mean requiring them to give up these differences, altho it may well mean an agreement to subject them to common analysis and debate. It does mean the acceptance of certain common goals and of certain common procedures by the coordinated societies.

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

In the situation under discussion all parties readily subscribed to the proposition that placement should be utilized as a last resort and that every means should be tried to keep the family together. The JSSB was, in theory at least, the best medium to make the determination since it had no institutional or professional vested interest in placement. Further it, alone of the three agencies, had the program and resources to achieve the objective of keeping families intact. Having been given the responsibility, as it were, of helping placement applicants solve their problems by means short of placement the JSSB developed substitute placement resources. Three of these might be mentioned.

1. Utilization of relief funds for financing plans without which placement would have been unavoidable.
2. Development of a homemaker service to be used for families where the mother was away or incapacitated, thus keeping the home together on a reasonably satisfactory basis.
3. Development of mutual boarding homes where a child *and* parent could live, thus providing foster care for the child while the parent was away at work and yet keeping the family unit going in a modified form.

There is good ground for believing that these efforts of the JSSB have resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children placed. In the first year (ending 6-30-34) of the Joint Committee's operations, 72 children were allocated for placement. There followed a steady reduction in these figures until in the year ending 6-30-39 only 35 were placed and this number remained at about the same level through the Committee's remaining 5 years of existence. Undoubtedly, other factors, including improvement in the economic situation, were responsible, but there is little question in the writer's mind that the substitute placement resources of the JSSB account at least in part for this reduction.

### *Foster Home or Institutional Care?*

As might be expected, the issue which consumed the greatest amount of time at the Joint Committee meetings revolved about questions of allocation. When should a child, whose need for placement was established, be allocated to the JCH and when to the

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

JCPB for foster home care? While some members of the Committee had their own opinions on the need of an institution, there was a tacit understanding that such questioning outside the jurisdiction of the Committee. The establishment of the Joint Committee in itself constituted an agreement by the community to utilize existing institutional facilities. The question was: How? In what cases? The Committee started out without ideological preconceptions on child care outside of the one basic principle that wherever possible children should be kept with their own families. But during the very first year of the Committee's operations the decisions in each individual case (174 children were involved) fell into a pattern which was maintained throughout the Committee's 11-year history.

1. Children whose early return to their families seemed likely were allocated to the JCH.
2. Children who appeared to require prolonged care were allocated to the JCPB.
3. Children to be adopted were allocated to the JCPB.

The last group was fairly easy to define and caused no controversy. In the first two groups, however, the question of "how long is temporary care" was still left open.

The Committee did not elaborate on this point which was decided by a discussion of each case. In border line situations there was a tendency to resolve the doubt in favor of the JCH. This was done largely to appease the Home board.

The working rule of institutional care for short-term cases was followed on the assumption that institutional life was less likely to weaken the child's parental ties, and conversely, where such ties were broken or about to be broken, the foster home allowed a better opportunity for forming new family relationships. The practice of the Joint Committee, in this respect, was based on sound principles of child care.

There was, however, another group of children who were allocated to the JCH without regard to sound child care principles but because of the existence of certain resources and for the sake of keeping the peace in the community. This was the group of children under 4 years of age and particularly those under 1 year of age. The JCH had succeeded to the program of the Hebrew Infants Orphan Home and possessed the personnel and equipment to care for very young children. On the other hand, the JCPB had never developed

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

homes for babies. This was partly because this area was already "preempted" by the JCH, and partly because the JCPB itself had little enthusiasm and often insufficient funds to venture into a new field. It was, therefore, natural for the Joint Committee to allocate most of the children under 4 to the JCH — the only agency which was ready to take them.

Foster home care for pre-nursery age children had been recommended in 1931 by the Kepecs study. There was fairly universal agreement among child care authorities that infants thrive better in family homes. But the failure to develop such homes by JCPB — the agency which laid so much stress on allocations being determined by the needs of the child — while it made the Joint Committee's job less burdensome, did do violence to sound principles of child care.

### *Learning to Work Together*

Considering the reservations entertained in 1933 the Joint Committee machinery worked with surprising smoothness and harmony. The right reserved by the JCH to veto Committee action was exercised only once, in the first year, and in that case the JCH board on reviewing the case sustained the Joint Committee's decision. No veto was subsequently attempted. The preponderance of JCH representation on the Joint Committee was largely of academic interest. While there is no doubt that if a deep rift had developed the JCH control of 50% of the Committee votes could have meant serious trouble, the fact was that two of the JCH delegates never showed up at meetings, a third left the city in 1938 and was never replaced, and from that year on the JCH had only 3 delegates on the Committee.

The above does not mean that the Committee meetings, averaging 17 a year in the first 8 years, were peaceful. On the contrary, many of them were spirited and afforded plenty of opportunity for airing of various views and convictions on the subject of child care. On occasion tempers ran high, but when it came to concrete decisions, these were invariably determined by what the Committee believed to be was best for the child, *as conditioned and limited* by the solid facts of the availability of some communal facilities and the absence of others.

In addition to making studies of all placement applications the JSSB also had another responsibility under its agreement with the JCH, and that was to provide casework services to the children while they were in the institution and in preparation for and following their discharge.

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

At the beginning this service was pretty much limited to making discharge plans and to supervision of the older children in their new living arrangements. There were two reasons for this. One was the fact that the Home lacked definite admission policies. This, added to the absence of casework facilities, resulted in many children remaining in the Home for exceedingly long periods. Thus during the 3 years ending 6-30-36 the Joint Committee approved the discharge from the JCH of 91 children. Of these, 32 had been admitted prior to the formation of the Committee, i.e. prior to the availability of casework service, and had an average length of stay in the institution of 60.2 months. This is in contrast to the 59 children, admitted subsequent to the organization of the Joint Committee, who averaged a stay of only 4.8 months. The Home was quite anxious to discharge many of the older children, and naturally the JSSB turned its attention first to this group in preference to those children whom the Home did not consider ready for discharge.

The other reason was the resistance of the JCH to permit the JSSB too much leeway in working with the children in the institution lest the Home's autonomy be infringed. It was not until some of this feeling dissipated, and a new administrator came to the Home in 1935 who had social work training, that definite procedures were worked out to furnish a regular consistent casework service to every child who remained in the Home longer than a few months. These procedures included periodic contacts by the JSSB caseworker with the child, written reports by the superintendent of the Home on the child's adjustment, and bi-weekly case conferences between the staffs of the two agencies. This arrangement made possible a well rounded knowledge of the child and his return to the parents on a permanent plan at the earliest practicable time.

The JSSB's relations with the JCPB were also very close and by and large productive. Cases were referred to the JCPB after the JSSB had come to the conclusion that there was not any way of keeping the family intact. Since this is often a matter of judgment, regular referral conferences were scheduled between the staffs of the two agencies on cases allocated by the Joint Committee to the JCPB. At these conferences each case was discussed and accepted by the JCPB, though sometimes it was referred back to the JSSB for fuller information or further casework treatment.

### *The Self Study*

Along with the remarkable success of the Committee in coordinating the community's child care services, establishing and main-

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

taining fairly harmonious inter-agency relationships, and keeping the communal peace, it became apparent, after a few years, that the Joint Committee machinery suffered from some inherent weaknesses. In fact, its success was, in part, intimately tied up with its weaknesses. The Committee was the creature of four independent agencies. Its continued existence depended on not "rocking the boat," or at least not so violently as to cause rebellion and secession. The Committee kept the communal peace, but at the expense of keeping the status quo. In all fairness to its origin and constitution, it could not introduce radical changes. It was powerless to prescribe new agency operations or policies, however much needed, as it had no control over agency budgets or staffs. A thorough discussion of the needs of children in the light of the accumulated experience was indicated.

This opportunity was provided by the self study authorized by the Committee in June 1940, exactly 7 years after the Committee's formation. Immediately, the study was a response to the request of the president of the JCH who was concerned over the steadily falling population of the Home and the resultant rise in per capita costs, a situation which prompted some critical comments from Community Chest budget committees. The study was conducted by the executives of the four agencies with the assistance of a graduate student. The report was submitted and recommendations effected by the beginning of 1941, probably a record for speed in the history of social work studies.

### *Changes Resulting from the Study*

The study afforded an opportunity for all 4 agencies to take a look at the size of the problem and to initiate conversations on what services the children need rather than on which facilities should be used. The steady decline in the number of children available for placement made it abundantly clear that the plant of the JCH was too large for Detroit's needs. Furthermore, the overall decline in the number of children placed made a merger of the two children's agencies (advocated by Jacob Kepecs in 1931) feasible and even necessary. Accordingly the Jewish Child Placement Bureau and the Jewish Children's Home were united under the name of the Jewish Children's Bureau in January 1941, under a single board, budget and administration.

The Joint Committee was continued, but its allocating task now became obsolete. Since the JSSB still continued to study all placement applications the Committee's functions were modified.

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

With both institutional and foster care now under the jurisdiction of one agency, and both types of facilities available, the Study recommends that there should be easy and flexible transfer from one type of care to the other as indicated, was easy enough to carry out.

The Jewish Children's Bureau readily accepted the Study's further recommendation that pre-school children should not be institutionalized.

The Study left open for future decision two other questions: (1) The type of institutional care to be provided (congregate care or cottage type) and (2) possible merger with the JSSB.

With the allocation function having been outdated the number of Joint Committee meetings was sharply reduced (7 in 3½ years) with decisions on placement made either by the JSSB or in inter-agency conferences of the JSSB and JCB.

The relations between the two agencies were much more harmonious than with the predecessor agencies of the Jewish Children's Bureau. This was due in part to the fact that the first executive of the JCB, as well as her successor, were both former staff members of the JSSB. Of perhaps greater significance was the fact that on the score of professional staff qualifications, standards and general philosophy of child care, the two agencies were very close together. Nevertheless, the JCB felt an increasing dissatisfaction with the fact that it did not control its own intake. This feeling was present not because the JCB believed the JSSB intake studies were inadequately or improperly done. Primarily, JCB's restiveness was the result of their view that there was necessarily something lost, in relationship with clients, when another agency entered in the midst of placement discussions. The distinction between study and placement is an artificial one. It has meaning from an academic and an organizational point of view. But to the client the experience is a continuous one from the point of application onwards. The meaning and consequences of placement need to be explained to him fairly early in the contact, and that can be done best by the placement agency.

By the middle of 1941 the population of the Jewish Children's Home (i.e. the institutional facility of the JCB) declined to 12 (the capacity was at least 50), and it became no longer economical to operate the institution. Accordingly on August 1, 1941 the building was closed and the remaining children transferred elsewhere.<sup>4)</sup>

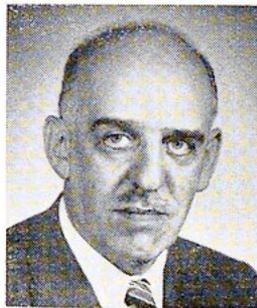
4) The building at present forms a wing of the Jewish Home for Aged.

## JEWISH CHILD PLACEMENT SERVICES IN DETROIT

In the course of the Self Study it has been proposed that the two children's agencies both merge with the JSSB. There were valid professional and communal reasons for the proposal, but it was not adopted largely because some important lay leaders of the children's agencies foresaw difficulties that might result from the presence of a particular leading professional on the JSSB staff. In 1944, when that professional left the agency, conversations were at once begun which resulted in the merger taking place on June 29, 1944.

Now there was only one agency — the Jewish Social Service Bureau — which was engaged in family and child placement. The Joint Committee on Child Care was automatically dissolved.

A major factor in the success of the Joint Committee was Fred M. Butzel, its chairman throughout the 11 years of its existence. He was an unusual personality who was held in high esteem and affection by all segments of the Jewish community and of the general social work community. Mr. Butzel was a member of the boards of all four agencies and had been president of three of them. He combined the qualities of encompassing with rare understanding large communal programs while simultaneously capable of sympathetically considering the problems of a single child. While holding to basic human values and social work standards he was tolerant of diverse philosophies and considered practical resolutions of conflict as a having a higher priority over any "ideology." "We are facing a condition, not a theory" was an expression he frequently used in reconciling differences and pacifying principled objectors at meetings of the joint Committee.



Fred M. Butzel

## ***Detroit's First Communal Talmud Torah***

by IRVING I. KATZ

The history of Jewish education in Detroit goes back to 1850 when Temple Beth El, Michigan's first Jewish Congregation, was founded by twelve families, all of whom were recent arrivals from Germany. The first Jews who came to America were from Spain and Portugal but beginning with 1815 the Jewish immigration came largely from Germany and other countries of Central Europe. For this was the time of the great German immigration to America, when thousands of Germans of all religions fled their native land for the New World. It was the time when the revolt of 1848 had been repressed and those who wanted freedom had to seek it in a foreign land. It was also a period of great poverty in Germany, when multitudes desired a fresh start in a new home. Hence the German Jews came to America, along with other Germans, seeking opportunity, freedom, and above all liberty to worship according to the dictates of their conscience.

From 1850 to 1869 Beth El conducted a "Hebrew-German-English School," an all-day school where the children received their secular as well as religious education. In 1869 the all-day school was discontinued and a religious school was opened which met twice weekly after public school hours and on Saturday and Sunday mornings. In the 1870's it became a one-day-a-week school and was commonly referred to as the Sabbath School.

Congregation Shaarey Zedek, organized in 1861, also conducted an all-day school. In the 1870's, however, this school was closed and the children were sent to the public schools for their secular education and to private Hebrew teachers for their religious instruction.

When Rabbi Aaron M. Ashinsky came to Detroit in 1889 as spiritual leader of Congregations Shaarey Zedek, Beth Israel and Beth Jacob, a *cheder* (private Hebrew school) was opened.

In 1880 Detroit had a population of 116,340 which included 665 Jews. In the next twenty years Detroit's population rose to some 300,000 and the Jewish population to 5,000. The increase in the Jewish settlement was due principally to the influx of East European Jews who fled from the poverty and persecution which bore most heavily upon them in Russia, Austria, Roumania and nearby lands. By 1900 Detroit numbered five Orthodox congregations (Shaarey Zedek, B'nai Israel, Beth Jacob, Beth David and Beth Abraham) and one Reform temple (Beth El).

## DETROIT'S FIRST COMMUNAL TALMUD TORAH

In 1898 Detroit's Orthodox Jewish community, principally the members of Shaarey Zedek, joined forces and organized "The Talmud Torah Association of Detroit" for the purpose of opening the first modern communal Talmud Torah in the city. The Articles of Association, dated June 2, 1898, read as follows:

*"We, the undersigned, desiring to become incorporated under the provisions of Act No. 208 of the Public Acts of 1897, entitled 'An Act to revise, amend and consolidate the laws for the incorporation of ecclesiastical bodies' do hereby make, execute and adopt the following Articles of Association, to wit:*

### ARTICLE I

*The purpose or purposes of this association are as follows: To establish, maintain and control an institution or institutions for the dissemination of religious knowledge, and especially for the purpose of instructing children of the Jewish faith in the history of that religion and its doctrines, in the Hebrew language and for other purposes incident thereto.*

### ARTICLE II

*The name assumed by this association and by which it shall be known in the law is "Talmud Torah Association of Detroit."*

### ARTICLE III

*The term of existence of this association is fixed as thirty years from the date hereof.*

### ARTICLE IV

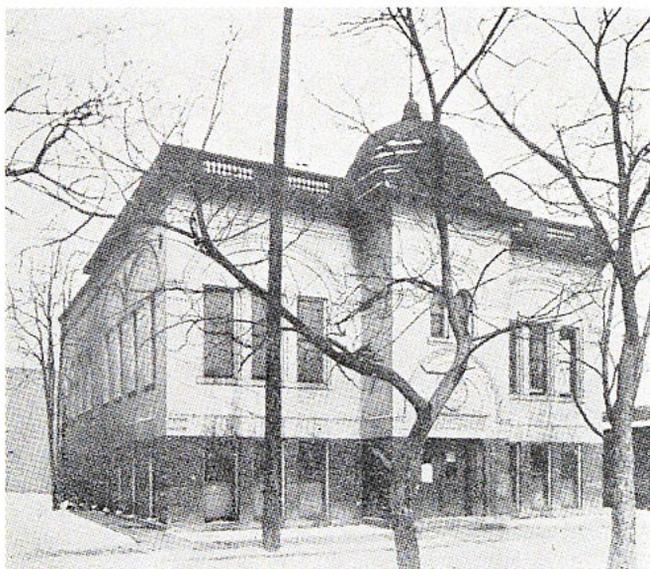
*The names of the members of this association and their respective residences are as follows:*

*Kate Roth, Detroit, Michigan  
Samuel Nathan Ginsburg, Detroit, Michigan  
David W. Simons, Detroit, Michigan  
Abraham Jacobs, Detroit, Michigan  
William Saulson, Detroit, Michigan  
Samuel Goldstein, Detroit, Michigan  
Joseph Rosenzweig, Detroit, Michigan  
Samuel Rosenthal, Petoskey, Michigan  
Moses Blumrosen, Manistique, Michigan  
David Blumenthal, Detroit, Michigan  
Julius P. Rosenthal, Detroit, Michigan  
Hyman Buchhalter, Detroit, Michigan*

## DETROIT'S FIRST COMMUNAL TALMUD TORAH

*Israel L. Scheinman, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Moses Harris, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Abbe Keidan, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Harry Meyers, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Phillip S. Applebaum, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Joseph Levitt, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Harris Kaplan, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Simon Lewis, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Michael Davis, Detroit, Michigan*  
*Aaron Solomon, Detroit, Michigan*

*In witness whereof, we the parties hereby associating, for the purpose of giving legal effect to these articles, hereunto sign our names this second day of June, 1898."*



Division Street Talmud Torah

The school opened by the Talmud Torah Association started out under the name "Talmud Torah Institute" but was also referred to as "The City Talmud Torah," "The Big Talmud Torah" and "The Hebrew Free School." The name by which it is best remembered is "The Division Street Talmud Torah" because

## DETROIT'S FIRST COMMUNAL TALMUD TORAH

it was located all through its existence on Division Street, corner Beaubien.

According to "The Jewish American," Detroit's first English-Jewish weekly published from 1900 to 1910, the first sessions of the school were held in a modest cottage on Division Street. A lot was soon purchased at 94 Division Street, corner Beaubien, two doors away from the cottage, and a beautiful brick building was erected, the first building built by Detroit Jews to house exclusively an institution of Jewish learning. The building consisted of class rooms, assembly hall and library. The principal contributors to the building were Mrs. Kate Roth, \$3,000.00; Samuel N. Ginsburg, \$1,500.00; The Daughters of Zion (Ladies Auxiliary of the Talmud Torah Association, organized April 5, 1899), \$614.00; David W. Simons, \$400.00; and Abraham Jacobs, \$300.00.

In addition to the Talmud Torah, which was exclusively for boys, a Sunday School was opened which was co-educational. The Sunday School of Shaarey Zedek amalgamated with this Sunday School. *Both Schools were communal in character and were open, free of charge, to all Jewish children, rich or poor.*

The first principal of the Division Street Talmud Torah was Dr. Jacob B. Baruch, an ordained rabbi and one of the earliest Jewish physicians in Detroit. The first president of the Talmud Torah Association was Samuel N. Ginsburg, an immigrant from Poland and one of the prominent Jews of Detroit at that time.

According to the first "American Jewish Year Book" for 1899-1900, there were 150 pupils in the Talmud Torah and 300 in the Sunday School. The schools were supported by 125 contributing members and by fund raising events sponsored by the Daughters of Zion of which Mrs. Joseph Rosenzweig was the first president. The annual budget of the schools was \$3,500.00, which included a Trade School Department for boys.

Sessions in the Talmud Torah were held daily for three hours, beginning at 4:00 P.M. The Daughters of Zion served food to the children during the winter months and refreshments during the summer season. The Sunday School met from 9:30 to 11:00 in the morning.

The teachers in the Talmud Torah, besides Dr. Baruch, were A. Buch and J. Blumenthal. The Sunday School staff, all volun-



Dr. Jacob B. Baruch

## DETROIT'S FIRST COMMUNAL TALMUD TORAH

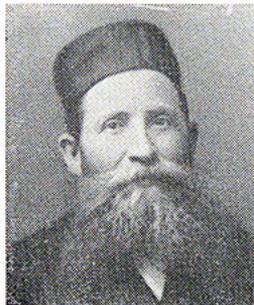
teers, consisted of Bella Goldman, who was named Principal in 1900, Dina Benjamin, Mary Buchhalter, Mary Goldman, J. Harris, J. Levinson and S. Simon.

The officers and directors of the Talmud Torah Association in 1900 were Samuel N. Ginsburg, President; J. Goldstein, Vice-President; Hyman Buchhalter, Secretary; J. Blumenthal, Michael Davis, J. Goldman, J. Harris, Abraham Jacobs, Simon Lewis, J. Mayer, Julius P. Rosenthal, William Saulson and David W. Simons, directors.

In 1909 the Hebrew School of Shaarey Zedek and the Division Street Talmud Torah amalgamated and Rabbi Abraham M. Hershman, spiritual leader of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, became the new Principal of the amalgamated school. One of the innovations introduced by Rabbi Hershman was to make the Talmud Torah co-educational.



Rabbi A. M. Hershman



Hyman Buchhalter

Hyman Buchhalter, an able educator and scholar, succeeded Rabbi Hershman as Principal of the Division Street Talmud Torah. His daughter, Miriam Buchhalter, succeeded Bella Goldman as Principal of the Sunday School.

The Division Street Talmud Torah existed until 1920 when it merged with the United Hebrew Schools which were established in 1919. The Division Street Talmud Torah was a well organized and well conducted school throughout the twenty-two years of its existence. Many Detroiters who attended this school still reminisce about it with love and affection.

Among those who were active in the management of the Division Street Talmud Torah, besides those mentioned above, were Jacob Friedberg, Miriam Ginsburg, Louis Granet, Mrs. Sal Kaufman, Aaron Klein, Michael Krell, Mrs. Israel Lieberman, Max Lieberman, Emanuel Schloss, Mrs. Henry Stearns, Julius Steinberg, Joseph Wetsman, and Mrs. H. Wilkinson.

# *Cultural Progress Report of the Greater Detroit Jewish Community*

by ALLEN A. WARSEN

Culture — the totality of man's mental activities — includes religion, education, literature, philosophy, and the arts. Similarly, Jewish culture or Judaism being the sum total of the mental activities of the Jewish people includes Jewish religion, Jewish education, Jewish philosophy, Jewish ethics, etc. In line with this definition, the more advanced a community's culture, the richer and more varied are its intellectual activities and accomplishments. Conversely, the poorer a community's culture, the fewer are its activities and the more meager its attainments.

The Jewish community of Greater Detroit, being both dynamic and creative, has always been rich in cultural activities. Its cultural creativity since January of this year will be the subject of this review.

Most notable of the achievements in the field of education was the establishment of the Bet Midrash on the campus of the University of Michigan. This junior college of Jewish studies, co-sponsored by the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York and the Midrasha of Detroit with the University of Michigan, is planned to cover a four year course with two days a week of concentrated classroom activities. Upon completion of the four year course, the students will be qualified to receive degrees in Hebrew literature from one of the respective recognized institutions of higher learning.

The loan fund instituted by the United Hebrew Schools to enable its teachers to visit and study in Israel is another noteworthy innovation. These interest free loans are to be repaid over a four year period.

Noteworthy, too, were the Midrasha's Fourth Annual Institute and the Borman Near Eastern Lectures of the College of Liberal Arts of Wayne State University. The theme of the Institute was "Messianic Ideas and Movements in Jewish Life." The Near Eastern series consisted of discourses by such outstanding scholars as Prof. James Muilenburg of Union Theological Seminary and Prof. Goodenough of Yale University who spoke on "Israel and the Nations of the Old Testament" and "Interpreting the Paintings in the Dura-Europos Synagogue."

Another innovation was the "Yom Hatalmid" of the Adas Shalom Religious School. The "Yom Hatalmid" (Scholar's Day),

## CULTURAL PROGRESS REPORT

dedicated to honor the school's students, was observed in January, and is to be observed annually hereafter.

Praiseworthy was the issue of the *Bulletin of Temple Beth El* of January 22, 1960. This publication was dedicated to the Temple's teachers who have served for ten years or more. In addition to Dr. Richard C. Hertz's article, "Thank God for Our Teachers," it contained photographs and biographical sketches of the thirteen honored teachers.

Mention should be made of the decision of the Detroit Board of Education to name two schools in the memory of the late Fred M. Butzel and Judge B. Keidan. As the *Jewish News* commented, "The tributes to these departed leaders also are marks of honor to the Jewish community whose standards were advanced by these two notable men."

The growth of the Hillel Day School is worthy of note. Beginning with a kindergarten and first grade, it has grown into a modern elementary day school with kindergarten and three grades which combine Hebraic-religious instruction with general studies, and is under the spiritual influence of Conservative Judaism and Zionism.

Foremost of the literary contributions of the community's authors was Mr. Bernard Isaacs' new collection of Hebrew short stories entitled *Choter Megeza*, printed in Israel.

Mr. Freed Winner's recent volume of Yiddish verse, *A Pastuch in New York (A Shepherd in New York)*, is composed of sonnets and lyric poems. This volume was printed in Buenos Aires.

Another book published by a citizen of Michigan is *Sanctity of the Synagogue*. The author, Baruch Litvin of Mt. Clemens, devoted the entire book to the question of "mechitsa" (the separation between men and women in the synagogue). This book defending "separation" is written from the traditional point of view.

Attractive indeed is the 92 page annual *Hed Hakvutzah* of the Detroit Kvutza Ivrit. This publication edited by Bernard Isaacs, Meyer Mathis, Morris Nobel and Aaron Toback is composed of Hebrew essays, stories and interpretive articles. The annual is sponsored by Mr. Irving Palman in memory of his father Jacob Kopel, who helped finance the publication of a number of Hebrew books.

Unique is the *Judaica Post* which made its first appearance last

## CULTURAL PROGRESS REPORT

January. The *Judaica Post* is a monthly journal of Philatelic Judaica published by Judaica Associates of Michigan and edited by Eli Grad. The purpose of this monthly publication is to familiarize its readers with "Jews on stamps, Jewish history, the Bible on stamps, and the contribution of Jews to civilization as reflected philatally."

In the area of fine arts was the exhibit held at the Jewish Community Center on Meyers Road of Berel Satt's collection of forty-three pieces of sculpture portraying vividly and dramatically the "shtetl" ("the Jewish town") as it existed in pre-Hitler Eastern Europe. The figurines of carved wood represented distinct "shtetl" types and scenes. The entire ensemble is owned by the Morris L. Schaver Foundation.

Reflecting the manifold services of Temple Beth El is its permanent art display which includes rare Jewish religious objects. Some of these objects are "menorahs," "kiddush" cups, "havdalah" (spice) boxes, "esrog" (citron) containers, "tefilin" (phylacteries), "Kitrey (crowns) Torah," "shofarim" (ram's horns), etc.

Recently it has been announced by the Temple that the family of the late Hoke Levin has established an art memorial in his memory. The first acquisition will be an object of sculpture by the known Jewish artist Walter Midener entitled "The Sound of the Shofar."

Impressive artistically is the newly completed B'nai Moshe Synagogue in Oak Park. The bronze sculpture which adorns it represents Jewish religious observances and episodes in the history of the Jewish people. The symbolic twelve columns flanking the Holy Ark are especially meaningful. They represent "Torah," charity, justice, prayer, wisdom, light, study, peace, "talis and tefilin," "Kohanim and Levites."

Finally the presentation in Hebrew of the musical comedy *The King and I* by the Adas Shalom Youth Theater was certainly an outstanding artistic contribution. The musical comedies *South Pacific* and *Oklahoma* also performed in Hebrew by the Shaarey Zedek Religious School were also artful contributions.

Thus the brief progress report of some of the cultural activities of the Jewish community of Greater Detroit for the first half of this year has come to a close.

## Book Reviews

*MOSES HESS: UTOPIAN SOCIALIST*, by John Weiss, 88 pages paperbound. Published by Wayne State University Press, \$1.95.

Moses Hess is known as a political leader, writer and forerunner of modern Zionism. He was born in 1812 in Bonn, Germany and died in 1875 in Paris, France. In Jewish circles he is known mainly for his work "*Rome and Jerusalem*," published in 1862. In it, among other things Hess stressed that small nations have a right to equal honor among the family of nations. That the re-establishment of Palestine — now Israel, is a must for the welfare, dignity and protection of Jewish persons who choose to or who must go there to dwell. This thinking became a basic part of Zionist philosophy leading to the establishment of the State of Israel.

Dr. John Weiss clearly and deeply delves into the mind and writings of Moses Hess.

Hess said that: "At first sight history seems a chaos, its events apparently unrelated to one another and motivated solely by the passion, selfishness, and will to power of men. But that is mere appearance. Correctly interpreted, history reveals an ordered and rational pattern which is the obvious work of divine wisdom. "Only he who closes his eyes and ears, or is blind and deaf by nature, can deny that before and after him the Holy Spirit of God is visibly at work in history."

Correctly Dr. Weiss then says: "In these words one hears echoes of the voices of Herder, Lessing, Fichte, and Hegel; yet who would come by the thought more naturally than a young Jew who had followed again and again, and always with intense interest, the fate of the chosen people driven from Egypt to Israel in fulfillment of their sacred mission in History? The German Idealists used Christ and the Reformation as symbols of the revelation of the Divine in history; Hess was able to add the ancient history of his people to the list of world-historical events. Accordingly, true to the traditional view of German philosophers from Lessing through Hegel, Hess believed philosophy to be the rationalization of theology, and history the amplification of the truths of both. "Religion and history," he wrote in this early work, "stand in close relationship, and one explains the other." Never before and rarely since has history been assigned such high rank among the sciences as it was by the intellectuals of early nineteenth century Germany. As Hess put it, history is

## BOOK REVIEWS

"incontestably the science which spreads the greatest light over the social and spiritual condition of man." (*from Die Heilige Geschichte der Menschheit*, Stuttgart, 1937.)

This small volume is an intellectual biography of the activities and socialist ideas of Moses Hess, a man who launched both Marx and Engels on their careers as Socialists. Frequently called "father of German socialism," Hess was the intellectual leaders of the most influential school of German socialism *before* Marxism. He was the first of the idealistic and utopian Socialists to be converted, by Marx himself, to Marxist socialism. After his conversion, Hess collaborated with Marx and Engels in their attempt to change socialist theory in Germany and Europe. Indeed, some months before the publication of the Communist Manifesto, Hess published a document strikingly similar in content.

Hess, for very good reasons of basic philosophy which clashed with those of Marx, finally broke with Marx, and joined Ferdinand Lassalle to come once more into prominence — this time as one of the original members and leading theoreticians of the first German Socialist Workers Party. The career of Moses Hess is an important part of the general history of German socialism.

"Hess also said that it is foolish to blame the ruling classes of past centuries for the misery of the lower orders; had men not been slaves and serfs in spirit during the past they could never have been so treated. Correspondingly, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution prove that men are no longer willing to submit to autocracy. As for the Restoration, it cannot succeed, for the old spirit of man cannot be restored."

Dr. John Weiss makes mention of his appreciation and respect for Prof. Edmund Silberner of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel the author of *Moses Hess; an annotated Bibliography*, New York: Burt Franklin Pub., 1951.

Grateful acknowledgement is made by the author Dr. John Weiss to the Ford Foundation for financial assistance in making possible the publication of this brilliant volume on one of the great neglected thinkers of the 19th century.

Wayne State University is to be commended for having recently published a number of works on Jewish themes of interest to the intellectual world.

*Emanuel Applebaum*

## BOOK REVIEWS

*THE JEWISH IMMIGRANT IN ENGLAND, 1870-1914*, by  
Lloyd P. Gartner, 320 pp. Detroit: Wayne State University  
Press, 1960. \$5.00.

The venerable Literary Supplement to the London Times in its July 15 issue thus hailed the publication of Mr. Gartner's book:

"It is remarkable that the first thorough study of the Jewish immigrant from eastern Europe into England during the latter part of the nineteenth century should be made by an American Jew writing fifty years after the end of the movement."

This well-documented work which originally was presented as a doctoral thesis at Columbia University deals with one of the momentous phases in Jewish history, namely, the mass emigration at the end of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th centuries. The study of the impact of this phenomenon on the existing Jewish community in England, as well as the transformation of the immigrant himself is the center of the author's interest.

Although England was not generally, the country of immigration but rather of emigration during the entire 19th century, approximately 100,000 Jews from Eastern Europe chose it after 1880 as a land of settlement. Before the 1800's the Jewish population of England did not exceed 60,000. In the forty years after 1880 this figure rose to 300,000 not only by direct addition from the dockside, but also from the immigrants' high birth rate.

Immigrant Jewish communities sprang up in every large English city, especially in the East End of London and in Manchester and Leeds. In the beginning these communities, badly overcrowded, differed quite markedly from their Gentile surroundings. Certain resentment toward the "aliens" on the part of the Englishmen and the existing Jewish community was not to be avoided. Yet, militant anti-semitism was largely unknown in England. Also, the wretched condition of the immigrants' slums aroused a great deal of official and unofficial sympathy.

The immigrant ventured into many trades, but ready-made clothing gradually took the lead in the form of small tailoring shops chiefly in London and Manchester. A few larger clothing factories were set up in Leeds. Essentially, the immigrants did not abandon their old workshop scale of labor to enter the English industrial system, but rather found a place for its continuance within their special

## BOOK REVIEWS

trades. Thus "the Jewish immigrant group formed its separate sub-economy . . . (its) distinctness has not disappeared to this day when the Jews possess no separate economic life but are distinguishable from the population at large by certain trends as group."

By no means, however, did this economic distinctness entail social, cultural or political isolation. On the contrary, already in the 1880's the immigrant Jewry in England laid the foundations of the Jewish socialist and trade union movement, but the instability of the trades themselves and the high turnover of the labor made it impossible to unionize major Jewish trades except in Leeds.

Apparently because of political freedom, unheard of in Eastern Europe and the absence of violent anti-semitism, the immigrant's religious and cultural life was channeled in the direction of secularization and Anglicization. The synagogue and its auxiliaries lost their place as the hub of communal and cultural life.

In the field of general education immigrant parents displayed no discernible preference for Jewish schools over the State system (secular study, an object of dispute in Eastern Europe, came about in England without question) but they jealously guarded their right to make Jews of their children in their own way. The old-fashioned *heder* (one-room private school, usually a "sorry place"), as well as Talmud Torahs were not too effective in checking the process of secularization and Anglicization. In spite of these tendencies the immigrants merged with the native Jewish community and continued to develop as a distinct socio-etnic and religious entity, conscious of its identity.

Dr. Gartner's masterful and conscientious research covering a vast variety of British official documents, the contemporary Hebrew and Yiddish press, and the archive sources some heretofore untouched by scholars, makes the author's conclusions quite convincing: the Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe, once persecuted and oppressed, brought about profound changes within the native Jewish community, successfully integrated himself into the fabric of the British way of life, took part in various aspects of Jewish activities. The immigrant was the one who contributed more than his share to the appearance of the Balfour Declaration, which, in turn, paved the way from the Zionist dream to the reality of the State of Israel.

*Joseph Babicki*

## *Biographical Notes on Contributors*

RABBI EMANUEL APPLEBAUM, BA., M.A., D.Litt. Rabbi Applebaum is principal of the Adas Shalom Branch of the United Hebrew Schools of Detroit. He is Visiting Professor of Sociology at Great Lakes College. Rabbi Applebaum serves on a number of local and national boards of religious and educational organizations. He is the author of several educational and sociological papers.

JOSEPH BABICKI is the Librarian at the Adas Shalom Synagogue and Asst. Librarian at Wayne State University, Detroit. Born in Poland, he was educated in Russia, receiving his B.A. from the University of Moscow in 1941. He came to this country in 1946. He holds a Masters degree from Wayne State University, and also from the University of Michigan.

IRVING I. KATZ, Vice-President of The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, is Executive Secretary of Detroit's Temple Beth El and Historiographer of the Jews in Michigan. He is author of "The Beth El Story, with a History of the Jews in Michigan before 1850" published by the Wayne State University Press and "Chronology of the History of Jewish Community Services in Detroit" published by Detroit's Jewish Welfare Federation. He was recently honored by the American Jewish Archives of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion by the establishment of the "Irving I. Katz Collection on Michigan Jewish History." He has contributed numerous articles to professional journals in the fields of Michigan Jewish History and Synagogue Administration.

HAROLD SILVER, Ph.B., M.S.S. Mr. Silver is director of the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Detroit (formerly the Jewish Social Service Bureau), a post he has occupied since 1933. He published numerous articles in professional social work journals. His article in this issue is based on first hand experience.

ALLEN A. WARSEN, B.A., M.S.W. Mr. Warsen is a teacher at Cody High School and is director of the Adas Shalom Religious School. He is a member of the board of directors of the Hillel Day School and the Directors Council of the Jewish Religious Schools of Metropolitan Detroit. Among his publications is a volume entitled *Jewish Communal Institutions of Detroit*.

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
*of the*  
JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

Allen A. Warsen, *President*  
Irving I. Katz, *Vice-President*  
Dr. Leonard W. Moss, *Recording Secretary*  
Mrs. Saul Waldman, *Corresponding Secretary*  
Dr. Irving I. Edgar, *Treasurer*  
Frank Barcus, *Scribe*  
Aaron Kutnik  
Rabbi Morris Adler  
Rabbi Emanuel Applebaum  
Mendell L. Berman  
Rabbi Leon Fram  
Morris Garvett  
Abraham J. Lachover  
Richard Leland  
Leonard N. Simons  
Rabbi M. Robert Syme  
Saul Waldman  
Allan Waller

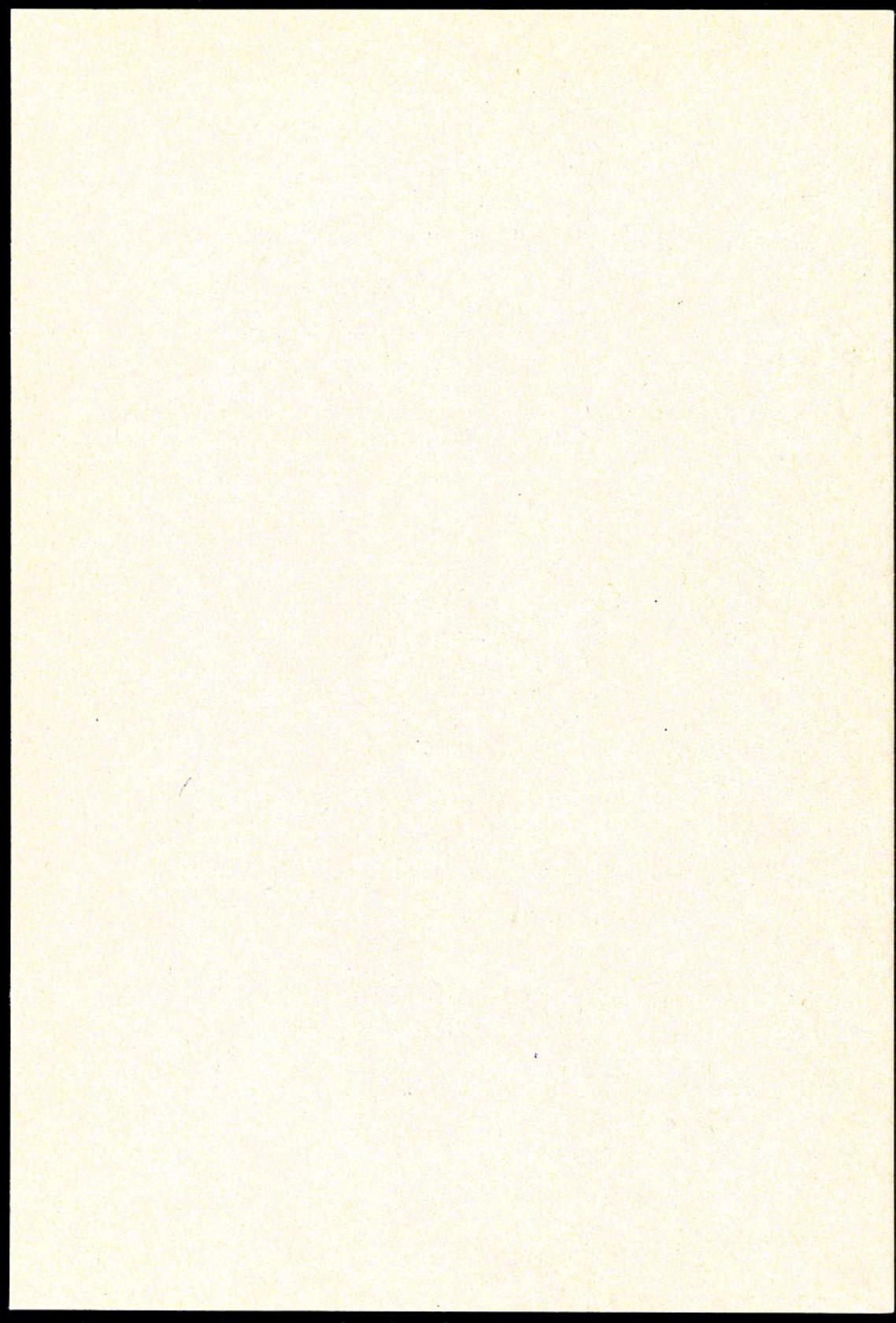
---

"MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY"

*Official Publication of the*  
JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN  
*Emanuel Applebaum, Editor*

*Editorial Committee*

Frank Barcus  
Irving I. Katz  
Leonard W. Moss  
Wolf Snyder  
Allen A. Warsen



1870

1870