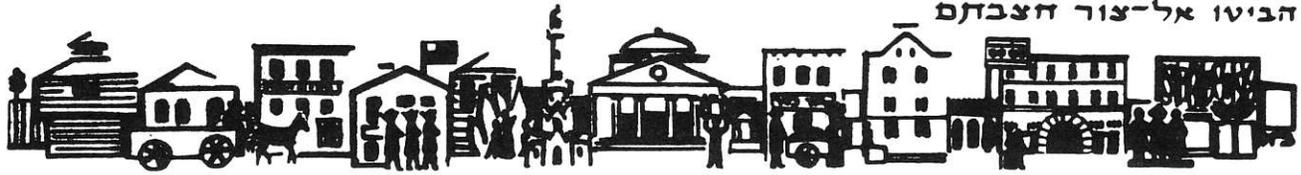


Look to the rock from which you were hewn  
הביטו אל-צור הצבנתם



# chicago jewish historical society society news

VOLUME XI, NUMBER 2

DECEMBER, 1987

## INFORMATION ABOUT DECEMBER 6, JANUARY 31 MEETINGS

### DECEMBER 6 MEETING FEATURES STORY OF RECONSTRUCTIONISTS IN CHICAGO

The local history of one of Judaism's smallest and newest branches will be the subject of the Sunday, December 6, meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. Leroy Shuster, one of its local pioneers, will discuss the Jewish Reconstructionist movement in Chicago.

The meeting will be held at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation at 303 Dodge Street in Evanston. Refreshments and a social hour will begin at 1 PM with the program starting at 2 PM. Once again, free bus service will be available to and from the meeting and the Near North Side.

#### Founded Some Fifty Years Ago

The Reconstructionist movement in Judaism was founded by Mordecai M. Kaplan in the Thirties and maintains headquarters and a rabbinical seminary in Philadelphia. Positioned in some ways between the Reform and Conservative movements and unique in other ways, it is a small but influential branch of the religion. Mr. Shuster will discuss its beginnings and development in the Chicago area, where there are currently two Reconstructionist synagogues.

Mr. Shuster, whose roots go back to the beginning of the movement in Chicago, was a founder of the Evanston congregation and its president for five years. He is also a past president of the National Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Chavurot.

#### Details of Free Bus Service

A chartered bus will pick up members

### JEWISH EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT JANUARY 31 MEETING

Fifty years of achievement by the Bureau on Jewish Employment Problems will be traced at the January 31 meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. The meeting, to be held at Spertus College of Judaica, will feature a talk by the Bureau's recently retired director, Sidney Silverman.

Following the usual format, the meeting will start with refreshments and a social hour at 1:00 PM with the presentation beginning at 2:00. A question period will follow.

The Bureau on Jewish Employment Problems was founded under the auspices of six Jewish communal organizations to study and act upon problems faced by Jews as they seek and enter into employment. Its record through the years in identifying and solving discrimination and other employment problems will be the subject of Mr. Silverman's talk.

The meeting will be open to the public. Program arrangements are being made by Burt Robin, hospitality by Shirley Sorkin.

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and their guests at the rear entrance of the Marriott Hotel on Rush Street south of Ohio Street at 12:30 PM. Free transportation back to the same point will be provided at the close of the meeting.

Program arrangements are being made by Burt Robin, social hour arrangements by Shirley Sorkin and transportation by Leah Axelrod.

Admission, as usual, is free to all.



Three generations of the family of the late Rabbi Saul Silber of Anshe Sholom. Michel Vishny, our speaker (center) with her mother, Esther Kopstein, and her daughter, Leila Aurin. Photo by Moselle Schwartz

## MICHELE VISHNY DISCUSSES HISTORY OF ANSHE SHOLOM AT FALL MEETING

Highlights in the history of what may be Chicago's oldest surviving Orthodox congregation were featured at the Society's meeting on September 20. Dr. Michele Vishny talked about the early years of Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation, focussing primarily on its earlier incarnation as Ohave Sholom Mariampoler, the congregation formed in a break-off from the earlier and now defunct Beth Hamedrosh Hagodol.

The meeting, held at B'nai Zion Congregation in Rogers Park, heard a speaker especially qualified to discuss her subject since she is herself the third generation associated with Anshe Sholom and her grandfather, Saul Silber, was its most distinguished rabbi. Anshe Sholom is now located on Melrose Avenue off Lake Shore Drive.

As an art historian, Dr. Vishny was particularly interested in the outstanding classical building complete with columns, arches and dome, built in 1910 by the congregation called by the Sentinel the "intelligentsia of orthodox Jewry." She showed slides of the building, which still stands at Ashland Avenue and Polk Street, where it serves as a Greek Orthodox Church. The congregation later occupied a building in Lawndale before moving to the North Side.

The Speaker was introduced by Program Chairman Burt Robin following a tour of the B'nai Zion facilities.

## President's Message

### Things Gone By Have Affected Us All

One of my duties as president is writing this column on some subject that relates to the activities of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. Thus I am not only forced to reflect but also to actually record some of my thoughts.

I have been thinking about our ten years of existence as a group, the people and events that have touched us both as an organization and personally. It has been an experience which, while trying at times, has been irreplaceable in its contribution to expanding our understanding of the development of the Chicago Jewish community and our own personal growth.

The response to changing demographics, to local events such as the Chicago Fire, the Nazi march in Skokie, and the need for the rights for Chicago workers; national events such as the Civil War, immigration laws, and the depression; and to international events such as the world wars, the Holocaust, and the creation of the State of Israel have all affected and moulded the character of our local Jewish community both institutionally and individually.

All this has been part of your life too, and we invite you to be part of our organization by joining, attending our meetings, providing articles for our bulletin, and helping us collect archival material.

--Norman D. Schwartz

## Elaine Suloway Succeeds Ruth Brandzel as Society Secretary

Elaine Suloway has been elected secretary of the Society to replace Ruth Brandzel. The election took place at the September board meeting.

Mrs. Suloway, a board member since 1983, has been responsible for typing Society News for the past 5 years. She replaces Mrs. Brandzel, a charter board member of the Society, who in the past ten years has served in a number of elective and appointive offices. At the September meeting of the Society President Norman Schwartz presented a gift to Mrs. Brandzel in appreciation of her long service.

## THE SOCIETY'S TELEPHONE KEEPS ON RINGING

### Volunteers Handle Inquiries From Wide Variety of People

It's merely one of almost one million telephones in the city, but it rings quite often. And many if not most times the callers want help.

The number is 663-5634 and it's the telephone number of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. During the past ten years, hundreds and hundreds of calls have been taken by CJHS volunteers Sara Jacobson, Doris Minsky and Elsie Orlinsky. They have typically either satisfied the callers themselves from their considerable knowledge or have put the callers in touch with other sources of information concerning the matters inquired about.

#### Callers a Varied Group

The calls have come from Jews and Gentiles, from old people checking their recollections, from young students looking into roots, from scholars seeking forgotten facts and sometimes, it seems, from the idly curious. In all cases the Society tries to help and usually it succeeds.

Mrs. Orlinsky, the knowledgeable CJHS founder and board member currently handling the phonecalls, regularly puts her experience with the Chicago Jewish Archives to use as she answers inquiries. She has selected from among the recent calls the following as indicators of the variety of the inquiries she deals with. A summary of the answer provided appears after each.

1. A call from a woman who had written down her late husband's memoirs of growing up in the Marks Nathan Orphan Home among other recollections. Could they be preserved? (They have been picked up for the Chicago Jewish Archives and form the basis of an article in Society News.)

2. Can we furnish a list of former synagogue buildings now used for other purposes? (We know of a great many but probably not all.)

3. How can a newly-retired man locate useful, interesting and fulfilling volunteer work? (He was referred to several specialized agencies.)

4. Are we going to repeat our tour of the old Jewish community in Ligonier, In-

## Dorothy Rose Provides Valuable Assistance to Oral History Project

Operating a citywide organization with no paid employees is not an easy task. To be successful, such a group needs to have both willing and capable volunteers. The Chicago Jewish Historical Society has been fortunate to have them in significant numbers.

We often read about our officers and chairmen, and they get to take their bows publicly on occasion; but too often other, unsung volunteers receive little or no public attention. We would like to correct that omission now in the case of Dorothy Rose.

Mrs. Rose, a Society member, volunteered her services as a typist at a meeting last year, and she has since transcribed a half-dozen oral histories from tape to typed page. One of these transcripts alone came to sixty pages of work.

Although Oral History Chairman Sidney Sorkin has expressed the Society's gratitude to her, Mrs. Rose insists that her reward is getting to "know" exceptional individuals as she transcribes their taped words.

A longtime resident of Skokie, Mrs. Rose has held the responsible position of secretary to the president of a good-sized business for eighteen years. Her skills and her generous efforts are providing an important service to the Society as it goes about the task of preserving the record of local Jewish history.

--I.J.S.

diana? The caller had a friend whose family came from there. (A repeat of that popular tour is under consideration.)

5. Where can photos of former Jewish neighborhoods be secured? (Referred to the Archives and the Chicago Historical Society.)

6. Mary Murphy, a curator at the Art Institute was seeking information about Chicagoans Samuel Lustgarten and Ralph Isham, early Jewish collectors of important art works. (Some information about the men was provided, but additional information from readers would be welcome.)

So you see, 663-5634 is an important if informal tool in the Society's work of disseminating information about local Jewish history.

--I.J.S.

# HOW RADICAL WERE CHICAGO'S RUSSIAN JEWISH IMMIGRANTS?

## Radical Roots Took Different Form After Transplanting into U.S. Soil

by Jerome R. Reich

Legends and embellished memories have created the image of large numbers of radical Russian Jewish immigrants who came to the United States in the first quarter of this century imbued with a feverish desire for revolution and the creation of a Marxist utopia in America. A few individual immigrants who fit the pattern and attracted undue attention by their activities have contributed to that image. However, a careful look at the record of social action by those Jewish immigrants to Chicago (and, doubtless, elsewhere in the U.S.) reveals that this image, insofar as it applied to the vast majority of those "huddled masses" is plainly false.

This writer has gone to perhaps the best contemporary records of the political and social actions of Russian Jewish immigrants during the early years of the century--the Chicago Yiddish newspapers of the period. From these records a quite different picture appears. The picture is one of workers striving mightily to improve working and living conditions for themselves and their families and to receive fair treatment from the powers that be. To these ends they would take political and social action. But revolution did not appeal to the many nor did it enlist their efforts.

### Brought Radicalism with Them

There is of course no denying the radical strain that the Jewish immigrants from the Russian empire brought to America with them.

To see how this radicalism survived in America, I have set up two gauges of radicalism, the trade union and the socialistic political organizations. This is not quite as arbitrary as might seem at first glance. These institutions were the two main vehicles of radicalism back in Russia, and, since they were used, or were tried for the same purpose in the United States, it is only by comparing them in the two countries that we can arrive at any valid conclusions as to the prevailing extent and depth of radicalism in the U.S.

### Trade Unionism Prevalent in Russia

A great exodus of Jews from Russia (which then included Poland) took place during the years immediately following 1905. This is in large part attributable to the political and economic conditions prevailing there at that time. Contrary to accepted belief, a powerful labor movement existed in Russia even in 1905. This is easily seen from a report of the U.S. Bureau of Labor which lists nearly 3,000,000 Russian workers as being out on strike at one time or another during 1905. It is significant to note that 68% of these strikes were classed as political while only 32% were economic.

Since over a half million Jews were engaged in manufacturing or mechanical pursuits, it is a reasonable inference that they too were active in these strikes. This theory is further buttressed when we note that the strike movement was especially strong in Poland and Lithuania where most of the Jews lived. But we do not have to deal merely in theories, for we have numerous reports of such specifically Jewish strikes as those of the bakers of Lodz, the locksmiths of Vitebsk, the tailors of Radomysl and the tobacco workers of Prilooki.

### Political Activism in Russia

The most famous Russian Jewish labor organization was the Bund (Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund in Litauen, Polen und Russland). In 1904 it was listed as having 30,000 members, but we must remember that it was illegal and thus rather secretive and amorphous. The Bund called 41 political strikes during the year 1904 with 23,035 people participating. We have no figures for 1905, but one authority placed his estimate at the hundreds of thousands.

As an active political force, then, it is significant to note that the Bund joined with the other left-wing Jewish groups, the Zionist-Socialist Party, the Jewish Social-Democratic Party, the Poale Zion and the Jewish Socialist Labor Party, in boycotting the Dumas (parliaments) of 1905 and 1906. This was based on the fear that "Tory reform" would only delay the "Revolutions." Nevertheless, all Jews hoped

that the Duma would ameliorate their status somewhat. Thus when, at the dissolution of the first Duma, there were no practical gains for the Jews, none of the evils under which they had been living were removed, no political aspirations had been realized, there was a great exodus.

#### Immigrants Were Skilled Workers

It is worth noting the nature of this "great exodus." Of the nearly 130,000 mainly Russian Jews who entered the U.S. in 1905, approximately seventy percent of those with a listed occupation were classified as skilled laborers. The figures for earlier and later years indicate the same high percentages of skilled workers among the immigrants.

Thus we have arriving in America a large group of radical-minded trade unionists, whom we would normally expect to play a large part in developing left-wing unionism in the United States. So, it is not too surprising to find a writer on the subject maintaining that the Russian Jews were the only recent immigrant group to found its own international unions and otherwise develop a distinct labor movement with its press, political clubs, benefit societies and other auxiliary agencies.

#### When Jews Are Revolutionists

But just how radical were these unions? Max Beer very keenly observed in his Fifty Years of International Socialism that, "In all countries where the Jew is treated with some measure of justice... he will work along with other citizens contributing his share of ideas to the general stock....Where he is treated as an inferior his innate sense of social justice grows feverish and seeks an outlet in social revolutionary channels."

This, I believe is one of the factors, along with the general American scene, the general labor scene and mixture with older American and other immigrant stocks, which caused the differentiation between the revolutionary attitudes of Jewish labor in Russia and its much more moderate unionism in this country. Needless to say, I am only discussing the radicals who did stay, at least mildly, interested in the movement. It is, of course, true that some of our radicals could shed their ideals so rapidly that they were soon subjecting workers of their own to worse abuses than those to which they had once objected.

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Ever since Karl Marx, Jews in general and Eastern European Jews in particular have been thought of as "radicals" by know-nothings and even those who should know better. That, as a result of Russian oppression, there was a small element of truth in this labelling in the early years of this century is now generally accepted. This article traces what happened to that radical strain of Jewish thought when the immigrants entered the efferent world of Chicago and, implicitly, elsewhere in the U.S. Dr. Reich, a professor of American history at Chicago State University and author, has also been an administrator in area public and religious schools.

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#### Too Busy To Be Political

Another reason why these radicals did not reinforce their radicalism by joining the Socialist Party in the United States was given by a Mr. Bailin, secretary of the Jewish Socialist Federation of America and Canada, who said, "The American Socialist Party believed themselves too important to immediately accept them in their ranks....The revolutionary Jewish workers came here with all hopes lost, dreams asunder, and lost energy....How much energy does it take to look for a new profession, acquaint yourself with a new life and new conditions and above all to learn a new language....The Socialist party could not understand nor realize and therefore could not win them."

Therefore, in Chicago during 1905 the United Hebrew Trades were organized. The first to affiliate were the small Jewish unions, the Bund, the Workmen's Circle and other small socialistic clubs. The cap-makers, bakers and garment workers came in soon after. The fundamental principles were described as "purely socialistic," and so closely was it related to the Russian scene that failures in Russia caused it to go out of existence in 1906, not to reorganize again until 1910.

#### What the Jewish Unions Wanted

Apart from rhetoric, however, a more effective way to determine the priorities of Chicago's Jewish unions is to examine what it was that they were willing to strike for. A brief analysis of their

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## How Radical Were Chicago's Russian Jews? (cont'd)

[Continued from previous page]

strikes between 1910 and 1929 reveals how much emphasis they actually put on "purely socialistic" principles.

We start with the great general strike of the tailors in 1910-1911, as it really opened a new era in labor organization. This strike began spontaneously when Hart, Schaffner, and Marx cut wages, and soon 45,000 employees of 250 firms were demanding the closed shop and some improvement in hours, wages and sanitary conditions. President Rickert of the United Garment Workers signed an agreement with the employers which would virtually guarantee the retention of the open shop, but it was indignantly repudiated by his followers. In the middle of January, Hart, Schaffner, and Marx agreed to arbitration, but the rest of the workers were also forced by cold and hunger to go back to work even without this concession. This strike was largely responsible for the formation of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which soon was able to improve the condition of its members.

### Goals Remain Similar

The pattern was set. As we go through the Yiddish newspaper files, we find the vast majority of all strikes were over hours and wages: either to improve them in the first place or retain gains already won. Just as a general sampling we can point to the pressers' strike after their employers tried to go back from a 48- to a 52-hour week, the United Hebrew Trades siding with the horsehair dressers, and the Hebrew School teachers in their strikes for higher wages; and the meatcutters' and the tombstone engravers' strikes which resulted from cuts in wages.

Another important category would be strikes in order to obtain or preserve union recognition. Two clear-cut examples of this are the strike at the Havana Cigar Company and that at sweater factories for recognition of the knitters' union.

A final miscellaneous category includes strikes for more sanitary working conditions by the cloak and suit alteration workers, unemployment insurance by the dressmakers, accident compensation by the butchers, vacations with pay by the furriers and strikes against night work or the owner working himself by the bakers--and

even against language offensive to female workers. In this last case, happily we may reassure our readers that after ten days the boss agreed "to speak to the girls as he would to his own daughters."

### A Single Exception

The only "political" strike faintly reminiscent of Russian political actions was the strike of 100,000 Chicago workers for the freedom of Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings, certainly not a Jewish-led event. Therefore, a fair summary would be that, whatever their "principles" and their radical roots, the Jewish labor movement in Chicago acted just as other typical trade unions did in the United States.

Added emphasis upon this point comes from a leader of the Cloakmakers who, just after he had won a strike, said, "Our present contract is no social revolution, nor is it anything pertaining to socialism."

The 1918 conference of Jewish Socialists and Labor Organizations, to give a final example, passed resolutions pertaining to boycotting the American Jewish Congress and holding a labor congress instead, freeing Tom Mooney, approving colonization in Palestine and censuring the pogroms in Poland--a set of resolutions (except for the first and possibly the second) which any Jewish organization might have made at that time.

### Linguistic Socialism Remained

Interestingly though, in many of these unions there still existed the shadow if not the substance of socialism. That is to say, their terms and symbolism were still socialistic. To give a few examples: they celebrated May Day, members were often designated as "comrades" and the summons to strike was usually printed on red paper. But all this does not invalidate our conclusion that there is a fundamental difference between trade unionism and socialism and that the Chicago Jewish labor movement must be put into the former class.

None of the above is to imply that the radical Russian Jewish immigrant in Chicago could not find basically socialistic organizations to nurture his beliefs.

### A Look at the Avowed Socialists

The Workmen's Circle was a popular or-

ganization but its actual achievements have been in the direction of sick benefits, education and cooperatives. We can see from the growth of its national membership from 6,776 in 1905 to 31,581 in 1909 how largely it relied upon the Russian immigrant. It ran cooperative bakeries, restaurants, groceries and credit societies in Chicago, most of which always seemed on the verge of collapse.

From a history of the group by Maxmilian Hurwitz one gathers that participation in socialism was limited to doctrinal disputes or, as we hear of them in Chicago, raising money for a monument in Warsaw to Vladimir Medem, a veteran European Socialist. Some of the leaders recognized that this dialectic and looking back could never appeal to the youth and agitated for "Americanized or English lecturers." In spite of such efforts, however, membership in English-speaking branches and Young Circle clubs remained low.

#### Socialist Group Has Ups and Downs

Articles in the Yiddish papers provide a rather checkered picture of the Jewish Socialist Alliance in Chicago. On the credit side we find an active newspaper and publishing association; on "neutral ground" we find them running a candidate for the city council (but why only one?) and having a membership of 400 in their Young Socialist group (rather a small number for a city like Chicago); and definitely on the debit side are repeated references to the "hatred, disorganization and inactivity in our branches." Internecine quarreling between the evolutionary and revolutionary socialists not only reached a point where the right wing demanded that the left be "automatically excluded from the Socialist Federation," but split the Workmen's Circle as well.

The socialist political activists certainly formed a part of the radical Jewish immigrant community in Chicago, their voices sometimes louder than their proportionate (and decreasing) numbers seemed to warrant. But on the whole it seems clear that the radicalism brought to Chicago from Russia by Jewish immigrants early in this century found outlet primarily in the Jewish labor unions, and the efforts of those unions were directed toward providing a richer and better life for an upwardly mobile segment of a capitalist rather than socialist society.

## MARCH MEETING WILL DISCUSS WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE JEWISH WORK ETHIC

### Program a Part of Year-Long Project The Society Is Co-Sponsoring

The Society's spring meeting, scheduled for March 27, will be devoted to the Jewish work ethic in Chicago as part of CJHS co-sponsorship of a year-long public education project funded by government grants.

To be held at Spertus College, the meeting has for its topic "What Happened to the Jewish Work Ethic?--An Intergenerational Dialogue" and will include a presentation by Eliot Zashin, director of the Hillel Foundation at the University of Illinois in Chicago, a panel of "reactors," and small group discussions. Make plans now to attend this unusual session.

#### Program Part of Larger Project

The program will be the fifth in a series of eight forums being held at various locations on the broader topic of the central role played by work in the ethical and social development in the Chicago Jewish community. The entire project is co-sponsored by the CJHS, The Jewish Labor Committee and the Labor Education Program at the University of Illinois. Funding comes from the Illinois Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Illinois General Assembly.

Interested individuals are also invited to attend the first of the forums, to be held February 27, 1988, at 2:00 PM at Anshe Emet Congregation, whose Rabbi Seymour Cohen will discuss the Jewish religious and ethical values related to work. Information concerning the forums will be announced in the next issue of Society News.

#### Members Serve on Project Committee

Acting for the CJHS as members of the committee administering the project are Sol Brandzel, Stanley Rosen, Sidney Sorkin and Milton Shulman. Project activities also involve taking oral histories and otherwise adding information to local archives of Chicago Jewish history.

Professor Rosen, a labor education specialist at the University of Illinois in Chicago, is overall director of the project.

# A CITY OF CHICAGO IN PALESTINE: AN UNREALIZED DREAM

## Local Zionist Leaders Attempted To Establish a Sister City in 1920's

by Bernard I. Sandler

In 1924 Max Shulman, Dr. Samuel Melamed (editor of the Jewish Courier) and some other Chicago Jews got together and decided to sponsor the establishment of a sister city, "Chicago," in Palestine. It was to take the form of a large agricultural colony (a garden city) for Jewish pioneers from all parts of Europe who had emigrated to Palestine and settled there as agricultural laborers.

Under the leadership of Shulman, a prominent local lawyer and Zionist, a Chicago Colony Committee was formed by well-known Jewish Chicagoans. Enthusiastically, the group turned to their fellow men in Chicago to point out that the prospective colony in the Holy Land would not only bear the name of the great City of Chicago but would someday become a great center, would influence others in the building of the Holy Land and would become an inspiration to the Jews elsewhere in America.

### An Example to Other U.S. Cities

To quote from a committee brochure, "See the now barren countryside dotted with fertile farms and thriving industries, each part of a colony called 'Chicago' or 'New York' or 'St. Louis' or 'Philadelphia.' Imagine the interest which the parent city in America will take in its offspring in Palestine, the pride in its development, effort strained for its betterment." The Chicago Colony Committee thus envisioned the broader effect and significance of their project and contended that the "enterprise means more than just the founding of another Palestine colony; for if Chicago succeeds in the pioneering work, every other large American city will be impelled to follow our lead" and a substantial group of American colonies would be established in Palestine, each the protégé and particular pride of its namesake city in America.

The Chicago Colony Project initiators also viewed their enterprise as a means of securing an American sphere of influence in the Holy Land: "It will serve as an ever-present and ever-operating reminder to

the countries of the world that America is a powerful force in Palestine, one to be reckoned with in every international affair which concerns the welfare of Palestine.... No greater surety for the future of Palestine could be fashioned than this one of American identity."

Today in Israel there are cities named for their American counterparts like Kiryat Malakhi, a township in the Judean Plain founded much later (in 1951) and named for the City of Los Angeles, whose Jews contributed the funds for its establishment. The Chicago group were indeed forerunners of the idea of getting Jews in America to establish sister cities in the Holy Land.

### Support from Chicago Mayor

Not only the Jews in Chicago were enthusiastic about this project. Mayor William E. Dever of Chicago, having heard of the plan and no doubt prodded by Jewish politicians, issued a proclamation to the citizens of Chicago, informing them of his wholehearted support for the Chicago Colony Project. He considered it "a praiseworthy ambition" and a humanitarian enterprise for the rebuilding of the Holy Land, "cradle of all generations," as a haven for needy Jewish pioneers from all part of Europe.

Mayor Dever saw the Chicago project as a stepping stone towards the solution of "the old problem that has perplexed humanity since time immemorial," i.e. a barren and extremely under-developed Palestine throughout the ages would be rebuilt, serve the highest purpose of the human race and be the fountain and wellspring of the spirit."

### Chicago Leaders Involved

In addition to Mr. Shulman and Mr. Melamed the colony committee included Judge Harry Fisher, Louis Bomash, Oscar Gumbinsky, Herman Elenbogen, Samuel Pincus and B. J. Schiff, most of them attorneys and bankers.

Two million dollars was set as the goal by the Chicago Colony Committee for the establishment of the "model agricultural community in Palestine." Funds were to be raised under the auspices of the Palestine Foundation Fund ("Keren-Hayesod") and the Zionist Central Committee (World Zionist Organization).

## Fund-Raising Plans

Every Chicago Jew, no matter how modest his means, would have the opportunity to share in the Chicago colony if he became a shareholder and purchased a five-dollar land certificate in the land development company to be established. This would then entitle him to democratic representation in the purchase and management of the colony. The plan for the realization of the Chicago colony was set forth in an illustrated brochure, "Chicago--First of the American-Named Settlements in Palestine: A Simple, Sensible Plan To Build Chicago in Palestine." Prospective shareholders were advised that:

- (a) in order to insure the success of the plan, a minimum capitalization of one million dollars had to be accrued during the first five years, i.e. \$200,000 is to be raised every year through the sale of five-dollar certificates,
- (b) each shareholder would receive interest payments on his certificates after the colony attained a sound economic footing,
- (c) money collected would be used to purchase land in Palestine and also to become a "revolving fund" which would be lent to "Chalutzim" (pioneers) for purposes of settling and working in the Chicago Colony,
- (d) as soon as the first \$200,000 was paid in, a competent delegation would be elected by the members and set out for Palestine (at their own expense) to select a suitable site for the colony, consult authorities, and then bring back a complete report on all plans made, to be approved of at a general shareholders' meeting,
- (e) then the aforementioned "Chalutzim" could apply for membership in the Chicago Colony.

## Buying the Land

After eight months of existence, the Chicago Colony Committee had not yet decided how and from whom they were to purchase the land for their future colony. The Jewish National Fund Bureau for America (JNF) was acquainted with the activities of the Chicago Colony Committee and contacted its own head office in Jerusalem suggesting that the Chicago colony be established on JNF land.

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Settling Jews on the land in what was then British-mandated Palestine was a major preoccupation of Chicago Zionists during the Nineteen Twenties. One plan to do so was an effort to develop a colony named "Chicago" in Palestine, its foundation to be underwritten by individual contributions by Chicagoans. This story of the vain efforts by local leaders to make possible this sister city is here told by Dr. Bernard I. Sandler, a member of the Department of General Studies at Technion, the technological university in Haifa, Israel.

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Such an arrangement could be made provided that the Chicago Colony Committee guaranteed to raise a certain sum of money for the JNF within a certain period in return for which the JNF would grant the Chicago group the required land for their colony. In addition, the JNF was also willing to supervise the land improvement work. At this point the JNF was almost certain that the Chicago promoters had already succeeded in collecting a fair sum of money which would facilitate such an arrangement.

## Failure of the Plan

However, Dr. A. E. Abramowitz, the director of the Chicago Committee, advised the JNF offices in New York that not enough funds had been collected to justify the departure of a delegation of volunteers for Palestine to take the matter of the formation of the Chicago colony up with the Zionist authorities there. Dr. Abramowitz also reminded the JNF that the Chicago colony had originally planned to incorporate its plan with the Palestine Foundation Fund rather than the JNF.

The zealous plans of the Chicago Colony Committee lasted only ten months and ended without being realized, doubtlessly because of difficulties in fund-raising. Notwithstanding the failure of the Chicago colony plan, such members of the committee as Max Shulman did not desist in their efforts in behalf of the development and reconstruction of the Holy Land. With others they became the vanguard in the building of the Jewish National Home.

(Editor's Note: For a current effort not too different from the Chicago colony plan, see the following article on the Chicago-Israel twinning plan.)

## CURRENT SISTER CITY PROVES TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN ONE IN 1924

### Project Renewal Twinning Aids Two Deprived Communities in Israel

Although a 1924 attempt to establish a sister city for Chicago in the form of a colony in Palestine failed (for details see the preceding story), that project lives on --and successfully--in a different form as Chicago is currently twinned with not one but two Israeli communities. As a part of Project Renewal sponsored by the local Jewish United Fund, Chicago has twinned with two underprivileged neighborhoods, one in Petach Tikva and one in Lod, and is contributing to their development.

The idea of Project Renewal is to match diaspora communities with underprivileged neighborhoods in Israel for the benefit of the latter. Since the project began in 1979 most development and redevelopment objectives have been achieved in 86 neighborhoods. About forty additional twinings yet remain to be done.

#### Chicagoans View the Results

The results have been impressive according to Moselle Schwartz, Society board member who, with her husband, CJHS President Norman Schwartz, only recently returned from a visit to the neighborhood of Amishav in Petach Tikva, Chicago's first "twin."

Since 1979 the Chicago JUF has committed more than \$4,000,000 to that community of 4,000 immigrants to Israel, most of them from other places in the Middle East. As a result, this once economically and socially deprived area now boasts a day-care center, an athletic clubhouse and a community center with swimming pool. Qualified personnel including counselors insure that the facilities are truly functional.

#### Success in Second Community

Twinning with the Ramat Eshkol community in Lod has produced similar results. A \$1,000,000 commitment has provided a wide range of social programs needed to serve the large number of young people in the area. Capital improvements costing \$1,800,000 have made possible a multi-function community center which serves as the



Moselle Schwartz visits in Amishav Petach Tikva with youngsters helped by a twinning project between Chicago and Israel.

Photo by Norman Schwartz

### Society's Maxwell Street Exhibit On Display at Reform Convention

Jews from all over the U.S. and Canada had an opportunity to view the Society's Maxwell Street Exhibit at its most recent exposure during the period October 30 through November 2. Several hundred delegates from Reform congregations around the continent were gathered at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago for the biennial convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

About half the original exhibit was on display in the hotel's exhibition hall, and the collection of enlarged and annotated photographs proved to be a popular attraction at the convention.

The Maxwell Street exhibit, originally created by the Chicago Historical Society, is on long-term loan to CJHS, which has arranged its showing at several locations around the greater Chicago area. Organizations or institutions interested in the display should get in touch with the Society.

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area's focal point.

"We rejoice that Chicagoans of a later time have succeeded in a twinning program which, alas, eluded our elders," said Mr. Schwartz. "But we are also proud of what they attempted to do for Israel in those early days."

## TOUR FOCUSES ON FAR SOUTH, SOUTHWEST SIDE SYNAGOGUES

### CONGREGATIONS PLAYED MAJOR ROLES IN AREAS OF SPARSE JEWISH SETTLEMENT

A local bus tour offered by the Society for the first time this summer proved to be a fascinating look at three generations of Jewish life on Chicago's southwest and far south sides--areas not commonly thought of as locations of Jewish settlement. The June 28 tour was planned by Mark Mandle and Leah Joy Axelrod. He led the tour with Mrs. Axelrod and Dr. Irving Cutler providing commentary.

#### Rabbi Served for Forty Years

The first stop was at Lawn Manor--Beth Jacob Congregation at 6601 South Kedzie Avenue. Arthur Deitcher, congregational president for the past thirteen years, gave an illuminating synagogue history and led a tour of the Conservative house of worship.

It was founded as Lawn Manor Hebrew Congregation in the 1920's and had the same rabbi, Mordechai Schultz, for forty years. Although the congregation had a peak membership of 400, it currently has about 90 members, residents of the southwest neighborhoods and suburbs.

#### Veterans Create New Congregation

The tour then visited the former Beth Jacob of Scottsdale synagogue at 4343 West 83rd Street. This congregation was organized after World War II in a new subdivision populated mainly by returning veterans.

Unfortunately, after about twenty years and the departure of many veterans and their children from this area of modest homes, the Conservative synagogue had too few members to continue. It closed in 1973 and merged into the Lawn Manor congregation.

#### Beverly Synagogue Also Short-Lived

The next visit was to the Beverly Hills-Morgan Park area with its rolling terrain and many beautiful homes. The tour paused at the former Beth Torah Congregation building at 92nd Street and Vanderpoel Avenue. This synagogue, which in its early days occupied an imposing mansion known as the castle-on-the-hill, was the only Reform congregation in the tour.

Like the Scottsdale congregation, Beth Torah was a post-World War II creation which lasted one generation, closing in the early 1970's as its members moved away. Today the synagogue building, though owned by the Chicago Board of Education, is boarded up and disfigured by graffiti.

#### Roseland Congregation Lasted 75 Years

The final area visited was the Roseland community, settled largely by Dutch immigrants in the 1880's and centering around Michigan Avenue and 111th Street. Jewish merchants began arriving ten years later. At the turn of the century they formed an Orthodox congregation, Shomre Hadas at Kensington Avenue (115th Street) and Michigan.

In 1929 the congregation, which had become Conservative, moved into a beautiful building at 11445 South Forest Avenue. By 1973 the congregation had disbanded and the building was sold to the Paradise Temple Church of God in Christ. A church leader, Deacon Watson, graciously led the group through the building.

The entire tour was a moving experience. It showed how small numbers of determined Jews, through the expenditure of effort and energy, managed to create Jewish institutions and lead full Jewish lives. The disbanded and dwindling congregations have not been failures. They are evidence of past successes of which all Chicago Jews can be proud.

--Mark Mandle

### New Members Aid Society's Efforts

The Society welcomes the following new members who have joined in the last few months. Their membership is proof of their belief in the value of perserving Chicago's Jewish history and enables them to enjoy the many activities of the Society secure in the knowledge that they help make these happenings possible.

Madolyn C. Aron	H. Spiegel
Gaye G. Kamm	Hilda D. Urban
Dorothy Leviton	David Wittenberg
Harold H. Ostrow	Jeanne Zasadil
Mr. & Mrs. Hans N. Spear	

--Marian Cutler  
Membership Chairman