NATHAN STRAUS
By David de Sola Pool

Seventy years ago, a growing lad in Georgia was dreaming how wonderful it would be if he could save a human life. That lad, Nathan Straus, grew up to be a man to whom untold multitudes of men and women living today owe their lives. He was an immigrant boy who had been born in Otterberg, Rhenish Palatinate, on January 31, 1848. His great grandfather, Jacob Lazar Straus was a man of high ability, a leading member of the Sanhedrin convened by Napoleon in 1806. His grandfather, Jacob Straus, died young. In the political reaction after 1848, his father, Lazarus Straus, a landowner and dealer in grain, found his native Bavaria unsympathetic to his democratic views, and in 1852, like many another aggressive and independent spirit in the Germany of those days, he made his way westward to the freedom of America. After spending some time as an itinerant vendor of general merchandise on the plantations of Georgia, he settled in 1853 in that State, at Talbotton, as the keeper of a general store. A year later he was in a position to bring his family from Germany, and in September, he was joined by his wife, Sara (who was also his first cousin, the daughter of his father's youngest brother Salamon) and his children, Isidor, a lad of nine, Hermina, a year and a half younger, Nathan a boy of six, and Oscar, a baby of three and a half years.

A charming picture of those early days has been drawn by Oscar Straus in his volume of memoirs "Under Four Administrations." We catch glimpses of the boy, Nathan, attending the local Baptist Bible School for two years, but at the same time being trained in Judaism by his father, a Hebraist of parts and a lover of the traditions of Jewish life. In a little log cabin, and later, at the Collingsworth Institute, the young Nathan obtained his primary education. Then came the Civil War, and the older boys, Isidor
and Nathan, took a hand in the running of the store. Even in those early days the young Nathan showed his originality and business acumen. When, for example, the Civil War made it very difficult to obtain face powder, he took a lump of talcum and cut it into small balls which he sold in place of face powder. Similarly as a lad of fifteen, when hemp had become very scarce in the South on account of the war, he collected or bought up odd pieces of hemp rope and sold them at a handsome profit. The future owner of splendid speedy horses was foreshadowed in the lad who used that profit for the purchase of a pony.

During the Civil War, the Straus family moved to Columbus, Ga. The end of the war left the family ruined, its wealth in cotton burned, its savings swept away. Thirteen years after Lazarus Straus had laid the foundation of his American home, he found himself, at the age of fifty-six, again virtually at the bottom of the ladder. But, this time he had at his side his three rarely-gifted sons. Moving to New York in 1865, he first paid off his creditors every dollar that he owed them, and then established the firm of Lazarus Straus & Son, importers of pottery and glassware. The "& Son" meant Isidor, for Nathan was then only seventeen. But after completing a course in Packard's Business College, Nathan joined the firm next year, 1866, as a salesman. On March 17, 1874, he called on the firm of R. H. Macy with two porcelain plates under his arm. The clever salesman interested Mr. Macy so successfully that he arranged for the firm of Lazarus Straus & Son to rent the basement of the Macy store for a crockery department. In the same year, when Nathan was twenty-six, he and his brother Isidor became partners in the Macy firm, and in 1887, they were the sole owners of the business. The romance of the brilliant and phenomenal growth of this enterprise is due to a combination of the executive ability of Isidor and the originality and daring vision of Nathan Straus. On one occasion, when Isidor was worried because the firm needed more cash, Nathan solved the problem by originating the idea of the Depositors' Account, which brought into the business an abundance of ready cash. On another occasion, one of the saleswomen fainted. It was learned that she had been virtually starving herself in order to be able to look after an
invalid mother. The future prince of philanthropists is seen in the reply which Nathan Straus gave to the challenge of this situation. He did not content himself with giving financial aid to the girl's family, but he originated the system, which has since been widely adopted, of installing a lunchroom in the store, where the employees could get good meals at nominal cost. In the same way, he originated the provision of rest rooms and medical care for the employees of the store. The legal and diplomatic career of the youngest brother, Oscar took him here and there, but Nathan and Isidor Straus lived and worked in the closest association until the death of the latter. The loss of the thoughtful, gentle brother Isidor in the sinking of the "Titanic" in 1912 affected Nathan deeply. Shortly thereafter, he retired from the firm of Macy's, and in 1914 he retired from active concern with business, some years later severing his relations also with the firm of Abraham & Straus of Brooklyn, which the two brothers had entered in 1888 in exactly the same way as they had entered the firm of R. H. Macy & Co.

An incident in his early business career led to a perfect life-long romance. In 1877 he went to Europe on a business trip, and, in Mannheim, he made a call on a friend of his father's. Between him and the daughter of the house, Lina Gutherz, there was love at first sight, and with that characteristic impetuousness which sometimes amounted to second sight, Nathan Straus laid such ardent siege to the lady's heart that the next day they were engaged. In April they were married, and, for fifty-three years Lina Gutherz Straus, a saintly woman of rare culture of mind, tenderness of heart, and nobility and purity of spirit, worked with him in his benefactions and public service, adored by him and loved by all who were privileged to know her.

While Nathan Straus was becoming a merchant prince, other sides of his richly endowed personality were also maturing. He was quick to grasp a public cause, and he had an instinct for dramatizing a situation so as to focus public attention upon it. But he was always too frankly and forcibly outspoken in his opinion of men and causes to qualify him for the type of public service his brother Oscar gave. Yet the great popularity of his warmhearted, generous nature, and his ardent desire to do the greatest good in the
most direct way carried him to some extent into public life. From 1889 to 1893 he was Park Commissioner of New York City, and in 1893 a member of the New York Forest Preserve Board. In the following year he received the honor of being the nominee of the Democratic Party for Mayor of the city, a nomination which he declined. He knew he had neither the patience to deal with the infinite detail of that office, nor the suave political indirection it imposed. But in 1898, when working for the adoption of compulsory pasteurization of milk, he accepted the office of president of the Board of Health of the City. One other occasion on which he let himself be drawn into public life was in 1917, when, charges having been made that improper conditions existed on the U. S. Hospital Ship "Solace," Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, appointed him as one of an impartial committee of three to investigate the charges.

Although Nathan Straus did not seek public office, it was impossible to keep him out of the public eye. There was a dash, an originality and a picturesqueness about his personality that could not be obscured and that inevitably made him both a widely known and a popular figure.

One of his interests which helped keep him in the forefront of popularity was his love of animals. He would not sit down to eat at his country home unless the birds in the garden had been fed. Of all animals, those he loved best were fast horses. He was fond of telling how, as a young man, not being able to afford a trotting horse for himself alone, he bought one in partnership with a friend. Each would drive the horse on alternate days. When he married, he felt he could not afford to keep both a wife and his half of the horse, and he sold his share in the horse to his partner. But he felt the sacrifice of his pet so keenly that he could not sleep that night, and, early the next morning, he bought back his share of the animal.

In those days, Seventh Avenue was the far from satisfactory speedway of the city, and it was in a large measure due to the initiative and renown of Nathan Straus as a driver of fast trotting horses that the Speedway was built along the Harlem River. When Robert Bonner, Commodore Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller, E. H. Harriman, H. B. Claflin, and other notables were daily to be seen driving
their fleet handsome horses, Nathan Straus was the recognized king of the Speedway. While men like Bonner were spending fortunes to own fast trotting horses, with an almost uncanny instinct, Nathan Straus purchased for nominal amounts historic horses such as Denver 2:14 1/4, never beaten in a race, and the undisputed champion of the speedway for five years, or Majolica 2:17, or Cobwebs, the favorite of all of the trotting horses which he drove, the unbeaten record holder of the Speedway with the mile in 2 minutes 12 seconds. Oldtime sportsmen declared that it was the superb horsemanship of the man who drove him and who could make the spirited animal respond instantly to the sound of his master's voice which made Cobwebs the fastest and most perfect harness horse ever seen on the Speedway of New York.

His interest in sport was not limited to swift horses, although they were his first love. Himself of spare and athletic build and ready to fight when need be, he was an ardent advocate of all clean and manly sports. His was the enthusiasm of a college student when in 1926, though rapidly approaching his eighties, he gave the kick-off at the first New York game played by the Champion Hakoah Soccer Team of Vienna. He took a lasting and warm personal interest in the achievements of Benny Leonard, the world champion lightweight pugilist. In his later years, after he had sold his yacht, he could be seen daily on the golf links. It was his delight to give financial and personal encouragement to the sports meets arranged by such organizations as Young Judaea, for he was an enthusiastic advocate of robust, upstanding physical development especially for Jews, warped by long harsh centuries of urbanization and intellectualization.

Exactly when Nathan Straus began his outstanding career as a philanthropist he could not recall. Probably his first large gift was that of a building which he presented to the Trudeau Tuberculosis Sanitarium at Saranac in the Adirondacks. But he leapt into the heart of the public during the winter of 1892-3. With a vision which saw the need long before others realized it, and with his characteristic directness of action which translated his vision into simple reality while others were still discussing symptoms
and methods of treatment, he built up a system of emergency relief by establishing a chain of depots for the distribution of food and coal to any of New York’s poor who would apply and pay 5 cents for it. This cutting of red tape was criticized by the advocates of a more discriminating and investigating relief. Nathan Straus answered "Supposing I am victimized to some extent. By making those mistakes I am not likely to miss any of the deserving cases that come to my station. And do not the organized charities make mistakes too with all their investigating? When a poor woman comes down to take away coal in a baby carriage, she is investigated enough for me." During that winter he distributed no less than 1,500,000 buckets of coal, and incidentally pointed the way to a development of public service by obtaining the use of city piers for his coal depots.

The next winter, 1893-4, was again a panic winter of depression and unemployment. Then again, at his own expense, he opened and maintained four lodging houses which gave bed and breakfast for five cents to 64,409 cases of New York City’s unemployed, hungry and homeless. Those who had not even the five cents were given a chance to earn it by work done around the lodging house. During that winter he issued over 2,000,000 five cent tickets entitling the bearer to coal, or bread, or groceries, or lodging and breakfast. On this occasion, and it was the only one when he accepted aid from others in his work, he received a contribution of $50,000 from J. Pierpont Morgan towards carrying on these works of mercy. In the hard winter of 1914-15, which followed the outbreak of the World War, he served in his milk stations in New York, 1,135,731 one cent meals, consisting of coffee or milk, and roll and butter or a cheese sandwich.

It would be vain to attempt even to list his philanthropies. They include such varied undertakings as the donation of an ice plant for the soldiers suffering in Santiago, Cuba, in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, aid in building a Roman Catholic Church in Lakewood, N. J., the gift of food, clothing and medical supplies for the victims of the Messina earthquake in 1909, a cottage presented to the Jewish Consumptive Sanitarium in Duarte, Cal. (1916), the gift to the Government in 1918 of the use of land in Lake-
wood, N. J. for the erection of Red Cross and of army hospital buildings, a model dairy presented to the National Farm School in Doylestown, Pa., and free distribution of pasteurized milk to soldiers and sailors in 1918.

There were other benefactions which demanded no money, but only imagination and heart. It was originally the idea of Nathan Straus that waterside piers should be used as recreation centers for the crowded city. Though his suggestion was rejected by the Dock Department, he kept hammering away until the city finally adopted it, and opened recreation centers on its piers. But when money was called for, he always managed to find it. He frequently said, "The opportunity to make money will always be here, this opportunity to do good will be gone forever if I let it pass. I can wait to make more money. I cannot wait to give."

It has been said that Nathan Straus came to his most enduring piece of world philanthropy through the accident of hearing a cow cough. But when he was asked in later years where he got the idea of pasteurizing milk, he pointed to his head and said "here," and to his heart and said "here." What set him on the path of his undertakings was never so much an incident as it was intuition, and it was this intuitive vision which carried his campaign for pure milk to world-wide triumph.

The incident of the cow that coughed is characteristic of the directness of methods and the unswerving eagerness with which he followed out his intuitions. A cow on his farm sickened and died. Questioning why the beautiful looking animal should have died prematurely notwithstanding the superb care it had always received, he ordered an autopsy to be made. This revealed tubercular destruction of lung tissue as the cause of the animal's death. Nathan Straus believed that the milk of a tubercular cow might transmit the disease to human beings, unless the milk were treated in some way that would kill the germs of the disease. In 1892, after taking counsel with some physicians, he launched his campaign for the pasteurization of milk as the best means of bringing within the reach of everyone, especially the children of the poor, milk which would be free of disease germs and which would have unim-
paired palatability, digestibility and nutritive qualities. At his own cost, he established in New York City a laboratory for furnishing milk that had been properly modified and pasteurized for infant feeding. In 1894, the laboratory was enlarged, and the six distributing stations he had then established gave out, at nominal cost, over 2500 bottles a day.

In 1897, when he was Health Commissioner of the City, he erected a pasteurization plant on Randall's Island. He knew the dreadful fact that at that time many of the city's waifs died. Without any other change in the dietary of the institution except that from raw to pasteurized milk, the death rate among the children on Randall's Island fell from 41.81 per hundred for the years 1895–7 to an average of 21.75 for the next seven years. In 1891, before Nathan Straus began his work, out of every thousand babies born in New York City, more than 241,—almost one out of every four—would die before they reached their first birthday. During four years, of 20,111 babies who had the benefit of pasteurized milk from his stations only six died. In Mamaroneck, where Mr. and Mrs. Straus had their summer home, a model health center with a milk pasteurization plant reduced the death rate among children under five years of age from 85 per thousand to the phenomenally low figure of 17 a thousand.

Such irrefutable figures made of him a tireless campaigner for compulsory pasteurization of milk. Deep sorrow in his life gave the sense of consecration to his devotion to this cause. The death of a little daughter, a babe of two years, on board ship during a European trip might have been prevented, both Mr. and Mrs. Straus thought, had good milk been available for her. Some years later he went on a tour of inspection of his milk stations with his son Jerome, a youth about to enter Cornell University. A few days later, the lad developed pneumonia. As he lay on his sick bed he said to his father “Father, you should sell your horses so that you can go on with your milk stations.” That night, the boy died, and Nathan Straus carried with him to the day of his death the sacred charge of those words.

He kept opening additional milk depots, until there were eighteen, covering every district in Manhattan, all of them
maintained entirely at his personal cost. He used to say, with a twinkling smile, that he had milk on the brain. Entrenched against him were public ignorance and indifference, professional prejudice, and commercial greed. But even when the attack on him was maliciously personal, he would say “Abuse won’t kill, but raw milk will,” and the incredulity, derision and bitter opposition which he encountered only strengthened his purpose to force on the medical profession and public health officers a general application of the discoveries of Pasteur. Once when he tried to introduce pasteurization of milk into a city of Germany he met opposition and the rejection of his plan. Tears of disappointment welled up into the eyes of Mrs. Straus. “Never mind, my dear” he said “don’t cry. Now we have something to fight for.” Ever a good fighter, he met every attack with an offensive by opening up some new milk depot or some new pasteurizing plant, until in 1920 he had 297 milk stations distributed in 36 cities. The opposition of dairymen, milk distributors, a number of politicians and some physicians persisted. Once his opponents caused him to be arrested and haled before the Court of Special Sessions, on the charge of having watered milk,—a charge based on the fact that at some of his stations the milk had been modified for infant feeding.

The battle continued for years, but the facts, the majority of the medical profession led by Dr. Jacobi, and a constantly growing public opinion, were with him. He was tireless in propaganda, reading papers on the prevention of infant mortality before State Legislatures, at medical, social and other conferences and congresses in the United States and various countries of Europe, and contributing forceful letters to the press, and to mayors and municipal health officers. In 1909, Public Health Service of the United States Treasury Department issued an elaborate volume on milk, in which were recorded such facts as that pasteurized milk was first made available for infants in general in New York City in 1893 when Nathan Straus dispensed 34,400 bottles of milk from one depot, and that in 1906, seventeen milk stations served 3,142,252 bottles and 1,078,405 glasses of pasteurized milk. The Treasury Department’s report recorded further that the general death rate of children
under five had been halved largely as a result of the pasteurization of milk, the average death rate in the months of June, July, and August having fallen from 136.4 per thousand to 62.7 per thousand. Such bodies as the American Medical Association, in 1911, and the International Health Commission of the Rockefeller Foundation, in 1917, added their testimony, and finally, in 1914, after an epidemic of milk-borne typhoid fever, the year before, had taught its disastrous lesson, New York City officially introduced the compulsory pasteurization of all milk, other than that produced and handled under exceptional conditions.

In 1920, when the battle was over, Mr. Straus presented his pasteurizing laboratory to the city. But in the meanwhile he had been carrying far and wide his campaign against what is called "The White Peril" of raw milk. He gave pasteurizing installations to various cities both in the United States and abroad. In Europe, he began his work by establishing a pasteurization plant at Heidelberg in 1907, and thereafter he carried it on in Sandhausen, Karlsruhe, Eberswalde, and elsewhere. In recognition of his brilliant service to childhood, and of the untold thousands of little ones who owed their lives to his insight, single-minded tenacity of purpose, and single-handed generosity, President Taft, in 1911, appointed him to the Berlin International congress for the protection of infants, as the sole delegate from the United States. The next year, he was a delegate to the Tuberculosis Congress in Rome. The first international Child Welfare Congress held under the auspices of the League of Nations in August, 1925, put on record its praise of his pioneer life-saving work. Ever more widely in countries and communities the world over, has the pasteurization of milk been made obligatory, and from all over the world wherever pasteurized milk was introduced there came to Nathan Straus the unvarying story of reduced infant mortality, and the moving joy and precious reward of the blessings of grateful mothers. Wherever pasteurization of milk is conscientiously carried out, the death rate from milk-borne germs of typhoid fever, streptococcus sore throat, scarlet fever, diphtheria and diarrhoeal diseases has been cut to nothing. Layman though he was, and without any pretense to medical knowledge, Nathan Straus lives in the
annals of medicine as one of the pioneers in public health, and as the man who saved untold thousands, and eventually millions of little children, from premature death. What he began with his private means, is every day being more generally adopted as a public obligation.

One word must be added to complete the story of this outstanding achievement of his life. In all the vast labor and unwearying struggle of propaganda, as well as in the organization of the infinite detail of the establishment and maintenance of the Straus laboratories and milk stations in the United States and abroad, Mrs. Straus worked day and night at his side. It was she who, in 1917, compiled the volume "Diseases in Milk—The Remedy Pasteurization." Her extraordinary patience and marvelous care for detail assured the carrying through of those quick intuitive decisions of her husband that were as brilliant and illuminating as a flash of lightning.

Another pioneering undertaking in public health that grew out of his passionate interest in combating tuberculosis by cleansing the milk supply, was his institution in 1909, of a tuberculosis preventorium for children. He had come to the conclusion that the inception of many cases of tuberculosis in adults was to be looked for in a childhood spent in contact with a case of the disease. He reasoned that these children could be saved from becoming victims of the disease if they were taken from such homes and cared for in a healthful environment. In this way, he evolved the idea of preventorium rather than a remedial sanitarium for children, thereby not only coining a new word for the English language, but also giving practical validity to what had theretofore been only a theoretically recognized idea. He housed his preventorium at first in "The Little White House," a cottage in Lakewood, N. J. which he had often placed at the disposal of President Cleveland, and later at Farmingdale, N. J., on a piece of land presented by Arthur Brisbane. This pioneer preventorium has become the model for similar institutions in many lands.

As the years went on, philanthropy in the broadest sense of the term became the ruling passion of Nathan Straus. He regarded his wealth, never near as great as popularly
estimated, as a trusteeship, not an ownership. He did not count his benefactions. In fact, he could never tell how much he had spent on them, though he knew he was deliberately and materially reducing his fortune. His motto was “Give while you live.” He would ask “Why should people profit more by your death than by your life?” In later years, he loved to castigate those rich men who, he believed, were not giving to public causes in accordance with their means. In season and out of season, in private homes, at public gatherings or by letter, he would give strong and sometimes drastic expression to his doctrine of the blessedness of giving during one’s lifetime. Stringent and stinging as sometimes were his words, he was able to express himself in this way because everyone knew that, in proportion to his means, he was giving more than were others. He would try to make more contracted hearts understand the rejuvenating joy and life-giving happiness which he derived from seeing in his lifetime the fruits of his philanthropy. On his seventy-fifth birthday he declared, “I feel ten years younger than I did ten years ago, because I have given so much of my money to those who needed it worse than I did, and I intend giving it away until I die.”

The colossal suffering caused by the World War inspired him to heights of generosity which matched his magnificent campaign for pure milk. The experiences of life, so far from bringing any hardening to his nature, made his heart increasingly more tender and responsive to human suffering. The tears would come to his eyes as he would hear or read of the woes of the men in uniform, or the tragedy of the non-combatants, and in response to appeals for their relief he gave lavishly of his means and of himself. His was the gift with the giver, and munificent as were his financial contributions, his gift of himself was of even higher value. It was he who suggested the slogan for one of the campaigns for relief of sufferers from the war “Give until it hurts,” but he later revised this to “Give until it feels good.” His winged words of personal appeal, ringing out from a heart exquisitely attuned to every emotion of pity and love, moved men from coast to coast. He was always the first to give, and his princely donations set a high standard and a contagious example. In 1917, he opened the Jewish War Relief Fund
with a gift of $100,000, the largest single contribution of its kind, given by an individual, up to that time. In 1916, he sold his luxurious steam yacht to obtain funds which were used for the aid of war orphans in Palestine. He tried to sell his beautiful home on West 72nd Street, setting up a large notice over the front door announcing that the proceeds of the sale would be devoted to the relief of sufferers from the War. Not succeeding in finding a ready purchaser, he set a fair price on the house and sold securities to realize that amount for War Relief, though he had to take a loss in a depressed market. Besides giving lavishly to alleviate some of the hideous sufferings of the War, septuagenarian though he was, he wrote hundreds of personal letters, traveled to various centers, and attended innumerable meetings. The close of the War left him an ardent lover of peace, and thereafter the cause of world peace found an enthusiastic advocate in him who had always embraced humanity in one brotherhood, transcending creed or nationality. Never did he give a truer revelation of this side of his character than when he penned the beautiful words "In the Titanic tragedy all creeds were united in the brotherhood of death. If one could only hope for a brotherhood of life! Why wait for death to teach us the lesson of human fraternity?"

This sense of human brotherhood strengthened his loyalty to the Jewish people, the people of sorrows among the nations of the world. Moreover the Jewish strain in Nathan Straus was vigorous and proud. The strong Jewish traditions of his father's home, as well as his wife's tenderly emotional Judaism, were potent religious influences in his life. Though brought up in a community where, except for his own family, there were no Jews, he was a synagogue Jew by choice, becoming affiliated with Reform Judaism on moving to New York. Yet, in his later years he felt that Reform Judaism of those days had abolished more than was healthy for the survival of Judaism. Addressing a convention of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America a few years before his death, he roundly declared that Orthodox Jews had the right stand, because in Reform circles the younger generation had gone too far from Jewish traditions.

He was sensitive and quick to defend the honor of the
Jewish name. When some members of the Straus family, desiring to go to Lakewood for a period of convalescence, were refused admission to one of the hotels because they were Jews, the characteristically vigorous reply of Nathan Straus was to get potential control of the situation by purchasing land in the immediate vicinity of several of the leading hotels, and building the Lakewood Hotel with no other policy than to throw it open to all, whether Jew or Gentile. President and Mrs. Cleveland, his warm friends, showed their appreciation of his stand and their disapproval of prejudice by becoming guests at the hotel. Its construction and management proved to be a costly undertaking in which Mr. Straus in the end lost a large sum of money. But he always said that he would have been willing to spend or lose much more if necessary, in defense of Jewish honor. His generous contribution towards building a Catholic Church at Lakewood was another expression of his detestation of the religious prejudice suffered at that time in Lakewood by Catholics as well as by Jews.

He had many a tilt with James Gordon Bennett because of anti-Semitic tendencies shown by that distinguished editor. In later years when the campaign against Jews sponsored by Henry Ford was at its height, Nathan Straus issued a public challenge to Mr. Ford to submit the egregious Protocols of the Elders of Zion to any impartial jury, and he, Nathan Straus, would undertake to refute them. The nation-wide publicity given to this challenge by the best loved and most trusted Jew of the land, together with the Sapiro and Bernstein trials, focused public attention upon the issue, and it is believed, helped materially to bring about Mr. Ford's full and frank recantation. Whenever Nathan Straus rose to fight prejudice against the Jew, he did so because, as he said, "The Jews have a work to do in the world not merely in fighting for toleration of their own race, but in defending the cause of religious freedom throughout the world."

When Ignace Paderewski denied that there had been pogroms against the Jews of Poland during the time that he was prime minister, Nathan Straus entered the lists against him as Chairman of the Committee for the Defense of the Jews in Poland, and challenged his statement by citations of excesses which had undeniably occurred. He expressed his
fighting Jewish spirit through his interest in movements and organizations for the defense of Jewish rights, associating himself actively with the first American Jewish Congress of which he was elected Chairman in 1916, and also with the present organization of which he was Chairman in 1920, President in 1922, and Honorary President in 1918 and 1925.

He was as emphatic in his appreciation of accomplishment by Jews as he was sensitive to slights put upon the good name of the Jew. The thrill of Jewish pride which he felt when he read of the extraordinary exploit of Abraham Krotoshinsky, the World War hero of the Lost Battalion, moved him to settle Krotoshinsky as a farmer on the soil of Palestine.

In his devotion to the cause of Palestine, the Jewish soul of Nathan Straus came to its fullest, most vigorous and most organic expression. The place which his campaign for pasteurized milk had taken in his life at the turn of the nineteenth century was filled in the last two decades of his life by Zionism. It was in 1904 while on a Mediterranean tour that Mr. and Mrs. Straus first visited Palestine. Even then, pre-war Palestine with all its discomforts and discouragement for the tourist, made so deep an impression on them that they changed their plan of proceeding to Damascus in order to stay longer in the Holy City. It was not until 1912, when they visited Palestine a second time together with Dr. J. L. Magnes, that the full magic of the ancient Jewish homeland entered into and possessed their souls. It was then that Mr. Straus attempted to raise the economic standards of Halukaridden Jewry by establishing a domestic science school for girls, and a factory for making buttons and souvenirs out of mother of pearl. Instinctively sensing the importance of the land problem, he bought land outside of Bethlehem opposite the Tomb of Rachel, and another piece of land which is now the center of Talpioth, a Jewish suburb of Jerusalem, which he planned originally to be the site of the Hebrew University or of the home which he hoped to build for himself in the Holy City. To cope with the pitiful problem of poverty, he opened a soup kitchen in the Old City. This began by dispensing 300 free meals to the destitute. Now, twenty years later, the two Straus soup kitchens, one in the Old City and one outside the Walls, filling in some measure the functions of old age and widows' pensions and insurance for the
disabled and unemployed, are giving an average of nearly 3,000 free meals daily. So deeply did this imperatively needed philanthropy appeal to Mr. Straus that a decade before his death he established a foundation to insure the continuance of these kitchens so long as poverty should exist in Jerusalem.

It was during the 1912 visit, that he laid the foundation of that work for public health in Palestine with which his name is preeminent and lastingly associated there, by founding a Health Department to cope in some measure with the malaria, trachoma and other ills of insanitation which scourged the pitifully neglected Holy Land. In the meanwhile, the Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America had been founded by Henrietta Szold. But its growth not being rapid enough to suit Nathan Straus, bringing back to America as he did his vivid impression of the deplorable health conditions in Palestine, he assumed the expense of one of the two nurses through whom Hadassah began its work, and in January, 1913, less than a year after their previous visit, he and Mrs. Straus sailed again for Palestine, taking with them Hadassah’s two nurses, settling them in Jerusalem, and thereby beginning Hadassah’s pioneer work in the Land of Israel. At that time also, Nathan Straus established a Pasteur Institute in Palestine, which, together with his Health Department, played an important part in controlling epidemics during the War.

When the problem of a Jewish Palestine became one of immediacy through the British conquest of the Holy Land, Zionism became and remained the dominant interest in the life of both Nathan and Lina Straus. It would be hopeless to attempt to list the superlatively munificent gifts with which he led and responded to every appeal to Palestine, beginning with his supplying half of the cargo of $100,000 worth of provisions sent from America to Palestine in 1915, on the U. S. collier Vulcan. It was a significant, though for them but a minor incident when Mrs. Straus gave to Hadassah all the jewels which a lifetime of love had showered on her. It was the crowning of a lifelong interest, when Nathan Straus founded and equipped Hadassah’s Child Health Welfare Stations. The fruit of a fourth visit to Palestine, in 1923–1924, was the establishment of the monu-
mental Nathan and Lina Straus Health Center in Jerusalem, and later a similar Health Center in Tel Aviv. On these two magnificent institutions, Mr. Straus expended $325,000. In 1927, when almost an octogenarian, he sailed again for Palestine, and, in the laying of the cornerstone of his Jerusalem Health Center, saw the pledge of his dream's realization.

The inscription which he caused to be set up at the entrance to the Health Centers, declaring in English, Arabic and Hebrew that they are for the benefit of all inhabitants of the land, Christian, Moslem and Jew, was characteristic of all his humanitarian work in Palestine as well as elsewhere. When, in July 1927, an earthquake shook Palestine, while others, fascinated with fear, were still reading the news, he took the swift and finely-inspired action of cabling $25,000 to Jerusalem, stipulating that it was to be used for all the sufferers from the disaster without distinction of race, creed or nationality. Though in 1922 he had given $1,000 to a Moslem orphanage in Jerusalem, and the next year again $1,000 for the poor Arabs of Jaffa, and on other occasions substantial sums for aiding the Arab poor, he declared that nothing he had ever done before gave him quite the same joy as came to him from receiving the enthusiastic praise and expressions of appreciation from the Arabs of Palestine, almost the sole beneficiaries of his gift for the sufferers from the earthquake.

For the last fifteen years of their lives both Mr. and Mrs. Straus lived ardently for Palestine. Nathan Straus spoke the simple truth when he said "Others may be better able than I to talk about Zionism, but none can feel it more deeply than I." A naive story illustrates how the love of Zion dominated Nathan Straus, occupying his thoughts night and day, and giving color to his whole life. A guest who had been living in Palestine for some time arrived at the Straus home one evening. His first question, with characteristic directness was "How is Palestine?" To such a comprehensive question, especially when asked by an elderly man whose heart bled for every story of trouble, there could be no discussion of difficulties, but only one answer, and that almost casual answer was given: "Palestine is splendid." The next morning, Straus opened the conversation by saying
to his guest, "You do not know what you did for me by telling me yesterday evening that things are fine in Palestine. For months I have not slept as well as I did last night." Zionism was so intense a passion in his life that when, in 1923, Israel Zangwill made his famous speech in Carnegie Hall trenchantly criticizing the policy of the Zionist movement, Mr. Straus could not restrain himself from publicly denouncing him, and Zangwill, who until then had been a guest in the Straus home, found it necessary to find other quarters. In the last two decades of his life Nathan Straus gave nearly two-thirds of his whole fortune to Palestine. His known gifts to Zion total more than $2,000,000.

It can be readily imagined what pain was his when the dispute broke out about the Wailing Wall. In a public letter he appealed to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem to end the strife. The bloody outbreak by the Arabs in August 1929, which was the culmination of their agitation, almost broke his heart. It robbed both Mr. and Mrs. Straus of the joy of life. That cowardly blow against the peaceful Jews of the Holy Land broke the spirit and hastened the death of Lina Guthertz Straus. For many weeks after the murderous Arab riots, Mr. and Mrs. Straus entered into mourning, refusing themselves to all but their dearest friends. But to the end of his days, Nathan Straus retained his conviction that the cause of Zionism would triumph. When, on account of growing weakness, he could no longer attend Zionist conferences and meetings, he would, from his retirement issue clarion words of sturdy hope and encouragement.

Ever since the nineties when his vivid personality and the heart which he put into his public benefactions singled him out as one of America's greatest philanthropists, he had been a popular and beloved figure among all classes. But when the fervor of Zion took possession of his soul, he became the darling of the Jewish masses. Forgotten were all the asperities that had been stirred up during his long battle for pure milk. Forgiven were his forcible criticism of those who differed from him. As President Taft expressed it "Dear old Nathan Straus is a great Jew and the greatest Christian of us all." He was everywhere accepted as the Grand Old Man of American Jewry. The last twenty years of his life were a continuous personal triumph. In the year 1923, on the
occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of greater New York, Nathan Straus was chosen by popular vote as the citizen who had, during that quarter of a century, done the most for public welfare in the empire city. His seventieth, seventy-fifth and especially his eightieth birthdays were the signal for popular celebration led by the press of the whole country, and hundreds of letters of admiration and congratulations poured in on him from leaders in every sphere of life, from the Old World as well as the New. In the early summer of 1930, the National Institute of Social Sciences awarded him a gold medal in recognition of his "distinguished and widespread social service rendered in behalf of humanity." His every appearance at a public gathering was the signal for an outburst of applause and cheering, and his rugged, forceful, direct and racily unconventional words of courageous hope, or challenge stirred his audiences to enthusiasm, far greater than that which polished orators could evoke. But the death on May 4, 1930, of his life's companion, the sweet and rare-souled Lina Gutherz Straus, left him a lonely and a broken man. They had always agreed that the one who survived would carry on the work to which they had unitedly devoted themselves with such perfect understanding and complementary gifts of character. But brave as was his spirit, without her by his side, he could no longer capture the joy and the thrill of their life's work, and on January 11, 1931, shortly before his eighty-third birthday, he passed gently into that sleep of peace for which his tired frame and bereaved soul were longing. And all that he held in his cold, dead hand was what he had given away.

The death of the Grand Old Man of American Jewry called forth tributes from high and low, from far and near. At his funeral two days later, thousands of men and women, most of them from the humbler walks of life, gathered to pay tribute to the one whose heart had always beat with all humanity, and to express the love that they bore for one who had not been a remote philanthropist but who had ever been as one of themselves. Some 3,500 men and women crowded into Temple Emanu-El, and perhaps twice as many more stood outside and around the Temple in a solemn silence to pay their tribute of reverent respect to the best-loved leader
of the Jewish people and one of the great benefactors of mankind.

Few words are needed to complete the picture, for the life story of Nathan Straus here limned was consistent throughout with his personality. The distinctiveness and originality of his character, that made it possible to force him into any mold and that differentiated him from any type or class, may be traced to his extraordinary combination of both mental and emotional gifts. He achieved the impossible in responding equally and at the same time to the keen, sound judgments of his vigorous mind, and to the undisciplined spontaneity and impulsiveness of his great and tender heart. One may list a combination of his fine qualities, as in the pregnant words with which Adolph S. Ochs described him:—

"A model husband; indulgent father; an inspiring example of filial love; an upright and sagacious businessman; a civic leader in progressive and far-seeing enterprises; a man of exalted spirituality, and firm convictions of righteousness in public and private affairs; a world-famed philanthropist with a heart overflowing with human sympathy and understanding, and, withal, a patriot of the highest order."

Add to this succinct characterization that he was an harmonious combination of opposites, a practical visionary, a fighting philanthropist, a belligerent pacifist, a lover of all men, yet capable of strong dislikes, an idealist, yet a hearty lover of the good things of life, a democrat in every fibre of his being, yet one of God's noblemen. Though he, foreign born, was a passionate lover and servant of America, he was no less devotedly a lover and servant of Palestine. Though his was a humanity which transcended creed and race, he was a deeply feeling, loyal Jew, who loved and who led his Jewish people by the inspiration of that unique personality which was Nathan Straus.
BEN SELLING
By Henry J. Berkowitz

On the 15th of January, 1931, the flags that fly over the city of Portland, Oregon, hung at half mast. The sad tidings had been announced that Ben Selling, Oregon's "first citizen," had been called to his reward. The Legislature, sitting at Salem, immediately adjourned. The crowds in the downtown streets went about with troubled faces. Portland was plunged into mourning.

It was said by the oldest inhabitants that in their memories no death had ever brought such consternation as that of Ben Selling. It was a genuine catastrophe to thousands of people, for they knew that such a man happens only once in a generation and that he could never be replaced. His funeral was held in the Temple Beth Israel on Sunday, January 18th, at noon, and throngs filled the aisles, crowded about the doors, and stood about in solid masses on the spacious lawns. Men of all creeds and races came and wept over the loss of their beloved friend, and all the eulogistic outpourings were inadequate to express the sorrow which filled the hearts of these silent thousands—high and low, great and obscure, captains of industry and the outcasts of society.

To understand why this unique man had won such universal affection, it is necessary to go back into the early history of Portland when it was a frontier town of about 5000 people. A pioneer city settled by New Englanders and middle-western emigrants, Portland was incorporated in 1851. Among the earliest Jewish settlers was Philip Selling, who in 1862, came with his family from San Francisco, where his son, Ben, had been born on April 29, 1852. Hence, when the family came to Portland and set up in business, the young Selling was a boy of ten years, and the city itself was but one year older. Thus the major portion of the life of Ben Selling ran parallel with the history of Portland. He
saw it grow to more than 300,000 inhabitants in the span of his lifetime, and in that progress he played so conspicuous a part that when, in 1928, he was named as its first citizen by the Portland Realty Board, there was universal approval of the choice.

Upon his arrival, Ben Selling's father operated a general merchandise store at First and Yamhill Streets. The boy attended the Beth Israel Religious School, and later Portland Academy; he was not graduated from the latter, because his father needed him in the store. In 1880, when he was twenty-eight years of age, he went to San Francisco, where he was married to Tillie Hess, on March 14 of that year.

The year following his marriage, Selling left the employ of his father and established a wholesale boot and shoe business under the firm name of Akin-Selling Company. This venture was continued until 1893, when he became interested in the Moyer Clothing Company. Three years later, a second store was established under his own name at the corner of Fourth and Morrison Streets, and for a period of over thirty years that corner was a landmark in the life of Portland. The sign outside read: "Ben Selling, Clothier." Though named Benjamin by his parents, he was always known as Ben, that listing being found in the city directory as far back as 1881. He always enjoyed the fact that he was known, not as "Selling" or "Mr. Selling," but as plain "Ben Selling." With the passing of the years his abbreviated given name came to have all the significance of that of a Talmudic sage. The Orthodox Jews, who adored him, thought of ben Zoma, ben Zakkai and ben Selling as equals.

Selling was intensely loyal to Portland and Oregon, and from the time he began his career as a newsboy in the last days of the Civil War, he was active in the promotion of city and state welfare. He became interested in Republican politics, and served as a member of the State Senate for eight years, including a term as President. For a short time he was acting governor. He also served as a member of the House of Representatives and as its Speaker. He was a candidate for the United States Senate in 1912, and, as a Republican nomination in Oregon was tantamount to an
election, he would have been swept into office, except for the unexpected appearance of an independent candidate who broke the Republican lines and thus made possible the election of a Democrat. Despite this fact Selling was defeated by fewer than eight hundred votes.

It was not for these activities, however, that his name became a synonym for all that is noble and generous. His international reputation came as a result of a lifetime of unrivaled generosity in every conceivable field. His store was a mecca for indigent students, bankrupt business men, itinerant beggars, traveling institutional solicitors, campaign directors, Old World rabbis, and representatives of numerous other categories. He had no office, only a desk tucked away in a tiny corner of the balcony. There was only room for Selling and for one extra chair, and that chair was always occupied by some suppliant. The clothing business was of secondary importance and, from all appearances, was maintained merely in order that the great philanthropist might have a headquarters for his charitable activities, for he gave up the major portion of his time to his manifold philanthropic interests. His huge correspondence with persons in all parts of the world was carried on entirely in long-hand, for Selling was old-fashioned enough to cling to the pen-and-ink method of letter writing. His desk revealed the character of the man. Simple and plain, it was stuffed with records of old campaigns which he had personally conducted. He had every subscription list for Jewish "drives" that had ever been conducted in the city, all of which he led and whose records he kept himself. He had intimate personal letters from every great Jew of our time. He loved to indulge in reminiscences of many a well-won struggle to raise money, and he could relate countless anecdotes of battles he had waged to teach his people how to give generously. As a money-raiser he was a recognized expert. One of the reasons for his success was his own extraordinary munificence. Few people refused him, first because he was held in such affection, and second because he himself set a noble example. Besides, many to whom he went for contributions were indebted to him for their own prosperity. An astonishing number of Jewish merchants in Portland owe their start to Ben Selling's personal assistance,
and it was his pride that he had often assisted his immediate competitors in their financial difficulties.

It is almost impossible to name all the institutions and organizations which he fostered and served. The scope of his charitable interests overleaped the bounds of creed and race, state and nation. Organizer and President of the Portland Remedial Loan Association, President of the Federated Jewish Societies, President of the first Hebrew Benevolent Association, President of the B’nai B’rith, Director of the Community Chest, patron of the Symphony Orchestra, promoter of the Waverly Baby Home, Chairman of the Armenian Relief Campaign, supporter of the Big Brother farm at Lebanon, are only a few of the positions he held in local societies.

In matters of foreign relief he set many a record. It was as a result of his efforts that more money per capita was raised in Portland than in any other city in the United States, for East European Jewry. He gathered thousands for sufferers from floods in China and earthquakes in Japan, and for the Near East Relief. During the war, he personally purchased $400,000 worth of liberty bonds and circulated them by selling them to citizens of modest means at the rate of a dollar down and a dollar a week. In 1914, when depression threatened, he set up the Working Men’s Club where 450,000 meals were served for five cents apiece, and as a result of his generosity many were helped to live through that trying period.

His interest in education won him the undying gratitude of hundreds of students. A few years before his death the great Oregon State College at Corvallis conferred upon him an honorary Doctor’s degree. Upon his death, the colleges and normal schools of Oregon were at a loss to know how they would continue their loan funds. President Arnold Bennett Hall, of the University of Oregon, testified to this fact in the following statement:

"In the death of Mr. Ben Selling the state has lost one of its great men and one of its most distinguished citizens. His citizenship reflected itself in many forms of intelligent and generous philanthropy. There is not a school or community in the state where boys and girls have not found through his
sympathetic generosity an opportunity for the education that they desired.

"Perhaps the rarest and most distinguished characteristic as a citizen was his high minded and intelligent conception of public service. It was my privilege only recently to discuss with him a scientific program for the social development of Oregon. I found him profound in wisdom, keen in his understanding of social problems, broad in human understanding, and farsighted in his vision. I came away from the conference with the conviction that there was a man who combined in a rare degree the technical understanding of the trained mind, the human compassion of a great soul, and the desire to serve of a great altruist."

It will probably never be known how many boys and girls were put through college by this great benefactor. Those so assisted have taken degrees in all parts of the United States. Monmouth Normal College alone is said to have educated close to five hundred teachers who were aided by the student loan funds supplied by Mr. Selling. Upon his death he provided in his will for the continuation of this work, by leaving a hundred thousand dollars in trust.

As a Jewish leader he played a prominent part in organized efforts of every kind. He was a member of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College, and won international fame by his gifts to the library of that institution, which made it possible for the library to acquire some of the rarest oriental Jewish manuscripts and books. He launched the campaign for a new library building by giving the first contribution and raising the rest through a series of personal letters to Jewish philanthropists in the east. In the councils of the Joint Distribution Committee he belonged to the Rosenwald-Warburg group, and was in constant touch with these stalwarts. He served on the American Jewish Committee since the organization of that body; was the only non-Zionist representative, west of Chicago on the Jewish Agency; and was an honorary member of the Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. He was at or near the top of the subscription lists of these and practically every other Jewish cultural and philanthropic institution in
the country. He gave annually the largest single contribution to Palestine of any Jew in Portland, despite the fact he did not class himself as a Zionist.

All of Mr. Selling's giving was of the most intelligent sort. He understood the technique of scientific philanthropy, and through years of experience developed a philosophy which he followed consistently to the end. He never gave indiscriminately, but always with a clearly defined social objective. He did not believe in pauperizing the people who came to him. Where there was actual disability he would give outright, but when it was a case in which constructive charity was necessary he "loaned" the money, permitting the recipient to refund the debt on his own terms. Mr. Selling's gifts to institutions were never based on what others gave. He determined what he believed to be his just share and gave it, and as a result he stood at the top of many a list. It was his firm conviction that giving should be done during a man's lifetime, when he could administer the money himself. Over the period of many decades in which Ben Selling distributed his wealth, he managed to give away several fortunes, and he had the joy of witnessing the great good that this money wrought. The most remarkable fact about all these activities was that his income was comparatively limited. Ben Selling was not a rich man, as wealth is measured in our time, but he was willing to give away practically his entire income very year. His own needs were exceedingly modest. He was simple in his tastes to the point of austerity. He used to joke about his two suits a year, taken out of his own stock, and his plain little black bow tie.

When Ben Selling walked on the streets of Portland, every face greeted him with a smile. Hats were raised in salute. His progress was constantly arrested by people who wished to greet him. Crippled newsboys, elevator men, clerks and policemen counted him as an intimate friend. In his home he was a devoted father and husband. His children are Dr. Laurence Selling, a distinguished physician in Portland, and Mrs. A. C. U. Berry.

Those who knew Ben Selling best in his lifetime speak of two important characteristics of the man that were not apparent to the casual acquaintance. One of these was his
gracious hospitality to high and low alike, and the other was his willingness to admit when he was wrong and to accept the other man's point of view.

His hospitality was noteworthy. Few men were his equal as perfect host. One who has had the pleasure of being his guest can testify to the joy Ben Selling took in lavishing his bounty upon his friends. But what was more remarkable was his ability to offer the same hospitality to entire strangers. He entertained scores of men and women who passed through Portland, on one mission or another, at various times. If nobody else knew them or would have them, Ben Selling made it his business to give them a luncheon or a dinner. It became a tradition. If the individual was engaged in some humanitarian work, the luncheon was a large affair. His invitations were seldom refused. They came on a plain postcard, often written out in long-hand by Ben Selling himself. He sat at the head of such a table with unusual grace and charm.

The second characteristic known to those closest to him was that yielding quality of his nature which became manifest after he became convinced of the rightness of an opponent's point of view. Ben Selling was a man of decided opinions and absolutely unafraid to express them. When he thought he was right he took a firm stand. But he was a just man with it all. Many a time he would lock horns with his co-workers on a matter of policy in some communal project, but after expressing his opinion he was always ready to listen to the other side. On many an occasion he spoke those beautiful words, "I am wrong and you are right."

Ben Selling was an excellent public speaker, though he was extremely modest about that particular attainment. He made an imposing appearance when he stood up to address a meeting. He would often apologize for rising to talk, but would always deliver an address that was cogent, straightforward and interesting. He could achieve genuine eloquence when he was stirred. When engaged in his favorite pursuit of raising money for philanthropic purposes he was at his best. He would lash out at the niggardly givers with prophetic wrath.

Another of his outstanding characteristics was the mili-
tancy of his Judaism. This quality became intensified with the years. It was his pride to stand forth openly and articulately as a Jew. In public meetings and civic gatherings, he invariably made reference to his Jewish origin and allegiance. In every case of discrimination or prejudice he fought rigorously for the rights of Jews. As a result, he won that high respect which is inevitably gained by a Jew who respects himself.

Every visiting rabbi or Jewish leader coming to Portland for the first time made a pilgrimage to meet Ben Selling. It was one of the outstanding purposes that brought them to the city. When the famous librarian of the Hebrew Union College, Adolph S. Oko, came to Portland personally to thank Ben Selling for his benefactions to the great library, he arrived when Mr. Selling was out of the city. A number of years passed, and Mr. Selling's benefactions continued, until finally Mr. Oko made a special trip across the continent, as he said, "just to look at Ben Selling to see if he were a man or a myth." Their meeting was typical of hundreds of such interviews, and as Oko looked at Selling and their hands clasped, the book-man said in his characteristic way, "When I look at you my heart actually melts."

Time and again Mr. Selling was beseeched to come east to participate in momentous deliberations in Washington, New York and Chicago. His associates in many activities wished to have the privilege of meeting and knowing him, and of paying him tribute; but it was the fear of adulation that kept him away. When the Union of American Hebrew Congregations met as near as San Francisco, Mr. Selling's modesty kept him from going. He was human enough to enjoy the appreciation of his fellows, but his modesty was deep-seated.

Mr. Selling's personal habits were extremely regular. He arose very early every morning, walked to his store and was at his desk before any of his employees arrived. He worked steadily until noon, went back to his hotel for lunch, took a rest, and then returned to work until six. He often said that this brief sleep after lunch, which he took regularly for twenty-five years, helped to preserve his splendid vigor and youthful appearance. In the evenings, he went to bed regularly at ten o'clock, except when he attended concerts.
He and Mrs. Selling were always devotees of good music. His only other recreation was a weekly card game at his club. Family celebrations were many and frequent, the family ties being strong and close.

The surviving widow is honored and beloved by all, as a woman of saintly character and charming personality; throughout her husband's significant career she played an important role.

When Ben Selling was seventy years of age, in 1922, the entire city paid him homage at a great banquet presided over by Rabbi Jonah B. Wise. Tributes were national and international. He was overwhelmed with the affectionate praise of his countless admirers. Ben Selling was acclaimed the leading Jew of the Pacific Coast, and his well-deserved reputation grew to such proportions that his name became a synonym for Portland, Oregon. When he passed away, the editorial columns of the secular and Jewish press poured forth their meed of praise. His own state mourned with universal grief, and in the person of this noble Jew and great American there were recognized those qualities that yield the truest immortality. At his funeral, it was truthfully said:

"In our day the divine arbiter of Israel's destiny has vouchsafed unto us many a steadfast leader, and among the greatest of these there stood the man Ben Selling. In him the ideal of social righteousness found concrete embodiment. Ben Selling loved his neighbor better than himself. He was an Eved Adonoy, a servant of the Most High. His memory will be written across the years as one who loved mankind and died in possession of life's chiefest treasure, a noble name."
JEWISH WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION
IN THE UNITED STATES

By Rebekah Kohut

I

The exemption of the woman from the performance of all legal and ceremonial obligations imposed by Jewish law on the male has placed her in an anomalous position where she appears virtually ignored, whereas, morally, she is an object of exaltation. However, from time immemorial, we see her combating this supposedly inferior social status, and today we see that she has successfully assumed a place of leadership in the community, and has applied to this task all the inherent wisdom and beauty of spirit which have become proverbial of the Jewess.

As a matter of fact, time and tradition have always linked the ingenuity of the Jewess with the desire to do good. In Proverbs we find it said of the ideal woman: “She may open her mouth to wisdom, but her tongue must know the law of kindness.” For thousands of years, the Jewish woman has applied her surplus energies to the law of kindness, or as society has come to call it, “charity.” The conception of charity is also not a vague quantity which the Jew had to discover and formulate for himself. In Deuteronomy, we find the term amply explained and its elements adequately stressed to make it endure through the ages.

In simple and graphic style, charity is described thus: “When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, for the widow.”

“When thou beatest thy olive tree thou shalt not go over the bow again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, for the widow.”

“When thou gatherest the grapes for the vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterwards; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.”
The field, the olive tree and the grapes have evolved through the centuries as symbols of the past. Then we had strange continents, ghetto streets and small shops. Now a new world—America. Larger ghettos and bigger shops. But the stranger, the fatherless and the widow are ever present.

The first implied reference to organized Jewish charity in America is found in the letter of the Dutch West India Company to Peter Stuyvesant, governor of New Amsterdam (as New York was called by its Dutch founders), dated April 26th, 1655, which says in part: “After many consultations, we have decided and resolved upon a certain petition made by the Portuguese Jews, [the first Jewish newcomers] that they shall have permission to sail and trade in New Netherland, and to live and remain there, provided that the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or to the community, but be supported by their own nation.”

In other words, the first settlement of the Jew in America depended upon the execution of the above promise. It appears to have been comparatively easy for these first settlers to vindicate themselves in the eyes of Mr. Stuyvesant, for they were a group of sturdy industrious men, who quickly found means of self-support in the new land, and the ensuing trickle of immigrants was also made up of self-reliant people. Jewish womanhood was present at this pact in the first era of Jewish life here, in the person of Ricka Nounes, and was present in every succeeding period, where such pacts were undertaken or understood without any word from the neighbors.

From this point on, as Jews settled in Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and points south, we do not hear of the woman stepping outside of her restricted communal pale, and her name was not sounded outside the confines of the hearth until about 150 years later. At the end of the eighteenth century, after the Revolutionary War, when the Jewish population of the states was about 2,000, and there were substantial Jewish congregations in Philadelphia, New York, Richmond, Newport, Charlestown, and Savannah, women were undoubtedly admitted to services on the Sabbath and High Holy Days, in a separate section of the synagogue, but certainly they were not given any voice in the
issues of these growing communities. There is no doubt, however, that with the piety and simplicity with which they carried out the other precepts of the Prayer Book, they also did "Zedakah," by helping the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new tide of immigration swept the shores of the recently formed United States; Jews formed a small but significant part of this influx. Unlike their immigrant predecessors who hailed from Spain, Portugal and Holland, these Jews came from England, Germany, and Poland, which had been swept by political and religious oppression after the fall of Napoleon.

Fortunately, the thriving Jewish communities here were able and willing to absorb the incoming streams of immigrants. And it is interesting, most interesting, that no sooner do we have a large colorful, polylingual and heterogeneous Jewish community, with all its healthy "ailments," we behold woman coming to the fore to do good. Such a community first came to life and maturity in Philadelphia. By 1815, Philadelphia already boasted of a number of synagogues built by German and Polish Jews, and some fraternal and benevolent organizations.

It was in this city that in 1819, the first step in organized woman's endeavor was taken. The story of this first woman's organization in America, known as "The Female Hebrew Benevolent Society," reads like a romantic chapter of pioneer life. Henry Solomon Morais in his "History of the Jews of Philadelphia" tells us that it was a stormy day in the month of October, and apparently a good many poor Jews were without adequate shelter. This state of affairs "came to the attention of two Jewish ladies, Mrs. Aaron Levy and Miss Hannah Levy and, sensible to the suffering, they decided to canvass some of the Jewish homes and enlist the women in their effort to aid the needy of their community."

In this way, we are told, these ladies formed the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, and we are further told that the Secretary of the Society was Miss Rebecca Gratz. This Rebecca Gratz is well known in American history. Jews and non-Jews are still inspired by her ineffable beauty and glamorous wit. And all of us are prompted to selflessness
and sacrifice by the unbounded devotion that Rebecca Gratz extended to her people. A woman of rare culture, a member of one of the most distinguished and beloved Jewish families in the New World, a person of great charm and wit, Rebecca Gratz was not satisfied with being the "Salon Dame," the hostess of an intellectual milieu. So she turned her head and her eyes to those outside of her drawing room, for she felt that there, among the less fortunate, was her calling.

I am elaborating somewhat on this first organization because its coming into being and the circumstances surrounding it are so very interesting to me as a woman and as a worker. I have before my eyes a picture of these very comely, sheltered, well-mannered, soft-spoken women, dressed in yards and yards of rich velvets, with beautiful plumage on their large hats; their dark eyes shining from under these hats with a full, warm glow. I also see them huddling their little hands into muff's as they enter the carriages which will take them to the house of Mrs. Levy for the first meeting. I am veritably charmed by the preamble which they wrote to their Constitution, which is as characteristic of the particular time and purpose, as the cause is eternal.

"In all communities, the means of alleviating the sufferings of the poor are considered of high importance by the benevolent and the humane. The subscribers, members of the Hebrew congregation (Mikveh Israel) of Philadelphia, and citizens of the United States and of the State of Pennsylvania, sensible to the calls of their small society and desirous of rendering themselves useful to their indigent sisters of the House of Israel, have associated themselves together for the purpose of charity, and in order to make the benefit permanent, have adopted this Constitution."

Thus, the first Constitution was composed by the first woman's organization in America, which incidentally is still in existence, functioning along the same lines as originally designated, and conducted largely by the descendants of its founders. The work of the Society was thoroughly systemized. The city was divided into districts, each in charge of a manager. Among these managers, we find such names as Sim'ha Peixotto, Ellen Phillips, Esther Hart,
Richea Hays, Phila Pesoa; many of these names are as prominent today as they were five generations ago.

Some years later, Miss Gratz spurred a group of these women to organize the first Hebrew Sunday School as a branch of the Society. It was resolved that: "Teachers be appointed among the young ladies of the Congregation." This school, which was formally opened on March 4, 1838, was the first Hebrew Sunday School in America. Then Miss Gratz started the Jewish Foster Home, the Fuel Society, and the Sewing Society, enlisting as many members of a family as possible, and delegating to them various duties, as she saw fit, thus helping to organize one of the most prosperous and exemplary Jewish communities of the New World.

II

By 1840, there were 15,000 Jews in the United States, and what was to be one of the most significant waves of Jewish mass immigration took place in the next ten years. For by 1850, we have 50,000 Jews in this country. The reasons for this are well known: The failure of the revolutions of 1848, and the Gold Rush in America. And as these masses were pouring into the port of New York, most of them realized immediately the opportunities west and south of New York. They were small tradesmen, and they picked up the peddler's pack with the same agility as they formerly handled the wanderer's stick. They scattered all over the country, settling in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The great bulk of the newcomers were Germans.

It was during this period of immigration, that the first woman's organization of national scope, the first effort on the part of Jewish women to effect a nationwide movement, was initiated by German Jewesses. This organization, "The United Order of True Sisters" was organized April 21, 1846, by a group of women who prayed at the Temple Im-Manuel (now known as Emanu-El), the most distinguished congregation in the city. The women originally took the name of "Unabhängiger Orden Treue Schwestern." The guiding spirit of this organization was Henrietta Bruckman, who inspired the women "to unite in sisterly affection and
esteem; to give moral and material aid to their dependents; to render philanthropic, civic and other services to communities in which the lodges are located.” The medium of communication of the society was originally German, but after five years, the English language was adopted and The Treue Schwestern became the Grand Lodge United Order of True Sisters.

The U. O. T. S. has the distinction of being the first national as well as the first fraternal Jewish women’s organization in the United States. Today, the Order consists of the Grand Lodge in New York City, and 34 subordinate lodges throughout the country, with a total membership of 12,000. Each lodge is engaged in its own special philanthropic and charitable work, besides co-operating in the general work of the central organization. Besides affording to its members the usual medical and financial aid extended by benevolent organizations, the latter provides a Widow’s Endowment Fund, and maintains an Emergency Fund for aiding victims of national disasters.

There are eight lodges in Manhattan. These have formed jointly the New York Philanthropic League In Aid Of Crippled Children, founded by Mrs. Rose Baran. This League whose President is Mrs. Carrie Hollander, does incalculable good for unfortunate crippled children in New York City.

It is interesting to note that the U. O. T. S. is the first fraternal woman’s organization in the country to erect its own club house, which not only serves as the National Headquarters but also as the meeting place for the Manhattan lodges, as well as the headquarters for the National Convention held in December. A great deal of the beauty dwelling within and without this house is a result of the continued efforts of its founder, Mrs. Emma Schlesinger, who is it chairman. The Order also issues a monthly organ, called “The Echo,” which is edited by Mrs. Esther Davis.

Although the membership of the U. O. T. S. is entirely Jewish, it does not function as a sectarian body. All its activities and benevolent work is extended to all the needy and suffering, regardless of sex or creed. Among the well known names identified with the Order are Mina Schotten-
Reform Judaism was taking a strong hold of the Jews in Germany and also making its way into the New World. This movement affected the social status of the Jewess in the circles of Reform Judaism, which introduced a great many modifications which spelled her emancipation.

One of the noted reformers of that period, Abraham Geiger, in his essay "The Position of the Woman of our Time," which found an echo in every part of the world, and gave rise to a great deal of controversy in Jewish communal circles, said: "Let there be from now on no distinction between duties for men and women unless flowing from the natural laws governing the sexes, no assumption of the spiritual minority of women as though she were incapable of grasping the deep things in religion."

The protagonist of Reform Judaism in this country was the venerable scholar, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who arrived here in 1846, and, for a half a century, wielded great power in the spiritual life of American Jewry. It was Rabbi Wise who introduced the family pew, and later the participation of women in the choir. This innovation was followed by the inclusion of women in Minyan, the quorum of adults necessary for conducting a service. These changes and reforms served as an impetus to many of the women in the Reform Congregations to organize, but it brought out strong opposition in the more conservative groups, where the answer was also in a union of forces.

During the two decades after the Civil War, women's clubs and welfare organizations were springing up everywhere, both as auxiliaries of existing societies and as independent bodies. But each was an isolated organism. Let me mention but a few of these organizations which came to life during the early part of the second half of the nineteenth century: The Israelitische Frauen Verein, or the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Association, founded in San Francisco in 1855; The Hebrew Free Sewing Society, Baltimore, Maryland, 1861; The Ladies' Hebrew Widow and Orphan Society,
Then a new era of immigration dawned. German Jews were beginning to enjoy greater freedom at home, and were no more lured to the States. And as German Jewish immigration was slowing down, the German Jews here were growing more prosperous and more influential from day to day. “The German Jews in America gain in influence daily, being rich, intelligent, and educated, or at least seeking education,” wrote a German American in 1869.

However, there was no lull in Jewish immigration. In unprecedented numbers, Jews began to migrate from the Slavic countries, and this tide of East-European immigration lasted for about two generations and formed a goodly part of the four million Jews now living in the land of freedom.

The first substantial evidences of the presence of the new polyglot throngs were the welfare organizations created by the older and affluent citizens here, most of these being brought to life by men. In 1871, we have the establishment of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and two years later, the Union of American Congregations. In 1874, New York Jewry consolidated its charitable forces in the United Hebrew Charities. The Mount Sinai Hospital was erected at about the same time. About five years later, we have the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society and many other kin-dred organizations. This sequence of establishing Jewish centers was followed out by the Jews of Philadelphia, Chicago, and the other large Jewish communities, not to mention the innumerable synagogues, temples, fraternal organizations, social clubs, etc., that came into existence during that period.

However, no indication of any specific Jewish women's undertaking on a large scale was as yet evident. We know of women's auxiliaries to these institutions, and we know of dozens of small organizations founded and maintained by women for the traditional social duties, such as aiding poor
maternity cases, providing dowries for poor girls of marriageable age, arranging weddings for poor brides, and caring for the needy and the sick. These societies were usually organized as Landsmannschaften, being composed of groups coming from the same city or the same districts or country "back home." These groups usually were found in the ghettos, and functioned within the dimensions of the district.

And the ghettos were growing in number and scope. We remember 1881 and the pogroms in Southern Russia, which were followed by another mass immigration to these shores. I should like to recall that this catastrophe brought to the fore Emma Lazarus, one of the most gifted of the women of her generation, who with her lyrical pen, tried to arouse the world to protest against the injustice which was being done to the Jews. And it was Emma Lazarus who, giving up the warmth of her study chamber and the geniality of her world of dreams, stood in the grim structure known as Castle Garden and was the first to smile and extend a warm hand to the weary and battered Jews, "the huddled masses yearning to breathe free," who came to seek new life here.

Those were the years of the sweat-shop, those were the years of hopes and aspirations, those were the years when the children of pushcart peddlers studied to become statesmen, and those were the years when children of rabbis and scholars became gangsters and thieves. The Melting Pot, a subject for romance for many an imaginative mind, was hard and inhuman to many of these Jews. Their needs, social and moral, were growing by the hour, as the process of their adaptation to the new environment was taking place. Here were seething masses, hurtled from their sources, trying to transplant the roots. Here were strangers trying to find their way.

To help the masses out of this maze, to guide somewhat the bewildered throngs, came the National Council of Jewish Women, the first women's philanthropic organization of national scope. It may be said that the women who formed the Council came to put the House of Israel in order. Its formation is a chapter of the history of the Jews in
America which will always be underscored with the gratitude of the immigrant masses.

It was in 1893 that the Parliament of Religions was to take place in Chicago simultaneously with the World’s Fair or the Columbian Exposition. To this Parliament of Religions the Jews were also invited by a communication to the Jewish communal and spiritual leaders. This was a most gratifying missive to the new Jewish world here, especially after the disheartening occurrences in other countries at about that time. In the American Hebrew of June 16, 1893, we read a letter signed by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the Local Committee on Jewish Church Congregations, calling the attention of the entire Jewry to the auspicious event and in conclusion, saying: “Since the existence of our religion, no such opportunity as this has ever been extended to the Jew to set himself right before the whole world.”

Some of the most prominent Jews and Jewesses rallied to this gathering. The Parliament of Religions was held under the auspices of the World’s Congress Auxiliary of the Exposition, and among the women who presented papers were Minnie D. Louis on “Mission Work Among the Unenlightened Jews,” Josephine Lazarus, sister of Emma, on “The Outlook of Judaism,” and Henrietta Szold, of whom we shall hear more later, on “What Judaism Has Done For Woman.”

But these singular instances do not constitute the entire function of the Jewish women at that Congress. For a group of Chicago women headed by Mrs. Henry Solomon decided to use this rare historic moment of universal importance, to conceive and give life to what was destined to become one of the greatest women’s organizations in the world. Mrs. Solomon invited women from surrounding states to represent their respective communities at this momentous gathering. Ninety-three delegates, representing twenty-nine cities came to Chicago. I shall again resort to the American Hebrew in order to describe that first gathering, so that we may visualize it in the spirit which pervaded the entire event, for we must not forget that we are speaking of something which happened almost four decades ago, and
it is interesting to feel the spirit of the time, if only as transmitted through the written word. In the issue of September 15, 1893, we read the report: "Lack of space prevents our doing justice to the gathering of Jewish women in Chicago last week. . . The Congress was opened by Mrs. Charles Ehnrotten, Vice-President of The World's Congress, who introduced Mrs. Henry Solomon as the Chairman of the meetings. Mrs. Solomon, before delivering her address of welcome, called upon Miss Ray Frank, of Oakland, California, a student at the Hebrew Union College, to offer a prayer.

"Mrs. Louise Mannheimer of Cincinnati read a paper on 'Jewish Women Prior to the Sixteenth Century,' and was followed by Mrs. Helen Kahan Weil, of Kansas City, in a companion paper on 'Jewish Women From That Time To The Present.'

"On Tuesday, Miss Julia Richman, of New York, gave an address on 'Women As Wage-Earners' with special reference to directing immigrants."

Perhaps some of my readers remember Julia Richman. Perhaps some of them knew her. Her untimely death robbed the immigrant Jews of one of their staunchest friends and sympathizers. It was Julia Richman who formulated the Constitution and read it at the final session of the gathering. The chief purpose was stated thus: "Resolved, that the Congress become a permanent organization to teach all Jewish women their obligations to the Jewish religion." The name was adopted as the National Council of Jewish Women, and its objects outlined as follows: "It shall seek to unite in closer relation women interested in the work of religion, philanthropy, and education, and shall consider practical means of solving problems in these fields. It shall organize and encourage the study of the underlying principles of Judaism. It shall apply knowledge gained in this study to the improvement of the Sabbath school and the work of social reform. It shall secure the interest and aid of influential persons in aroused the general sentiment against religious persecutions whenever and by whomever shown, and in finding means to prevent such persecution."

Mrs. Hannah G. Solomon (Mrs. Henry) was elected president, and Miss Sadie American, Corresponding Secretary.
Thus, the Council of Jewish Women came into being in the Middle West, some thirty seven years ago, soon to become a household word to Jews the world over. Thus, was started one of the finest philanthropic organizations in America to serve as a source of joy and pride to American Jewry, and a source of mercy and Jewishness for all the Jews.

It is not easy to enumerate the achievements of the Council, not because the world has not kept record of them, but because they have been so extensive and intensive and have been marked by so much glorious undertaking and fulfillment that an outline would prove inadequate. But I will mention some of the outstanding accomplishments. First of all, the National Council of Jewish Women is the first and only national organization in the history of American Jewish womanhood that enables all groups of Jewry to meet on a common platform. Then, it deserves unstinted praise for its immigration work which took on worldwide proportions and which gained worldwide recognition for the expert program evolved for the protection of the Jewish immigrant particularly the Jewish immigrant woman and girl traveling to America.

This program provides for the immigrant aid at Ellis Island and at other ports of entry as well as in the local communities, and includes the education and Americanization of the foreigner.

What the Council did for the Jews of Europe after the World War marks one of its most noted chapters. The echoes of those piercing cries from the devastated Jewish settlements all over the continent will probably never cease to remind us of that dark period in the history of the Jews. ‘In the spring of 1920,’ I have noted in ‘My Portion,’ my book of memoirs, ‘the president of the Council, the late Rose Brenner, appointed me chairman of the Reconstruction Committee and ordered me to go abroad and make a study of the conditions of the various countries and determine what aid was needed.

‘So I left for Europe with my personal secretary. We visited London, Paris, Antwerp, The Hague, Rotterdam, Berlin, Kattowicz, Vienna, Budapest and Frankfort.'
'If my tears could have left an indelible imprint, they would have made a line along the streets of Europe...

'Everywhere one met little children who had been lost in the shuffle; mothers looking into the eyes of the lost ones in the hope of finding their own children, who had strayed from them, when city after city and village after village had been evacuated...

'Amid this chaos, anti-Semitism was rampant. As was usual, the classes who had made the war sought a scapegoat to divert attention from themselves; and the Jew—already bowed and broken from his sufferings—proved a convenient one.

'Jews are massacred in the Ukraine, harassed in Poland, driven in refugee bands from place to place—a starving, footsore, weary-eyed army. The Asyl of Paris was filled with refugees; yet the misery was mild compared with the tented colonies in Belgium, and the overcrowded quarters in the German and Austrian cities... Twenty thousand refugees were living in tents at The Hague, besides the number who were quartered in the Montefiore Home in Rotterdam...'

We organized classes in English so that the people who were waiting for their turn to migrate would lose no time in learning the language of their new country. Council groups were organized at Riga, Libau, Rotterdam, Danzig, and Antwerp for constructive service to the Jewish emigrants through their ports.

In the autumn of 1920, a reconstruction unit headed by Celia Strakosch was dispatched to Europe to follow out some of the work which I outlined in my report. Another unit was sent in 1921, consisting of social service experts, and still another unit in the spring of 1922, headed by Mrs. Elinore Sachs-Barr and Doris Maddow, and one year later, Clara Greenhut and Dr. Margaret Paukner headed still another unit.

The vital part that the Council played in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Jewish war refugee can probably never be fully estimated. If I may use a concrete form of symbolism I might say that thousands upon thousands of Jewish lives were saved at that time through the efforts of the Council of Jewish Women.
We must not, however, forget that these above-mentioned activities are comparatively recent, and but few of all those pursued in the history of the Council. We must remember that for more than twenty-five years before this reconstruction work, the Council carried on philanthropic and communal tasks all through the states and that it always lived up to its motto “Faith and Humanity” to its fullest extent and in its most consumate sense. We must also remember that the membership and, with it, the efficiency of the Council grew enormously from year to year. The Council started with a membership of ninety-three. In 1896, three years later, the reports reveal 50 sections with a membership of 3,370. In 1914, when the Council was twenty years old, it had 56 sections in 24 states. In 1920, it had 164 sections, in 40 states, with a membership of 28,000. Of these sections five were in Canada, one in Cuba, and 41 were junior sections. In 1925, it reached a total membership of 52,000.

Along the lines of its usual activities, the Council has formed close to 100 study circles in religion and philanthropy throughout its chapters. Fourteen religious schools have been opened by individual sections. The Council sponsors two Vacation Societies caring for hundreds of children. Sewing schools, Jewish libraries, Sabbath schools, etc., have been formed in many parts of the country. But these activities, I take it for granted, are understood to be within the normal functions of an organization of this type. I shall therefore give a cursory review of some of the other activities and turn again to the work which the Council has done, I may say, on an international scale.

The Council provides many communities with their first volunteer workers in the field of Jewish philanthropy. Through its social welfare program, it has stimulated the establishment of many neighborhood houses, homes for girls, clinics, recreational centers, and vacation camps. It has also developed work among the blind and the deaf. It has aroused nation-wide interest in the movement to provide scholarship funds for deserving students, under the auspices of Council sections. It has established a Department of Farm and Rural Work, to keep the lonely Jewish women in the scattered rural communities of several of our most popular states, in touch with the Jewish world outside. It
has interested the Jewish woman in the progress and welfare of the child in the public schools, through its "School Friend" System.

Among its publications is "The Jewish Woman" the first periodical devoted entirely to the interest of Jewish womanhood; and "The Immigrant," a monthly bulletin on immigration questions published by the Council's Department of Immigrant Aid. Holiday calendars are also issued by the Council to schools, colleges, universities, and institutions, where the Jewish holidays are noted. Besides it boasts of an imposing list of publications of Jewish interest which are made easily accessible to all its Sections and members.

Not the least significant of the Council's achievements was its summoning of the World Congress for Jewish Women, which is the first international body of its kind in Jewish history. It was in 1923 that the Council acted as hostess to a group of representative women of the various Jewish centers of Europe, who were called together in Vienna. It was my great pleasure to be there and to see the World Congress of Jewish Women come into being, drawing its breath from some of the greatest Jewesses of our present generation. There were among us then Berta Popenheim and Paula Ollendorf of Germany, Anita Muller-Cohen of Vienna, women of magnificent cultural stature and women who embodied all the bounty of kindness and devotion to their race. We banded together to discuss the various problems which were facing the Jews of Europe after the war. What was to be done with the hundreds of thousands of orphans? What about the refugees? And what an appalling situation the homeless girl presented with white-slave traffic spreading its net! These and more stark questions faced us, and the Council, representing the most prosperous Jewish community in the world, of course, assumed most of the material burden of this international body. I am proud to say that I have served as its president since its inception and that at its last conference in Hamburg, in the spring of 1929, the Council was again very well represented and Mrs. Estelle M. Sternberger, who has served as Executive Secretary of the Council for the last few years, was elected Secretary of the World Congress.

Although the problems that confront the World Congress
naturally undergo certain modifications as time goes on, yet the work is always of vital importance in its fundamental Jewish aspects, and I would set this World Congress down as one of the glowing jewels in the crown of achievement of the Council of Jewish Women.

I should also like to mention that the Council participated in an exhibit of a general nature at Paris in 1905, also participated in the same year in the Jamestown Exposition, and in 1915, gave an exhibit of its work at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. In each instance, it carried off a gold medal in recognition of its excellent work.

In the many years of my association with the Council and in the various offices that I occupied, I have had the good fortune to meet most of the outstanding workers and its guiding lights. I shall mention only a few of them: Hannah G. Solomon, Marion L. Misch, Bertha F. Rauh, and the beloved Rose Brenner who departed from us all too soon. As for the splendid personality heading the Council now, Mrs. Joseph E. Friend, and the very brilliant service rendered by the Executive Secretary, Mrs. Sternberger, I feel certain that all of my readers know of them.

IV

The vast scope of the Council of Jewish Women absorbed the finest elements of Jewish womanhood in America. And the work of the Council spread like a powerful river down the valley of Jewish life; the valley with the numerous hills and rocks, with the endless rows of weeds. This mighty river sent its many branches far and wide,—all coming from the clear springs of charity, all going to the deep sea of welfare. For the extent of the Council work is all-prevailing and all-embracing.

Soon, however, another great woman’s organization came to life, a peer we might call it, both in integrity of purpose and in its blessed vision. For the Council of Jewish Women and Hadassah are today among the most important Jewish national bodies in the country, and among the most forceful women’s organizations in the world. Although the scope of the younger organization is more limited, yet Hadassah in its comparatively short existence, has managed to attract
the attention of the world to its unique type of welfare work.

I should like to outline briefly the premises upon which the Hadassah structure was founded. We are now passing from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. The Jews were facing the new century with mortification and renewed horror. For a good many years to come, they were not able to shake off the abominable effects of the Dreyfus case. Jews and non-Jews alike were shaken by this incident where the Jewish army officer was accused of the most disgraceful crime, and the world was shocked because it occurred in France, the religious and political haven of the modern world.

And if France could become anti-Semitic, what hope was there for the Jew in the notoriously anti-Semitic countries?

This was the state of mind of the Jews of the world. And out of this came a strong Zionist tide. Orthodox as well as assimilated Jew saw after the Dreyfus Affair that Zion was the only answer. And when Theodor Herzl came to the fore with his political program, and the first Zionist Congress, the response throughout the world was overwhelming.

Very soon, it reverberated in America. When the Federation of Zionist Societies of Greater New York and vicinity was organized in 1897, and one year later became known as the Federation of American Zionists, it boasted as members some of the best known names in American Jewish history. Professor Richard J. H. Gottheil became its president, with Dr. Stephen S. Wise, as secretary, and with Henrietta Szold, by this time a writer of note, and Judah L. Magnes, on the Governing Board. Soon the Federation had 25 societies throughout the states, and took its place among the active Zionist groups of the world.

The Zionist ranks were also recruited from the immigrant masses who were coming to America in large numbers at that time.

American Jews, those of adequate means of course, were heard of taking their annual vacation in Palestine rather than any of the other famous resorts. Jewish tourists wended their way to the hills of Judaea. Women were also among them. In 1911, a group of these women made a tour through the Holy Land, and returned with the light of Zion
gleaming in their eyes, and the work for Zion throbbing in their pulse. Henrietta Szold, who was then occupying the important post of Secretary of the Jewish Publication Society, was motivating this woman’s expedition, and upon their return, Miss Szold realized the golden moment to organize the American women into a Zionist body.

Henrietta Szold arranged for a meeting, at which the women who returned were the speakers, and their stirring and moving accounts of “the Jewish pioneers there whose task was even more difficult than that of our pioneers here in the West”, swept the small assembly of women, and right there and then, they organized into the Women’s Zionist Organization of America. They chose the name “Hadassah,” which was the Hebrew name of Queen Esther, and as their motto and inspiration “the healing of the daughter of my people,” from the very beautiful and sad verse of Jeremiah:

“Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people
From a land far off:
'Is it not the Lord in Zion?
Is not the King in her?'

Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then is not the
Healing of the daughter of my people recovered?”

(Jeremiah 8:19–22)

Thus, Hadassah was born in 1912.

Before I tell about Hadassah’s program and its adherence to the motto “the healing of the daughter of my people,” I must stop for a moment and say something about the great need for Hadassah in Palestine. Let me first quote from a journalist’s description of the country at that time: “Here was no paternal government giving homesteads to worthy men, but here were people buying back from Arab landowners at high prices, land that had been abused by generations of bad farming, that had to be carefully nursed back into fertility. Here, too, was constant danger from bands of marauding Arabs, intensely hostile to these people, trying to settle again in this land.
"Hardships were numerous. Physicians and nurses were too expensive, too difficult to be even thought of. Swamps abounded and mosquitoes were numerous—is it to be wondered that malarial fever was a common occurrence? Water was scarce, and the idea of biological protection never had a hearing. As a result, typhoid fever claimed far too many victims. The climate differed from that of Eastern Europe, whence came most of the colonists, but who was to instruct these people in the necessary change of diet?

"There was no provision for caring for maternity cases, except a missionary hospital to which mothers might be admitted only if their children were to be baptized into the Christian church. The Jewish mothers naturally refrained from using these facilities. The resulting infant death rate was frightful among the entire population."

Hadassah was going to heal. Hadassah was going to turn death into life. Hadassah was going to bring Western scientific culture into the land.

Technically speaking, Hadassah was founded with the dual program: to foster Zionist ideals in America and to establish a system of medical and social service in Palestine. Of course, every Hadassah member is automatically a member of the Zionist Organization of America, which has developed out of the Federation of American Zionists. This not only means paying the annual Shekel but also annual contributions to the Keren Kayemeth, or the National Fund, which is the land-buying agency and to which all Zionist factions contribute alike.

Now if Henrietta Szold gave to Hadassah life and purpose, then it may be said that Nathan and Lina Straus gave to Hadassah its first practical move in life. No sooner was Hadassah founded, than the Strauses financed the trip of two American Jewish nurses to do district nursing in Palestine. In 1913, Miss Rachael Landy and Miss Rose Kaplan left for the Holy Land to start Hadassah's task which was soon to gain recognition from the entire civilized world.

But the kind and magnanimous Strauses were not satisfied with representatives alone. So the aged couple took the trip themselves and saw the beginnings of Hadassah work. They watched the modern scientific methods of district
nursing being introduced into Palestine. Under the supervision of the Hadassah nurses and with the assistance of experienced midwives, maternity nursing in the home was established. But how inadequate these few agents of health seemed in the face of all the vast numbers who needed them!

So the Strauses provided the funds for a small Nurses Settlement which was opened at the home of the two American nurses in Jerusalem. Here, a class of girls were trained and instructed in the elements of nursing, first aid, and hygiene.

But just as Hadassah was getting its hopeful roots into the desolate soil of Palestine, the World War broke out and suspended all activities. For two years, all Hadassah work practically ceased, as did that of all other foreign welfare agencies. However, in 1916, when the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organization appealed to the Zionists in America to send a medical unit to the disease-ridden territories of Palestine, the Zionist Organization here entrusted to Hadassah the task of organizing such a unit. With the aid of the Joint Distribution Committee and the World Zionist Organization, Hadassah organized a unit of forty-four physicians, dentists, nurses, and sanitary engineers, and in 1918, the unit reached Palestine and immediately plunged into the arduous task. The various hospitals, dispensaries, and health stations that were established were of course staffed and financed by Jews, but their ministries were by no means confined to Jewish patients. We can easily imagine the pestilence and disease raging in the country at that time after the battles and skirmishes there. Hadassah threw its doors open to Jew and Arab alike, conducting inspection and waging anti-malarial campaigns.

In that same year, the first training school for nurses was opened with headquarters at the Rothschild Hospital in Jerusalem. This training school served a twofold purpose: it established a self-perpetuating group of nurses for the country, and it also gave Palestinian young women an avenue of employment. The three-year training course (given entirely in the Hebrew language) offers here the equivalent of any nurses' training course given in America, and the diploma is recognized the world over.
While all this intensive health work was going on in Palestine, Hadassah began, in the United States, a huge campaign for hospital apparel and linens. The Palestine Supply Department was formed under the leadership of Mrs. A. H. Fromenson with numerous Hadassah chapters turning out linens and hospital supplies through its sewing circles and linen "showers." At the same time, a program of Zionist cultural work was outlined here, and carried out by all the chapters.

In 1920, Hadassah here saw its first-born brought to light. Junior Hadassah, comprising the daughters and young sisters of the older Hadassah-members organized with the specific purpose of caring for the children of Palestine. This young group, which numbers more than 10,000 members, in 260 chapters throughout the country, founded and maintains Meier Shfeyah, a rural school for children, and a Nurses' Training School, besides, of course, supporting general Zionist efforts.

To date, senior and junior Hadassah have a joint membership of 50,000. And here is some of the monumental work Hadassah has done and is doing: There are four Hadassah hospitals and five dispensaries in Palestine, and provisions for medical service in fifty rural districts. There are 21 infant welfare stations, 18 pre-natal clinics, besides special clinics for obstetric and pediatric service, and a mental hygiene clinic. Hadassah is also soon to realize a dental clinic made possible through the assistance of a New York dentist, who is endowing the clinic in the memory of his wife, Clara Wachtel, whose name the clinic will bear.

Hadassah conducts regular medical inspection of 24,000 school children and a system of penny luncheons prepared by expert dieticians in 14 schools and 15 kindergartens. Continuous campaigns are waged against tuberculosis, smallpox, trachoma, typhoid and malaria.

A million dollar fund is being sponsored by both junior and senior Hadassah jointly to help found a hospital in connection with the Hebrew University. Senior Hadassah also has a fund for scholarships for graduates of the nurses' training school in Palestine to come and study in America. There is also a fund for the publication in Hebrew of text-
books for the nurses. Again with junior Hadassah, $70,000 has been raised for the Jewish National Fund for the redemption of the Haifa Bay land.

I must not forget to mention the special hospitals which have been erected for the benefit of the Halutzim who are engaged in agricultural work in the remote sections of the country, and also the X-ray Institute which is now operating as part of the Hadassah Hospital of Jerusalem.

Two years ago, the names of the late beloved Lina and Nathan Straus, bigger and brighter than ever, came up again in the annals of Hadassah. The crowning glory of Hadassah, the Straus Health Centers in Palestine, became a reality. These Straus Health Centers, of which one is in Jerusalem and the other in Tel-Aviv, will unite all the public health activities in one institution. The keynote of these centers will be guarding health rather than treating illness. The first contribution of the Strauses toward the Health Centers was $50,000, but the late Lina Straus' devotion to Hadassah exceeded all financial bounds, and, about two years before her death, she gathered all the jewels which her family had presented to her up to that time, and gave these to Hadassah to go towards a Reserve Fund for these Centers. The jewels brought a great deal of money and were returned by the chapters to Hadassah, which, in turn, presented them to Lady Samuel, formerly the First Lady of Palestine.

In the past ten years, Hadassah has raised $3,500,000 towards its medical work, which requires about $600,000 a year. Again I wish to stress the point that all Hadassah work is extended to the non-Jews as well.

Before closing the story of Hadassah, one of the most magnificent chapters of Jewish womanhood in history, I wish to make reference to the immense growth in the Jewish population of Palestine to show the great needs that Hadassah had to fill. In 1916, Palestine had 85,000 Jews; after Balfour issued the historic Declaration, the population jumped by leaps and bounds, and in 1929, it was 157,800. And Hadassah is there, ready to serve these incoming masses, and to help make their dream of Zion come true.

I have already mentioned Henrietta Szold, whose name is synonymous with Hadassah. After her term of presidency which began with the first day of Hadassah and terminated
eight years later, many another loyal and devoted Jewess came to the fore and carried on the magnificent work of Hadassah. Among them are Lotta Levensohn, Alice Seligsberg, Mrs. Edward Jacobs, who was elected president at the last convention in Buffalo after many years of devotion and service to Hadassah, Mrs. Irma Lindheim, who served as president for three years, and Mrs. Robert Szold who had added glory to the name Szold, during her long association with Hadassah.

Thirteen years after Hadassah was instituted, the second National women's organization to espouse the cause of rebuilding Zion came into existence. It called itself Women's Organization for the Pioneer Women of Palestine. It grew out of the ranks of the Poale-Zion (Socialist Zionist Party), that faction of modern Zionism which speaks for the proletariat. In America, the Poale-Zionist Party was organized about twenty-seven years ago and has found great response among the Jewish workers, who are imbued with the spirit of Zionism. The women who are responsible for the Pioneer Women's Organization were and still are members of the Poale-Zion Party, or the National Jewish Worker's Alliance of America, its outstanding fraternal Order. Among these women are Mrs. Meyer Brown, Sophie A. Udin, Mrs. Louis Siegel, and Mrs. Baruch Zuckerman.

These women made the welfare of the worker in Palestine, particularly the working woman, their objective. In other words, they not only help foster in Palestine the usual welfare work with which liberal women are identified, but they also take steps to strengthen the position of the working woman there, in order to improve her social and economic status, and also to enable her to participate more fully in the upbuilding of the Jewish National Homeland. The Histadruth, as the Federation of Labor in Palestine is called, comprises 30,000 workers, including 12,000 women. It is with this group and the groups of young Halutzoth, the women Pioneers working on the land, that the organization concerns itself.

Immediately upon its inception, information was disseminated among the Jewish working women here, telling them of the life and the needs of the Jewish working women
in Palestine, the important part she plays in the moral and economic growth of the country, the heroism she has shown in overcoming the difficulties under which she had to rear her family while doing her work, etc., etc. As a result, the Pioneer Women's Organization in the five years of its existence has enlisted 5,000 women throughout the country and Canada, in 60 different clubs. In this short time, it has become the buttress of spirit and substance of the working woman in Palestine, so that the latter uses her new freedom to the best advantage in doing her share, if not more than an equal share with the man, in improving the living conditions of the worker. Those who have visited Palestine in the past few years speak with utmost admiration of the Halutzah, who with face uplifted toward the Eastern sun, her shoulders straightened by the new freedom, with her hands eagerly mothers the neglected soil which she loves so dearly. And the lot of this Halutzah has been greatly improved thanks to the efforts of the Pioneer Women's Organization.

The Pioneer Women's Organization has raised already $175,000 for the girls' Kvutzoth, or the agricultural settlements where the Halutzoth live and work, enabling the girl groups to acquire land for co-operative farms in Rechvia, Schechunath Borochov, Tiberias and Petach-Tikvah. Provision has also been made for other girls' settlements in Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa, the larger centers where they are employed. Funds have been given to them for the purpose of erecting farm structures, for the purchase of cattle and farm implements, and the development of dairies, bee-raising, and tree nurseries. Several agricultural training schools have been founded for these Halutzoth, which have already sent out a number of expert agriculturists who are now, in turn, directing the training in the newer girls' settlements.

Some of these settlements have already proven to be not only self-supporting, but profitable. So successful have they been in their dairy produce, honey culture, and, particularly, tree-raising that they have been able to dispose of all their excess quantity at a good price, and many of these girls have been invited by their Jewish and non-Jewish neighboring farmers to take care of their trees. There are ten such girls' settlements, or Kvutzoth, sponsored by the Pioneer Wo-
men's Organization, where 600 girls are housed and trained for agricultural and other work.

To provide the means for maintaining the agricultural training schools the organization carries on an independent campaign annually. In 1929 a total of $55,000 was raised. The money is remitted to the Women's Council of the Histadruth. The organization also maintains three kindergartens and day nurseries where children of working mothers are looked after during the day.

The National Fund, being the one institution which is a basic part of all Zionist factions, occupies an important place in the program of the Pioneer Women, which provides for participation in the general drive as well as special campaigns. In its immediate affiliation, it supports all the more general undertakings of the Poale-Zion Party.

In order to keep the members well informed of its activities in Palestine the organization publishes the "Pioneer Woman" a bi-monthly bulletin, employing both Yiddish and English. It also distributes the literature pertaining to or emanating from the working classes of Palestine. They have, however, found an even more effective method of arousing interest in their work by inviting leaders of the working women to come to America.

Another recent publication is a Hebrew one called "Divrei Poaleth" (What The Working Women Have To Say). This is a compilation of fifty-seven essays, written by as many women workers telling their experiences as toilers on the land. This work is indeed an interesting document in the history of the new woman and I do hope it will be translated into the European languages so that it will be accessible to the women outside of Palestine.

Instead of a president, the Pioneer Women's Organization is lead by an Executive Committee, which consists of Mrs. L. Siegel, B. Caller, and Mrs. Dr. I. Applebaum.

V

At the third convention of the Reform Rabbis held in Cincinnati, in June 1871, the idea of the Hebrew Union College was born, and with it, the idea of organizing all the Reform Congregations into the Union of American Hebrew
Congregations. About the Hebrew Union College and the great spirits that dwelt therein as well as the men it has sent forth to "Torah, Hohmah, Ma'asim Tovim," I cannot stop to speak here. We will pass over forty-one years of the existence of the Union, whose chief objects are the maintenance of the College and the promotion of religious instruction, and come to the creation of the counterpart of the Union, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.

It was in December, 1912, that the President of the Union, Mr. J. Walter Freiberg, issued a "call to all ladies' organizations belonging to the Union to appoint or elect delegates for a meeting to be held in Cincinnati, during January 20-23, 1913. This meeting is for the purpose of organizing a Federation of Temple Sisterhoods."

Representatives of fifty Sisterhoods from almost as many cities attended this conference. Some of these women are no more with us, but their memory always serves to inspire the cause of this organization. The sessions were attended by huge throngs, and prominent speakers, men and women, addressed them. In summing up his remarks, Rabbi David Philipson of Cincinnati said to the women: "Your organization when formed will become the counterpart of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The two organizations will be the obverse and reverse of the same shield, the congregation as the basis of Jewish representation."

With the object of bringing the various Sisterhoods of the country into closer co-operation and association with one another, of quickening the religious consciousness of the Jew by strengthening spiritual and educational activity, and of working with and for the Hebrew Union College, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods took its place as the first national congregational organization in the country.

After thirteen years, the Federation numbers now 56,000 members divided among 340 Sisterhoods in the United States and Canada, and one Sisterhood in England. The numerous activities are carried on through National Standing Committees on Religion, Religious Schools, Hebrew Union College Scholarships and Dormitory Maintenance, Isaac M. Wise Sisterhood Memorial Fund, Union Museum, Uniongrams, Sisterhood Extension, Federation of Young
Folks' Temple Leagues, Student Activities, Programs, Peace, Jewish Literature for the Sightless, State Federations, Cooperation.

Recognition for much of the growth and increased influence of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhood should go first of all to its former presidents, Mrs. Abram Simon, Mrs. Joseph Wiesenfeld, and Mrs. J. Walter Freiberg, and to Mrs. Maurice Steinfeld, its present president. Among the other women who have gained distinction in their efforts in the name of the Federation are the late Mrs. Sally Kubie Glauber, Miss Edna Goldsmith, Mrs. Albert J. May, (a daughter of Rabbi Isaac M. Wise), Mrs. David Goldfarb, Mrs. Joseph Stolz, Mrs. Jacob Wertheim, and Mrs. Adolph Rosenberg.

Mention should also be made here of Miss Elsa Weihl, Mrs. Miriam Dreyfuss, and Miss Helen Straus, who have rendered invaluable service to the Federation, and thereby also to the Jewish community, in the capacity of Executive Secretary.

Just as the spirit and message of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise permeates the existence of the Hebrew Union College, and consequently the other institutions born of the inspiration glowing from the College, namely, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, so the spirit of Professor Solomon Schechter dwells in the midst of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the two organizations created to promote its teachings and principles—the United Synagogue of America, and the more recently established Women's League of the United Synagogue.

The former organizations foster Reform Judaism; the latter, conservative or traditional Judaism.

The Jewish Theological Seminary was established in 1886. It was not until 1902, when Doctor Solomon Schechter assumed the presidency, that the need for a united congregational body to work with the seminary was realized. However, it was not until February, 1913, that Doctor Schechter succeeded in bringing the United Synagogue of America into being. The establishment of a women's league was forecast at the organization meeting of the United Synagogue, when Doctor Schechter said: "I would even suggest
that the United Synagogue assign a certain portion of its work to women, and give them a regular share in its activities. They can become more than an auxiliary to us; indeed, helpful in many respects where, as conditions are in this country, their influence is more far reaching than that of their husbands."

However, five years elapsed before these wives of the United Synagogue members formed the Women's League. And as Solomon Schechter gave the impetus to the organization of the United Synagogue, Mrs. Schechter inspired the Women's League. This was in January, 1918, when the broader objects of the newly-formed organization had to be set aside to make room for an immediate program of work in connection with the War.

With the characteristic devotion and zeal manifested by the Jewish woman in those days, the Women's League immediately launched a special drive for funds to provide extra provisions, and other necessities for the Jewish soldiers stationed in nearby training camps. Of course, the chief concern was that the food should be kosher and served, as far as possible, in conformity with the Jewish dietary laws. The very first substantial achievement of the new group was the Jewish Students' House near Columbia University, which was originally intended as a canteen for the Students' Army Training Corps of the Jewish Welfare Board. This Students' House served as a cozy corner for the Jewish student soldier. After the Armistice, this House remained a gathering and study place for Jewish students and scholars connected with Columbia, the Jewish Theological Seminary nearby, and other schools. Soon, this example of The Jewish Student House was followed by the Philadelphia Sisterhoods, under the leadership of Mrs. Cyrus Adler, who erected one near Dropsie College. Today we also have similar institutions in Denver and Detroit. In all of these, hundreds of Jewish students living away from home are able to find a truly Jewish atmosphere and all that goes with it.

In speaking of the war activities of the Women's League, I wish to mention the substantial remittances of money and shipments of clothes made to the Jews of Palestine during the months of abysmal suffering in that country. And I
will also not omit the shipments of *matzoth* made by the Sisterhoods to the Jewish soldiers at their various camping points at that time.

It is very interesting and significant that at its second annual convention in 1919, a little more than a year after its inception, the League already numbered 57 Sisterhoods throughout the country with a total membership of 6,000. Though still revolving around its axis, the tenets of conservative Judaism, the work of the Women's League has radiated diverse activities. Each Sisterhood conducts study circles on Jewish subjects, chiefly Jewish history. The observance of the Sabbath is always stressed and the adherence to Kasheruth always emphasized. These measures are not only taken up by the Sisterhoods for their own immediate families, but each unit endeavors to see to it that the laws of Kasheruth are observed in local Jewish institutions, such as hospitals, orphan asylums, and day nurseries. Similar effort is made in the cause of Sabbath observance. The Sisterhoods enlist individuals as well as groups to keep the Sabbath in more Jewish spirit, and to persuade institutions and business houses not to make their workers break the Sabbath.

The Women's League also publishes pamphlets on Jewish subjects which are distributed among the members and among the children in the Sabbath schools, which are the League's strongholds.

For a good many years now, the League has been awarding annual scholarships to students of the Seminary, and also doing a great deal of Jewish cultural work among the Jewish students at women's colleges. Prominent among the League's personalities, besides the late Mrs. Solomon Schechter and Mrs. Cyrus Adler, already mentioned, are Miss Emily Solis-Cohen of New York, Miss Sarah Kussy, Newark, Mrs. Moses Hyamson, New York; Mrs. Charles I. Hoffman, Newark; Mrs. Israel Unterberg, New York; Mrs. Samuel Spiegel, New York, who is now president; Miss Deborah Kallen, Boston; and Mrs. A. H. Vixman, New York.

What the Union of American Hebrew Congregations is to the Hebrew Union College, and the United Synagogue of America to the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Union of
Orthodox Jewish Congregations is to the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshivah.

The Orthodox Congregations united in 1898 "to advance the interests of positive Biblical, Rabbinical and historical Judaism," and the Women's Branch, which came in 1924, many years later, naturally grew out of the same principles.

As in the case of the parent organization, the Women's Branch is aiming to further and intensify Orthodox Judaism in the home, in the religious school, and among students and in institutions of higher learning. The activities of the Women's Branch are divided into ten departments, each one concerning itself with a different phase of the work, all the phases converging toward the central point, the preservation and intensification of Orthodox Judaism.

It may be said that the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshivah is the apple of the eye both of the older organization as well as the Women's Branch. This Yeshivah, whose locale has been transformed from humble ramshackle quarters on the East Side of New York, to its present magnificent edifice uptown, owes a good deal of its present beauty and glory to the efforts of the Women's Branch. More than $300,000 was raised by the women for the dormitory adjoining the Yeshivah. The Women's Branch also awards annual scholarships to needy students.

These Yeshivah students may be the pets of the Women's Branch, but they are by no means monopolizing the attention and devotion of the women. The Collegiate Branch of the organization holds large gatherings in celebration of each of the Jewish holidays, at which young students from all the schools are invited and are given an opportunity to enjoy the holiday in its true Jewish spirit. Furthermore, arrangements are made for members of the Women's Branch to invite out-of-town students as their guests for Sabbaths and holidays.

There is also an Educational Committee, which distributes appropriate literature in advance of each holiday, giving a resumé of the significance and observance of the festival. This literature is also circulated among its constituent Sisterhoods and individual members for their information and guidance.
The subject of Kashruth is one of the most important concerns of the Women's Branch. Not only are the women exhorted to observe scrupulously the Jewish dietary laws in their own homes, but as an organization, they have undertaken to investigate the Kashruth of manufactured food products. This is done by Rabbis, who are appointed by the Ritual Commission of the Union, and employed by the Women's Branch. Furthermore, they endeavor, wherever possible to persuade manufacturers to substitute kosher for non-kosher ingredients. Thus far, the Women's Branch has won the approval of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America for seven kinds of kosher crackers manufactured by a large baking company, for a butter product in wide use, for many of the canned and bottled goods of a national manufacturer, and for bread and cakes of another baking company. The Kashruth Committee also answers questions coming from housewives pertaining to certain household matters, after consultation with authorities.

Another important agency of the Women's Branch is the Family Purity Committee which has as its task to bring home once more the value and importance of the old laws of Taharath Hamispacha, under its supervision, efforts are being made to modernize the existing ritual baths.

But the crowning glory of the Women's Branch lies in its most recent achievement—the establishment of an institution of which organizations of much longer standing might well be proud. For in spite of its short existence, the Women's Branch is reaping glory and satisfaction from the Teachers' Training School for Girls. This school, which has already been in existence three years, trains young Jewish girls to become competent Hebrew and religious teachers, employing the most modern pedagogic methods combined with a genuinely religious spirit. This past year, ninety-five girls from all parts of New York and New Jersey enrolled in the school. The curriculum here compares favorably with that of any Hebrew Teachers’ College in Palestine or in Europe, offering courses in the Hebrew language, history, religion, Mishnah, Agadah, pedagogy, and other kindred subjects. The language of instruction throughout is Hebrew.
VI

The idea of fraternal college societies is indeed a cheerful one. This American scholastic institution is associated with youth and the campus, and all the social amenities that make up college life. The idea of the Jewish fraternal college society, however, has a somewhat sad phase in it. Why should these Jewish boys and girls form their own fraternities and sororities, unless they were not made to feel welcome in the organization of their non-Jewish college mates? Nevertheless, this negative point has practically disappeared, with the rise of dozens of Greek letter societies of Jewish students who are motivated by constructive and nationalistic aims and views.

The first college fraternity in the United States was formed in 1776 at the William and Mary College in Virginia. There being very few Jewish families in the South in those days, it is not strange that no Jewish names are associated with the foundation of the famous Phi Beta Kappa fraternity. The fraternities which followed were either sectarian Christian or, if non-sectarian, set drastic limitations upon the admission of Jews. In the early days, when the Jewish population was small and there were comparatively few Jewish college students, the number affected by this exclusion from fraternities was too small for any thought of the organization of Jewish fraternities, whether as a defensive measure, or for frankly Jewish fraternal advantages. With the growth in the number of Jews attending our colleges the problem became increasingly acute, and eventually led to the organization of fraternities by Jews. This does not mean that all so-called Jewish fraternities were formed merely to provide a refuge for Jewish students who yearned for the kind of fellowship afforded by existing societies but were excluded from their membership, for a considerable proportion of the fraternities of Jews are at the same time Jewish fraternities. Such was the first of these societies: the Zeta Beta Tau, which came to life at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1898. The purpose of this first Jewish college fraternity was: "so that a socially congenial group of Jewish college men banded together to demonstrate by their every word and deed in public and in private the best of which
Jewish manhood is capable, and the inherent excellence of the Jewish character."

The Jewish sorority was the result of a similar evolution, and the first Jewish sorority was also Jewish in a positive way. It was Iota Alpha Pi and was formed in 1903 at Hunter College, "to promote opportunities for social contact among Jewish college women." In the beginning, the meetings were devoted to extensive study of women characters in the Bible, and also contemporary Jewish literature. Soon they plunged into social and welfare work, doing settlement case work on the East Side of New York, and helping individual cases of consumptives through the Denver Consumptive League.

At first, the Iota Alpha Pi was known as the J. A. P., and thus existed at Hunter as a local Sorority, until 1913. With the adoption of the Greek Letters, and with the addition of many new members, the original organizers grouped themselves into the Alpha Chapter, and the succeeding group became the Beta Chapter, which was in time inducted into the Hunter Pan-Hellenic Council.

In speaking of the original group the following names of the organizers should be mentioned: Hannah Finkelstein, now Mrs. Swick, Mrs. Olga Edelstein Ecker, Mrs. Sadie April Glotzer, Mrs. Rose Posner Bernstein, Mrs. Rose Delson Hirschman, Mrs. May Finkelstein Spiegel, Mrs. Frances Zellermayer Delson.

Expansion at first extended to chapters in the vicinity of New York City, with Delta Chapter at New York University, Gamma at the Brooklyn Law School, and Epsilon at the New Jersey Law School.

In 1924, a Rotation Scholarship Fund was instituted, with money to be loaned to worthy students on the expectation of it being repaid to the Sorority. This fund is well known to the Deans of the various colleges at which Iota Alpha Chapters are found, and they co-operate with the Society in the selection of students worthy of help.

In 1925, this Sorority began to issue its own bulletin, a dignified semi-annual booklet.

Among the women who have been very active in Iota Alpha Pi, beside those mentioned above, are: Professor
Vera Loeb, New York City, Miss Bertha Weinlander, New York City, Mrs. Beatrice Rosenthal Reuss, New York City, Mrs. Hilda Meyer Podoloff, New Haven, Connecticut, Miss Charlotte Sternberg, New York City, Mrs. Sadie Hayman Leiss, Brooklyn, Mrs. Meriam Wilson Futterman, New York City, Mrs. Ethel Isaacs Reisman, New York City, Dr. Leoni Newmann Claman, New York City, Meriam Perlstein Cane, New York City, Amelie Spiegel Rothschild, New York City, Daisy Cohen Shapiro, New York City, Hannah F. Sokobin, Newark, New Jersey.

Four years ago, Iota Alpha Pi celebrated a quarter of a century of existence. Members came from all over the country to celebrate the Silver Jubilee, many of them married and mothers of grown children, others shining in careers of their own. For Iota Alpha Pi boasts of many successful lawyers, politicians, musicians, and teachers. But doing its splendid bit of work for needy students, it is among the finest of American fraternal societies.

Seven years after Iota Alpha Pi was organized, Alpha Epsilon Phi, the next Jewish sorority was founded at Barnard College on October 24, 1909 by Ida Beck, Helen Phillips, Rose Salmowitz, Stella Straus, Rose Gerstein, Tina Hess, and Bertha Stenbuck, with the object of fostering close friendship between the members, of stimulating their intellectual, social and spiritual life, and counting as a force through service rendered to others.

The program of the Society is carried out in the usual fraternal way, every chapter doing local philanthropic work, with the national body of the Sorority giving scholarships for academic training as well as social service.

The total membership of Alpha Epsilon Phi is 1,900 of which number 1,400 are in the Alumni Group, and the remainder active members now attending college. They are divided into 24 chapters in various colleges throughout the United States and Canada.

The Sorority is governed by a National Council consisting of 9 members elected at each convention. Among its publications are "The Quarterly," collections of Jewish songs, and national directories of the Society.

Among those whose work has been especially influential are some of the past and present officers: Mrs. Samuel
Greene, Montclair, N. J.; Mrs. Nathan H. Feitel, New Orleans, La.; Mrs. Mitchell Edelson, Chicago, Ill.; Mrs. Ellis Slatoff, Newark, N. J.; Mrs. Nat Bloom, New York City; Mrs. Aaron Schaffer, Austin, Texas; Miss Harriet Moses, New York City, and Miss Elizabeth Eldridge, San Antonio, Texas.

Alpha Epsilon Phi has five national honorary members,—Mrs. Joseph Friend, New Orleans, La., now president of the National Council of Jewish Women, Mrs. Edward Lazansky, New York City, Mrs. Enoch Rauh, Pittsburgh, Pa., Mrs. Israel Unterberg, New York City, and Congresswoman Florence P. Kahn, San Francisco, Calif.

A very long and influential list of matrons have affiliated with the various chapters as honorary members or patronesses.

It was quite natural that Hunter College, being the only free college for women in New York City, and having as a result a preponderance of Jewish students, should have more than one Jewish Sorority, and in 1913, Phi Sigma Sigma was organized with the purpose "of working charitable good without regard to creed or sect."

Among the founders of the Society were Fay Chertkoff, Ethel Gordon Krauss, Estelle Melnick Cole, Claire Wunder McArdle, Gwen Zaliels Snyder, Josephine Ellison, Shirley Cohen Goldstein, Rose Scherr Seidman and Jeanette Lipka.

The growth of this Sorority is quite extraordinary. In 1918, the Beta chapter was chartered at Tufts College, and the Gamma chapter at New York University. In 1920, came Delta at the University of Buffalo, and Epsilon at the Adelphi College, Brooklyn, N. Y. Then came in rapid succession Zeta at the University of California; Eta, at the University of Michigan; Theta, at the University of Illinois; Iota, at the University of Pittsburgh; Kappa, at the George Washington University; Lambda, at the University of Cincinnati; Mu, at the University of California; Nu, at the University of Pennsylvania; Xi, at Temple University; Omicron, Louisiana State University; Pi, Syracuse University; Rho, Ohio State University; Sigma, Long Island University; Tau, University of Texas; and Upsilon, at the
University of Manitoba. The total membership of the 20 chapters is 1,105.

Among the activities and the achievements of Phi Sigma Sigma, are scholarships, the maintenance of Camp Rainbow, at Croton-on-the-Hudson, and the United Charities Camp for undernourished children. In commemoration of its tenth birthday, the Society endowed in perpetuity a bed in the Beth David Hospital in New York. The following year, the Zeta Chapter presented and equipped to the Duarte Sanitarium of California a model barber shop. In 1926, the Society financed the addition of a Children's Section to the National Library of Jerusalem.

The official publication of the Sorority is "The Sphinx" which is issued quarterly.

Sigma Delta Tau, the fourth Jewish sorority was founded in March of 1917, at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, with the pursuit of culture, scholarship, and charity, as its object. The founders of this Society were Regene Robinson Freund, Dora Bloom, Inez Dane Ross, Marion Gerber, Leonore Rubinow, and Pirie Miller Harris.

The total membership of Sigma Delta Tau is 700. Its chapters are found all through the states, and each active chapter undertakes some special worthy charitable activity within the city of its establishment. The National Organization has also a system of endowment funds for aiding girls through college, and the Scholarship Cup which is awarded annually to the chapter with highest scholastic standards. Its official organ is "The Torch."

The present national officers are: President, Mrs. Miriam Simon Levy; Vice-President, Alice Loeb; Secretary, Mrs. Mildred Elkes Wallens; Treasurer, Mrs. Olga Strashun Weil.

We have noted only the national Jewish women's organizations. Obviously the reasons for so doing is because to mention others, of which the number is legion, even a book would not suffice. However, it must be mentioned that just forty years ago, there was organized in New York City by that vivid personality Hannah B. Einstein, then President of the Emanuel Sisterhood for Personal Service,
Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations which should act as a clearing house for all organizations conducted by Jewish women in New York City. Under the brilliant leadership of Mrs. David Goldfarb the Federation to-day counts more than one hundred organizations in its membership. Realizing the value of such a federation as an educational and practical factor in human and humane endeavor, about thirty cities have followed New York's example.

The National Organizations, such as the Council, Sisterhoods and Temple Leagues, also have organized themselves into a Conference which acts as a clearing house for their activities, and helps to bring about better understanding among the Jewish women's organizations everywhere.

Just as the women of the Bible were noted for their remarkable outstanding traits which earned for them that poetic title, Mothers in Israel, and called forth the Psalmists most hallowed songs, so down the ages, Jewish womanhood has been conscious of her privileges and responsibilities, and has given good account of herself.

The forward march of women in general has found Jewish women keeping step, and while opportunities in education, politics, and professions have offered Jewish women great enrichment in their lives, they have, through the possession of these opportunities, integrated their efforts into Jewish life and Judaism, and have everywhere been a factor for good always.

The World War, the machine age, the recognized changes in the standards of life and living have necessarily called forth new effort, and greater need for services. But the pledge given by our pioneer Jewish American mothers is still kept by us, and we can hope and expect that the generations that will follow will remember and reverence it.
JEWISH INMATES OF THE STATE PRISONS
OF THE UNITED STATES
1920-1929

BY H. S. LINFIELD
Director, Department Statistics,
of the
American Jewish Committee

NOTE—The following article presents only the results of a comprehensive
study of the number of Jewish inmates of state prisons and reformatories in the
United States, together with summary tables, all based on official statistics.
The basic detail table, as well as notes of a technical nature, will be presented
in a reprint of this article to be published, in due course, by the Statistical
Department of the American Jewish Committee.

During the ten years 1920-1929, a total of 394,080
prisoners were received from the courts\(^1\), at the receiving
prisons and reformatories of the states of the Union. This
number included 6,846 Jews, or 1.74%. During the same
period, the average percentage of Jews to the total popula-
tion of the United States was 3.43%\(^2\). The number of Jews
in the prisons of the country was thus 49.27% smaller than
the percentage of Jews to the total population of the
country. In other words, Jews furnished a little over half
of their numerical quota to the population of the prisons.

\(^1\) By the term “prisoners received from the courts” is meant, here as elsewhere in
this article, sentenced prisoners (felons) committed by the courts. In other words, the
term excludes persons received at the prisons for safe-keeping, as well as all those
received from sources other than the courts, such as those transferred from other
institutions, escaped prisoners who had returned or been recaptured, violators of
parole, etc.

\(^2\) The percentage of Jews of the total population at the end of 1917 was 3.27, and at
the end of 1927, 3.58. See the writer’s Jews in the United States, New York, American
Jewish Committee, 1929.
### TABLE I

**Jewish Prisoners Received at the State Prisons and Reformatories, 1920-1929**

*(By States)*

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number Total</th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>Percentage Jewish Prisoners</th>
<th>Percentage of Jews to Total Population (Average)</th>
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<td>394,080</td>
<td>6,846</td>
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<td>3.43</td>
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<td>16,937</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
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<td>Colorado</td>
<td>7,245</td>
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<td>119</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>10,490</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>1,329</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.23</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
<td>17,114</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>12,709</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>6,799</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.69</td>
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<td>Kansas</td>
<td>12,141</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>11,504</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>7,596</td>
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<td>0.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>2,133</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>18,071</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>6,673</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
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<td>19,092</td>
<td>248</td>
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<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>6,455</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>6,074</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>3,790</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>11,141</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>5.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>32,440</td>
<td>3,337</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>5,107</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>1,820</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>27,971</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>14,410</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>2,571</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>16,175</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>2,322</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>2,972</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>1,929</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>7,088</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>13,771</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>1,574</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>8,982</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>6,990</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>7,127</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>6,520</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>1,311</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. Sentenced prisoners received from the courts. See footnote 1 to p. 203.

2. Exclusive of the District of Columbia which, of course, has no state prison.
Not only in the country as a whole, but also in every geographical division of the country, the number of Jews in the prisons is proportionately small. But the percentage of Jews in the prisons differs due to variable factors such as, for example, the age and sex distribution of the Jewish population, family structure (ratio of unmarried to married), communal organization. The percentage of Jews in the prisons is lowest in the Division of the South and highest in the division of the West. But even in the latter the percentage of Jews in the prisons is proportionately small. In the state prisons in the South, the percentage of Jews is but 16% of the quota, had the Jews of the South contributed to the prison population of the division in proportion to their number among the total population; in the North, the percentage is 53% of the quota; and in the West, 86%.

Within the divisions, the number of Jews in the prisons of New York is 64.3% of the quota, but only 46.2% of the quota in Pennsylvania, and as high as 98% in the state of Minnesota of less than 50,000 Jews. In the South, the percentage ranges from 50% in the state of North Carolina to 10.7% in the state of Florida. But in the West, in the state of Colorado (20,321 Jews), the Jews have 97.6% of their quota in the prisons, and in the other Mountain States with a combined Jewish population of 9,666, the percentage reaches 129% of the quota; while the State of California, 81.5%, Washington 75%, and Oregon 44.6%.

1 In the South, the negro population shows a high ratio of inmates in the prisons, and the percentage for the Jews is thus abnormally small.
2 The number of Jews in the prisons is less than the percentage of Jews of the total population, in every state of the Union except the following, all but one of which are in the Mountain Division and which have a combined population of 7,980: Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Wyoming.
### TABLE II

**Jewish Prisoners Received at the State Prisons, 1920-1929**

*(By States and Divisions)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Jewish Population 1927</th>
<th>Prisoners</th>
<th>P. C. of Jews of Total Population (Average)</th>
<th>P. C. of Quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>4,228,029</td>
<td>394,080</td>
<td>6,846</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>3,821,045</td>
<td>228,625</td>
<td>6,164</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>225,940</td>
<td>119,622</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>181,044</td>
<td>45,833</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### North

- Massachusetts: 225,634
- Rhode Island: 25,003
- Connecticut: 91,538
- New York: 1,903,890
- New Jersey: 225,306
- Pennsylvania: 404,979
- Maryland: 70,871
- Ohio: 173,976
- Michigan: 89,462
- Wisconsin: 35,935
- Illinois: 345,980
- Indiana: 27,244
- Minnesota: 43,197
- Iowa: 16,404
- Missouri: 80,687
- Nebraska: 14,409
- Other States: 30,730

#### South

- Virginia: 25,656
- North Carolina: 8,252
- Georgia: 23,179
- Florida: 13,402
- Kentucky: 19,533
- Tennessee: 22,532
- Alabama: 12,891
- Arkansas: 8,850
- Louisiana: 16,432
- Texas: 46,648
- Other States: 28,565

#### West

- Colorado: 20,321
- Washington: 14,698
- Oregon: 13,075
- California: 123,284
- Other States: 9,666

---

1 Including the States of Maryland and Delaware.
3 West Virginia, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Oklahoma.
4 Wyoming, Utah, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico.
5 Excluding the States of Maryland and Delaware.
The number of women received at the state penal institutions is small. During 1920-1929, the state prisons of New York, Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio and seven other states, for which data is available, received from the courts 4,618 prisoners directly described as Jews, and these included 466 women. The Jewish prisoners constituted 3.4% of the total (compared with average of 6.5% Jews of total population), and similarly was the percentage of Jewish female prisoners of the total number of female prisoners, 3.43%.

'The slightly greater percentage of Jewish female prisoners is due probably to the larger percentage of Jewish women of the total number of women in the country.

### TABLE III

JEWISH WOMEN RECEIVED\(^1\) AT STATE PRISONS AND REFORMATORIES, 1920-1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>P. C. of Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All States</td>
<td>135,413</td>
<td>13,603</td>
<td>4,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>7,245</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>17,114</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>12,709</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>6,799</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>12,141</td>
<td>3,430</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>6,673</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>6,455</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>32,440</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>27,971</td>
<td>3,345</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>2,571</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) See footnote 1 to p. 203.
Of the total number of Jewish prisoners received at the state prisons in New York during the ten years, 11.83% were committed during 1920, and the percentage reached 18.71% in 1922. The number committed the following year was much lower (7.88%), and the number committed increased during 1924-1925 (8.18% and 8.99% respectively). The following year, 1926, witnessed again a drop in the number of Jewish prisoners committed (7.69%) and the number decreased slightly during the years that followed.

Of the total number of prisoners, 10.13% were committed during 1920 and the numbers, as in the case of the Jews, increased during the following two years, reaching 14.55% in 1922. The percentage then dropped to 7.08% in 1923, and the number committed increased during the following years until they reached 10.48% in 1926, 9.32% in 1927, 8.66% in 1928, and 9.40% in 1929, compared with 7.64%, 7.39%, 7.66% and 7.12% for the Jewish prisoners during the reported four years.

### TABLE IV

**Movement of Jewish Prisoners in the State Prisons of New York, 1920-1929**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1920-1929</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>32,440</td>
<td>3,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>3,388</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>4,720</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>2,287</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>2,863</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>3,145</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>3,401</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>3,022</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>2,807</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3,050</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supplement

Jewish Prisoners in Foreign Countries

Also in foreign countries the ratio of Jewish prisoners to the total Jewish population appears smaller than that of the total number of prisoners to the total population. The following paragraphs deal with Poland, Roumania, and Latvia. These countries represent 25.51% of the total Jewish population of the world (and together with the Jewish community of the United States 53.61% of the total).

In Poland, during 1923-1926, a total of 558,224 prisoners were sentenced by the courts\(^1\), including 22,307 Jews, 4.8% of the total; whereas the Jews constituted 10.49% of the total population of the country in 1921.

In Roumania, during 1923-1927, a total of 158,229 sentenced prisoners were committed to the prisons, including 5,403 Jews or 3.41% of the total, whereas 5.5% of the total population in 1925 were Jews.

Finally, in Latvia, during 1925-1929 a total of 47,728 prisoners were sentenced by the civil courts and the courts martial, including 1,634 Jews or 3.41%; whereas the Jews were 5.2% of the total population in 1925 and 5% in 1930.

As in the case of the United States, the number of Jewish women prisoners in these three foreign countries is small. In Poland during the years 1924-1926, for which years statistics are available, the Jewish women sentenced by the courts, constituted 4.43% of the total number of women sentenced by the courts, (compared with 10% that Jews constitute of the total population), and in Roumania, the Jewish women, committed to the prisons, during 1923-1927, formed but 2.36% of the total number of sentenced women, (compared with 5.5% Jews of the total population). On the other hand, in Latvia, the number of Jewish women sentenced by the courts, 3.84% of the total number of women, was slightly in excess of the percentage of Jews sentenced by the courts (3.42% of the total sentenced). But even in the latter country the percentage of Jewish women in the prisons, 3.84% was less than the percentage of Jews of the total population, 5.18% in 1925.\(^2\)

---

\(^1\) The number excludes sentenced prisoners, whose appeals to higher courts were pending.

# TABLE V
## POLAND
### Prisoners Sentenced by Courts during 1923-1926

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Both Sexes</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>Both Sexes</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>P. C. of Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923—1926</td>
<td>689,418</td>
<td>125,870</td>
<td>34,479</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924—1926</td>
<td>558,224</td>
<td>100,055</td>
<td>26,740</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131,994</td>
<td>25,815</td>
<td>7,739</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>184,391</td>
<td>34,013</td>
<td>9,023</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>184,964</td>
<td>32,539</td>
<td>8,422</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>1,402</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>188,869</td>
<td>33,503</td>
<td>9,295</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>1,527</td>
<td>4.56</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# TABLE VI
## ROUMANIA
### Sentenced Prisoners Committed to the Prisons, 1923–1927

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Both Sexes</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>Both Sexes</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>P. C. of Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923—1927</td>
<td>158,229</td>
<td>14,801</td>
<td>5,403</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>349</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>73,841</td>
<td>4,754</td>
<td>2,554</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>21,138</td>
<td>2,699</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>20,208</td>
<td>2,485</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>19,395</td>
<td>2,138</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>23,647</td>
<td>2,725</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE VII
**LATVIA**
**Prisoners Sentenced by Civil Courts and by Martial Courts, 1925-1929**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>P. C. of Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both Sexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925—1929...</td>
<td>47,728</td>
<td>9,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>7,344</td>
<td>1,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>8,772</td>
<td>1,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>9,062</td>
<td>1,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>10,315</td>
<td>2,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>12,235</td>
<td>2,472</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the total number of prisoners sentenced by the courts in Latvia, during 1927-1929, a total of 9,098 were recidivists. Of these only 3.23% were Jews, compared with 5% for the percentage of Jews of the total population of the country, the number of women recidivists was small, both for the total population and for the Jews; and the percentage of Jewish women recidivists of the total number of women recidivists was 5.1%, similar to the percentage of Jewish women of the total number of women in the country.1

### TABLE VIII
**LATVIA**
**Recidivists Sentenced by Courts During 1927-1929**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>P. C. of Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both Sexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927—1929...</td>
<td>9,098</td>
<td>1,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>2,312</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>2,811</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3,975</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See footnote 2 page 209.