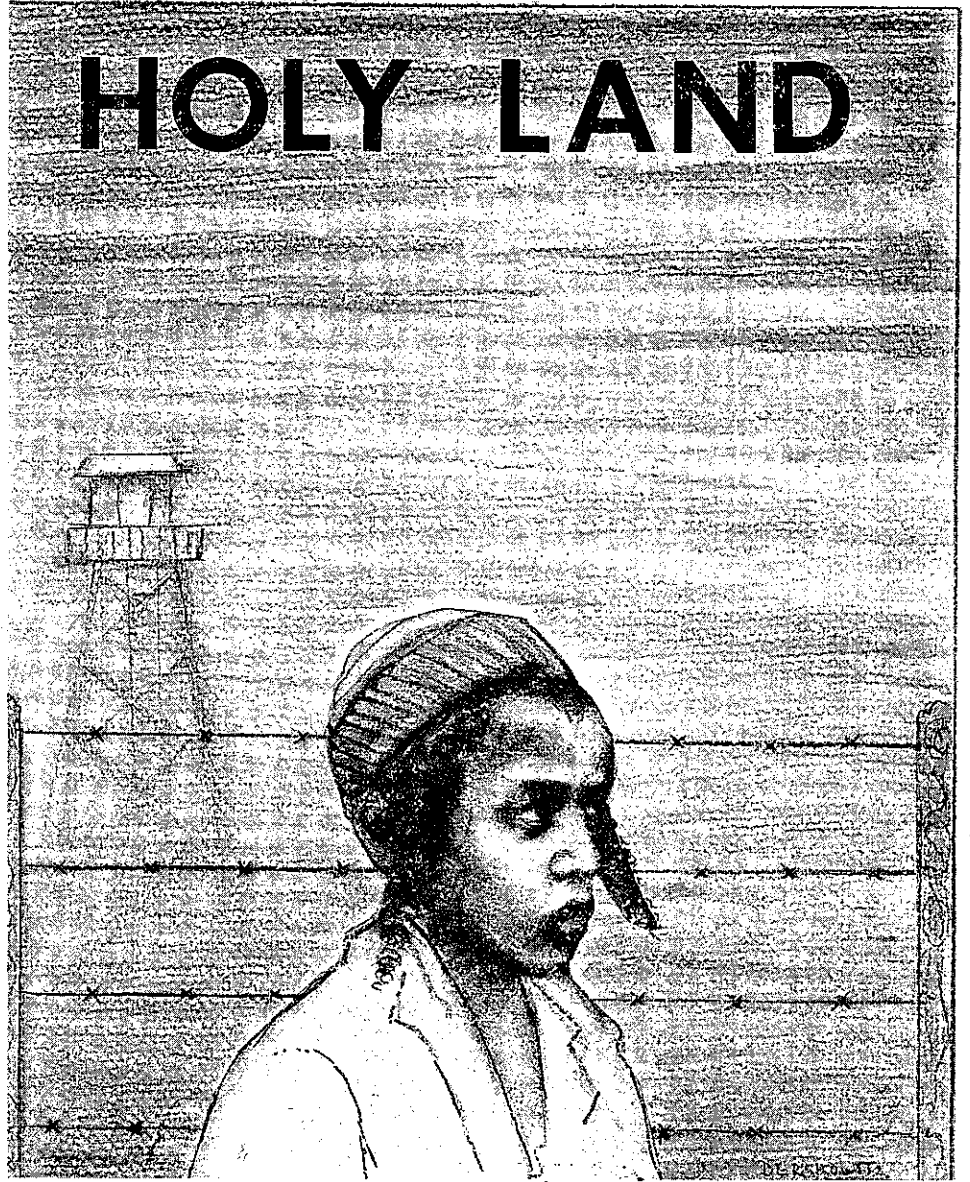


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IN THE HOLY LANI

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by

Rabbi Moshe Schonfeld ז"ל

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דברים כג. ט. רש"י (פסרי מדרש רבה ותחומא פנחס)

"He who leads one to sin is worse than he who kills him."

Medrash Rabbah Bamidbar , Pinchas

What the murderers did not achieve in Poland, our destroyers
from within wish to complete here in the Holy Land.

--David Rubinstein

A brother -in-law of two Teheran boys in a letter

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לזכר עולם

IN MEMORIAM

Dedicated To

ע"ה רבי משה שחנפלד
Rabbi Moshe Schonfeld

נפטר ה' אלול תשל"ה
תנצ"ה

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INTRODUCTION

The Jewish people have been enjoined in Deuteronomy (23:3-6) not to accept the Ammonites or the Moabites into their congregation for they tried to entice the Jews to sin. The effect of sin is so profound on the sinner, (in the case of Ammon and Moab) that it continues even beyond his tenth generation. The stigma can never be removed, not only from the sinner, but from all of his progeny. As Rashi explains in his commentary of the above verse the difference between the sinners and those who would have wanted to annihilate the Jewish people physically: ancient Egypt and Edom--that the ancient Egyptians and Edomites can be accepted into the assemblage of G-d after the third generation, while the Ammonites and the Moabites cannot, because causing someone to sin, is much worse than he who kills someone. Thus, Zionists who not only have broken the mitzvos, but also have enticed countless thousands of Jewish immigrants to the state of Israel to sin by turning them into atheists are much worse according to the Torah than murderers. Their goal has been to transform the Jewish people from a religious people to a secular nation. They have used various methods in different countries, depending on the circumstances. They have used the guise of religion when it was to their advantage, confusing Zionism and Judaism in the minds of those from whom they hope to gain support. They have even used the holocaust to play upon the sympathies of the unwitting to get what they want. They have used the horrible suffering of millions of Jews to enable them to build a nation, as all other nations.

The Zionists have attempted to strike at the heart of Judaism in an effort to gain control over the Jewish people. They have used any and all means to secure that goal, including bribery, terrorism, anti-semitism and the violation of the basic human right of religious freedom. The Zionist dream of the establishment of the State of Israel was based on manipulation of the anti-semitism of Western leaders by Theodore Herzl, the

architect of modern-day Zionism. It was furthered by bribery which was used, for example, to persuade the imam of Yemen and Southern Arabian sultans to allow the Yemeni Jews to immigrate to Israel. Terrorism has also been a capstone of Zionism. One need only remember the tactics of the Irgun in the 1940's, of which Israel's current Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, was a member. Countless terrorist acts, such as those used in 1950-1951 in Baghdad, Iraq, have been attributed to the Zionists--terrorist acts not only against those opposed to the Zionists, but also against their fellow Jews to persuade them to immigrate to Israel.

All of these tactics, which most people would agree are despicable, were used. But -- the worst -- is the Zionist's denial of the freedom of religious education and religious expression to their fellow Jews. This method reached alarming proportions with the attempt of wholesale brainwashing of orphaned Polish Orthodox children on their way to Palestine via Teheran in 1942-1943. Various methods were used by the Zionists to "convert" the children from their Orthodoxy to the secular nationalist "faith" of the Zionists. It began with subtle brainwashing of weak, terrified children and continued with overt acts, such as the denial of religious articles and instruction, food and clothing. When these tactics did not work, violence was used in some cases, with some children being beaten and boys being put into solitary confinement for leading children in prayer. This book describes all the above in great detail.

These methods, which were fairly successful on most of the children, were again used in the 1950's against the Orthodox Jews of Yemen who were taken to the Zionist State in what was dubbed Operation Magic Carpet. This large-scale immigration designed by the Zionists increased the population of the Zionist State by nearly 100,000. Once they were in the Promised Land, the naive Yemenites, who had come from a completely different, Asiatic, non-technological culture, were taken advantage of by

the Zionists. They, too, like the Teheran children before them, were denied the basic right of religious freedom. They were not allowed to have synagogues, and their children were not allowed religious education. They were coerced with threats--denying them food, housing and the right to work. Now for the first time the English reading public has a chance to read about this.

Moroccan Jews faced a similar fate at the hands of the Zionists. They, too, were threatened with the denial of life's basic necessities if they persisted in their demands for religious education for their children and for synagogues for their communities.

Illustrations of these outrageous Zionist methods abound. They pervade the annals of the history of the Zionist State, dating many years prior to its establishment, and continuing up to the present. This presentation is but a fraction of the atrocities committed.

But why, one might ask, should we be upset if the Jews involved were not physically harmed, if they simply "persuaded" them to give up their Orthodox beliefs and the daily expression of their faith? None of the Teheran children was physically killed. They were simply placed, for the most part, in secular institutions where they were trained to be "good" citizens of the state.. Orthodox Judaism's answer to this is that they were murdered -- a spiritual murder. And spiritual death is much worse than physical death because that soul is lost to Judaism forever. This was and is genocide.

How did this happen? When the corruption of the Teheran children began, it was not widely recognized. Only after friends, relatives and some Orthodox rabbis visited the transit camps holding the children did word begin to leak out. But who could believe that Jews would try to tear other Jews away from their faith? However when some members of Agudath Israel saw with their own eyes what was happening, they began to protest the treatment of the children at the hands of the Zionists. Agudath

Israel was established originally in Poland to fight Zionism. But some of their leaders became corrupted when they saw the money and power they could gain by taking some children into their schools and receiving maintenance funds from the Zionists. What began with good intentions -- to save the religious children from secularism -- became a mockery, with both Agudath Israel and the Mizrahi double dealing for the children's souls. While the Mizrahi was dealing with the Zionists from the start of the discussions concerning the children's placement, the Agudah initially sought to save all the children from the horrible fate.

Unfortunately, one of the leaders of the Agudah, Isaac Meir Lewin, succumbed to the lure of money and power and began to negotiate with the Zionists how to divide the children among the groups wanting them...and the maintenance funds. His collaboration with the Zionists was eventually rewarded with the position of Minister of Welfare in the very soon to be established new state.

Some men protested this change of goals. The National Convention of Agudath Youth, which took place during the Intermediary Days of Passover in 1944, issued a strong declaration against the Zionists and implored the Agudath Israel leaders to cease negotiations with the Zionists:

Declaration

The crime the Jewish Agency perpetrated against the suffering Teheran children is enough to stir every heart, even in these dire days full of grief. The large majority of these children, which the Jewish Agency itself confirmed were of Orthodox parents, were spiritually annihilated. With deception and through coercion, the Jewish Agency tore away these children from their faith. From a total of seven hundred and fifty children, only thirty were permitted a religious education in yeshivos.

What has happened to these Teheran children might just as

well be the consequences, G-d forbid, of 30,000 more children, yet to come to these shores. Religious youth! **We Dare Not Remain Silent!** These children are our brothers and friends. Just as ourselves, they were born to religious parents; just as ourselves, they were reared in the path of the Torah. Behold what has befallen them today! The parents were killed by the Nazis, and under the hands of the Zionists the souls of these orphans are being killed. The Nazis severed the parents from their children in this world and the Zionists want to separate them in this world and the world to come. It is without any doubt that the parents would rather have the death of their children than for them to have a life void of Torah and fear of the Al-mighty.

To the leaders of the Agudath Israel and especially to the leaders of the Poalei Agudath Israel, we say: Rend yourselves from this evil assemblage. Sever all bonds with them. Desist from all negotiations with them. Deny any gains to be obtained from them. Carefully guard the autonomy of the Orthodox Jewry who fear the L-rd. Put an end to all illusion. The Zionists are the most dangerous enemies of the Jewish people. With them no compromises are possible. Orthodox Jewry must fight them until they are destroyed.

Teachers of our youth! Unmask before your students the evil of the Zionists! Place in their hearts the clear understanding that our struggle against Zionism and all its offshoots is a continuation of the historical battle of the Prophet Eijah and the false prophets of the Ba'al, the battles of the Macabees and the Hellenists, the battles of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The complete text of the declaration can be seen in chapter eight.

Rabbi Moshe Schonfeld, of blessed memory, also continually protested Agudath Israel's participation in the Zionist deals and wrote the book **The Teheran Children Accuse** in 1944 to reveal what the Zionists and Mizrahi were doing.

INTRODUCTION

But he still hoped that the Agudah's leadership would return to their original sacred mission, to save all the children, so he did not explicitly accuse his fellow Agudath Israel leaders of dealing for the children's souls. He tried for over twenty years to return the Agudah to their original path, to fight against Zionism, but realizing that he spoke to deaf ears, he broke away from Agudath Israel in the 1960's when they again after thirty years of wheeling and dealing with the Zionists for the funds instead of souls, sold Moroccan Jewry to the Zionist devil, as will be shown in the last chapter of this book.

The outline for the development of the Teheran children scandal and the consequences for all Jews who immigrate to the Holy Land thereafter are revealed by Rabbi Schonfeld in an article, "Do Not Forget".

In 1943, on the Friday before the Torah reading commanding Jews to remember what Amalek did to us, **HaDerech**, the organ of the Agudath Israel in Tel Aviv, ran a front-page banner headline which read, "Remember what the Jewish Agency did to Jewish Children on their way out of exile into the Holy Land. Do not Forget."

At the time, Torah Jewry, headed by the Rav of Brisk (Rabbi Yitzchok Z'ev Soloveitchik), was waging a major battle on behalf of the Teheran children. If that tragic affair would have been consigned to the past, we might have been permitted to ignore or forget that unfortunate date in the spirit of, "Do not recall unto us our earlier transgressions."

But to our dismay that was only the first sin, the prelude to a program of spiritual annihilation of Jewish children which is still spreading in every dimension. What happened 35 years ago to a thousand children applies today to tens of thousands who have

been sacrificed on the altar of the secular Zionist idol.

The Soul Hunters

The soul-hunters of the Youth Aliyah have operated consistently and persistently. Their energies have not flagged and their aim, saturated with hatred of the Torah, is to remove every single Jewish child from the tradition of its ancestors: Their hatred still burns within them with the same fervor as in the past.

Only among Torah loyal Jews has a tragic change taken place. The plight of endangered children years ago stirred up our very beings, aroused our best inclinations, and prodded us to make every effort, today leaves us apathetic, quiet, self-controlled and helpless. Consequently, it is not my purpose now to protest and to express wonder about those who cause us anguish, but rather about ourselves, who have grown slothful in the work of rescue. Day in, day out, hour after hour, we violate the Torah's serious warning, "Do not stand by while your fellowman's life is at stake."

The Accomplices

A public group, other than Youth Aliyah, has remained consistent in its attitudes and in its assistance as an accomplice to these crimes, serving as a handle to the ax raised to cut off tender shoots in G-d's Vineyard.

This is the National Religious Party known as Mizrahi. They are the ones who stopped the efforts at rescue in the case of the Teheran children; they are the ones who split the front of loyal Jewry by providing sleeping pills; and they continue today to be a stumbling-block to Torah Jewry and to provide shield and armor for rampant secularism.

In the case of the Teheran children, the Mizrahi

made a shameful agreement with Youth Aliyah about how to do business with Jewish souls, dividing them on a percentage basis. To this very day, it maintains the same system of giving away five Jewish souls for every one it receives. There is no doubt that if the Mizrachi had not led the public astray at the time of the affair of the Teheran children, that if it had not provided false information to Jewry abroad and here, then the boycott declared against the United Jewish Appeal and Jewish National Fund which seriously affected the Jewish Agency would have compelled Youth Aliyah to agree to the principle that at least every child from a religious home should be absorbed in a Torah institution.

The Traitorous Rabbi Fishman (Maimon)

The fury against the forcible removal of the Teheran children from their faith was so great that even secular leaders such as the Marchioness of Reading, Betel Locker and Zelig Brodetsky rained telegrams upon the Jewish Agency demanding that the Teheran children be given a religious education. The Jewish Agency was clever enough to choose Rabbi Y.L. Fishman (Maimon) to fight its battle against all the protestors. He carried out this traitorous task with loyalty and succeeded in convincing Stephen Wise, the extremist Reform Rabbi, that no harm would come to the souls of the Teheran children. That moment should be set aside as a permanent anniversary for mourning. Not only did Rabbi Fishman then seal the spiritual fate of the Teheran children, but he sealed the future of tens of thousands of children who were brought from all parts of the world to be educated no differently than if they had been captured by pagans.

Rabbi Hager's Story

It seems to me that the time has now come to reveal the dimension of that affair a dimension still unknown to the public so that people may know how bad things really were. When the Teheran Children-Accuse was published, I received a letter from Rabbi Menachem Hager, o.b.m. Until recently Chairman of the Chevra Kaddisha in Tel Aviv, he had been a rabbi in Sosnowiec, Poland, and a long-time Mizrachi leader.

Rabbi Hager met with me and told me his story. In Teheran, he had met the refugees who arrived via Russia and had spent time in Teheran together with the Polish children. He had seen at first hand what the Jewish Agency madrichim did to the unfortunate orphans and also to adult refugees.

Before his very eyes, his world was totally destroyed. He saw the dream for which he had sacrificed his best years and energies devoid of delusion. He realized that the representatives of the Zionist Federation and its educators were in no way different from Russian Jewish violators of the faith, the evil Yevsektzia, which he had encountered in Russia. He saw these people in all their immorality, he saw their wickedness, their viper-like cruelty; he saw them lacking all the character traits that distinguish the Jewish people.

And he was especially shaken by a question posed him by a minister of another faith in Teheran. The minister told him, "The Church institutions in London have instructed us not to carry on missionary activities among the Jewish refugees in Teheran in view of the terrible destruction of Jewry in Poland. We are to offer material assistance but not to attempt any kind of

spiritual influencing. Now your **madrichim** are forcibly uprooting from the hearts of these children every bit of religious feeling, and they are implanting atheism instead!" Rabbi Hager could not answer. He had no idea what to answer. He had only one hope: that upon arrival in Palestine he would raise a storm. He was confident that the **Yishuv** was unaware of what was happening and, most of all, he relied on his friends in the Miz rachi organization to react vigorously and to demand that the responsible parties be brought to justice and that arrangements be made to heal the children of the spiritual wounds they had suffered.

The news about what the **madrichim** were doing in Teheran spread throughout the world. And it compelled the Jewish Agency to establish an investigative commission whose members were Rabbi Fishman, Greenbaum, Dr. Sentor, A. Dobkin and Moshe Shapiro -- all members of the Jewish Agency Executive.

In an editorial headed **Scoffing, Ha'Aretz** commented, "It is difficult to believe what one's eyes read. An investigative commission composed entirely of Jewish Agency people! In other words, the institution responsible for what happened is going to investigate itself!"

True Horrors of Zionism

Rabbi Hager presented his complaint before this commission. He accused the directors of the refugee camp, especially Menachem Rudnitzky, may his memory be a curse forever, of three major categories of crimes: theft, sexual immorality and murder. The commission eventually disbanded without reaching

any conclusions, offering the excuse that it would present all the information it received to a special court of the Zionist Congress (which, naturally, was never convened). The investigative commission did all that it could to cover up all the sins that were committed. The secretary even distorted all the testimony in the minutes. The heads of the Jewish Agency brought pressure to bear upon the witnesses for the prosecution not to appear, or they tried to get them to change their testimony from negative to positive. Rabbi Hager walked out and said, "I give up." He tore the hair from his head in great anguish and shock, and finally decided that he must do something to publicize all the material he had, including the protocol of the testimony given before the investigative commission and the accusations that he had presented in private. Over many weeks we worked together editing the material, and when it was completed, I saw that the material I had prepared for **The Teheran Children Accuse** was the weakest reflection of the horrors of Teheran, that the factual situation had been a hundred times worse than presented in my book, even though the book created great shock waves.

Mizrachi Breaks Rabbi Hager

At the last moment before publishing his work, I was asked by Rabbi Hager to withhold all the material we had gathered and edited. Rabbi Hager broke down and wept and said that he could no longer stand up to the horrible pressures being applied to him by his friends in the Mizrachi. He was far too broken and shattered a man to go out alone and wage open war against the heads of the **Yishuv** and the Zionist Histadrut. This was the shocking tragedy of a

wonderful and noble man whom brutality, terror and blackmail silenced. I am confident that I am causing great pleasure to his soul by relating his hopeless battle and by removing some of the mystery that surrounds the affair of the Teheran Children.

It is not feasible to publicize in a religious publication the material presented before the investigative committee. For the most part, these are actions of sexual immorality which no sensitive mind can bear.

The Jewish consciences of the Jewish Agency Executive, including Mizrahi men Moshe Shapiro and Rabbi Yehuda Leib Fishman (Maimon), did not obligate them to reprove Menachem Rudnitzky even mildly. He suffered only one unpleasant incident when a number of Teheran children met him in the street and wished to mete out their own justice to him. Rudnitzky and his colleagues performed this major task -- the uprooting of Jewish faith -- in the name of the Jewish Agency. They were the Jewish Agency in Teheran. Of 750 Teheran children, almost all of whom (with the exception of seventeen) had been educated in Chadarim or in Beth Jacob schools, exactly thirty two of them were sent to Torah institutions! That was the end of the affair.

The Climax But Not the End

Ever since then, religious Jewry has suffered new problems which have caused it to forget the old problems. Every wave of new immigration was brought and drowned in the foam of secularism. One by one, these groups were lost to the Jewish people.

Who is the polltaker who can count every new

edition of the affair of the Teheran children? Who can weigh the suffering? Who can collect the tears of the oppressed? Of the parents who bewailed their children, pure Jewish children, whom sin came to destroy? Who, though raised in the diaspora to be as Jewish as possible, came to the Holy Land to shepherd "polar bears" -- kibbutz slang for pigs.

What We Can Do

The question then is asked: Why should we be compelled to remember and not to forget? Why should we flagellate ourselves when all we do is raise up layers of bitterness and frustration? What can we do to correct the past?

In the study hall of Jewry, we have learned that we must commemorate destruction. Also, that we may not forget wicked deeds and wicked people. "Do not forget" means an inner protest, an unwillingness to compromise with wickedness even when it is successful. "Remember" serves as a shield that protects us from disillusionment by providing us awareness of the nature of our enemy. It serves as leverage to lift one up to a position of sober self-protection, and it is a guarantee that there will be no inner peace, that there will be constant and fruitful fermentation within the individual. The affair of the Teheran children, which has turned into a concept, is not a lesson of and for itself alone, but comes to teach us about the collective tragedy of all the Jewish children swallowed up by secular oppression in the Holy Land. It is the realization of the curse in Deutoronony 28: "Your sons and your daughters are given to another nation" which Targum Yonasan renders "To a secular nation!"

Do not forget! And do not be silent, for silence denotes acceptance of the situation. When the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt wanted to destroy the Jewish people, he asked the advice of Bilaam, Jethro and Job (Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin 106). Bilaam said to annihilate the Jews; Jethro ran away; and Job gave no advice, but kept quiet. Job's punishment for his silence was years of suffering--the loss of his children and his land, and the pain of physical ailments--which he had to endure. Because of his apparent acceptance of the Pharaoh's desire to destroy the Jews, as evidenced by his silence, G-d made him suffer so that he would no longer be silent but would cry out. Only if something hurts do we scream. And we should be screaming because of the spiritual genocide of the Teheran children, and the Yemenites, and the Moroccans and the Iraqis and all the Jews whom the Zionists have torn away from Judaism.

This crime of spiritual genocide perpetrated on the Jews by the Zionists and their collaborators has no parallel in Jewish history. It can rightfully only compare with the gravest of sins -- that of the establishment of the Zionist state -- which has usurped the holy name of Israel. These two crimes, are the greatest tragedies to befall the Jews ever. Greater than the destruction of the Holy Temple -- which was committed by Gentiles -- while this catastrophe was done by Jews. And much worse than Hitler's annihilation of over six million Jews -- as they lost only this world -- while the children and youth the Zionists annihilated spiritually have lost both worlds.

We have included information on the Teheran children, the Yemenites, the Iraqis, the Algerians, the Moroccans, the Djerbans and the Persians, but this in no way tells the whole story of what the Zionists have done to religious Jews. For every group discussed, there are countless others. The Zionists' anti-religious coercion began long before the establishment of the state of Israel, and

IT CONTINUES TODAY!

To all the leading rabbis of renown and to all communal leaders throughout the diaspora: G-d be with you!

A PUBLIC PROTEST AND OUTCRY!

The stone in the wall cries out and all faces are blackened because of the deliberate cruelty perpetrated by those who speak in the name of the people and have abused their power by oppressing thousands of children -- refugees from the sword and the flame, unfortunate orphans whose parents died or were murdered, thus leaving them untended in Siberia -- who were handed to them in Teheran to be brought to the Holy Land.

A new period then began in the lives of these unfortunate orphans -- suffering upon suffering, tragedy upon tragedy. Like the man who runs away from the lion to be met by the bear, they escaped physical destruction only to meet up with a campaign of spiritual destruction. The fury of these "guardians" poured down, forcibly removing them from their faith and the practice of Judaism as they were taught by their parents and grandparents. Almost every one of these children was born of devout parents and was raised in an atmosphere of unparalleled sanctity. Many are children and grandchildren of rabbis and **chassidic** rebbes, brilliant scholars and righteous holy men from all over Galicia and Poland. Whoever sees these children recognizes them as G-d blessed seed.

As soon as these children were placed in the hands of their oppressors in Persia, the latter immediately provided teachers and counselors who demanded that they leave their entire past behind and accustom themselves to live new lives devoid of the Torah and its laws. They utilized all means to obliterate the memory of their fathers and mothers and to uproot from their minds any trace of faith. It is particularly shocking that they absolutely refused to let them recite kaddish on behalf of their fathers and mothers who had so recently died in such a tragic and cruel manner.

They immediately began to habituate them to non kosher food and to the desecration of Sabbath, Yom Kipur, and the rest of the Jewish holy days. They scoffed at all that is sacred. When many of the children withstood their efforts at the cost of much self-sacrifice, and in memory of their parents who had died sanctifying G-d, the "guardians" actually went to war against the children, a war in the fullest sense of the word, using every means of compulsion. **It makes one's hair stand on end to hear that anyone would be so cruel to small unfortunate children as in the Spanish Inquisition.**

Yet all this did not help sway the children from their faith. What these little children suffered at the hands of their evil counselors was incredible. Yet most of these holy children withstood their suffering and arrived here in our land pure and whole, expressing hope that here in the Holy Land, they would find a clear way to live a life of Torah and Jewish-observance in accord with the express wish of their late parents who, until the last moments of life hoped and prayed that their children might keep to G-d's way as they had taught them.

But to our sorrow and that of all who fear G-d, this hope of the children and of their parents was dashed. One's heart breaks to see the sacred fires of self-sacrifice for G-d's sake that had burned so furiously in the hearts of the children, slowly being extinguished here, in our land. For their "guardians" settled them in irreligious transit camps overflowing with the poison of atheism. Forcibly, they are exerting tremendous influence on the children's entire way of life to reject the life of Torah and Jewish observance they had desired and hoped for and to choose a life of license as practiced in those camps. The wicked are on constant alert not to permit any religious influence to reach the children from devout Jewry. The situation of the children is tragic and upsetting because they are tossing about in the last throes of self-sacrifice on the very threshold of spiritual death - G-d preserve them and us. The entire devout Yishuv is looking on as 1,000 children of martyrs are being lost and is powerless to save them.

While these children were still in Teheran, we received

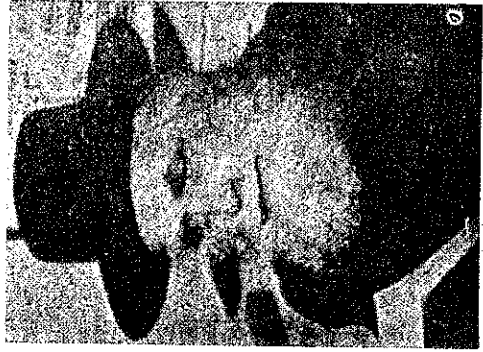


Rabbi Abraham Mordecai Alter, the Gerer Rebbe. Even a gift from the Zionists is destructive (from his letters).

reports here of only a fraction of what went on there. We have seen with our own eyes what became of the children who arrived here earlier from Germany and other countries and were educated by these very same "guardians". The situation is very tragic because they are totally lost to the Jewish people. They no longer have any link with the faith and the Torah (additionally they are morally corrupt in every single way, in a most disgusting manner, impossible to put into writing). Therefore we immediately turned to the committee making arrangements for these children and declared that we, too, would like to receive children and to educate them in the spirit of Torah, in view of the fact that these arriving children were for the most part from religious homes. But they did not respond to our request at all because they are the rulers, and who can tell them what to do? After much effort, we finally got them to begin negotiating with us. But this was only superficial. Functionally, it was totally irrelevant because they simply put us off time and time again with all kinds of excuses. Meanwhile, they held the children in those dangerous camps from which no Jewish soul ever escaped unscathed, utilizing every means at their disposal, including compulsion, not to leave any trace of the Torah and everything these children had learned and been trained for in their parents' homes. To this very day, they are still working over the children in order to remove them from their faith, to uproot from their hearts every last vestige of faith that is still within them - just as they began in Teheran. Our hearts are wounded and pained because so many have already fallen victim to their efforts. There are still many who are fighting for their existence. They continue to rebel at all that their eyes perceive in the area of religious destruction in those camps, and they secretly requested that we save them from those irreligious educators who at present have them under their control. But how long will these little heroes be able to stand up to their powerful brutal task masters, who will not consider anything except their single-minded goal of turning them into people without the slightest trace of Torah or faith, which is the reason they brought the children here. These children of martyrs, who come from

famous and glorious Jewish families, were gathered as unclaimed baggage by these anti-religious people in order to use them to attain their goal. The earth trembles at this; and every person must be shaken at hearing of this cruel theft, this robbery of the living and the dead; of bereft families that were taken away before their time, whose suffering was one long chain of wandering and anguish. Now, these people come and deprive them of their last hope, by destroying their children through permanent **sh'mad**.

The entire Yishuv is in shock over the affair of these Teheran children. **The horrible inquisition to which they are being subjected has no peer in Jewish history, an inquisition to converted away from Judaism little children, an inquisition operated by people who call themselves Jews!** It has called forth the protest of the entire Yishuv in our Holy Land. How could this evil have come to pass? The mourning and the wailing in our land has become a general trend ever since the children have arrived. It began when the children related what had happened in Teheran to those people who had visited them there, and continued when they narrated what had happened to them on the trip from Teheran to Palestine. Shocking deeds which make it impossible for the eye to remain tearless, for the heart not to melt. The storm and wailing grew greater after we all saw what kind of children they were. It is not only the majority of them, but rather almost every single one comes from the best of Orthodox Jewry in Galicia and Poland. Children who were raised to pure Judaism, who were provided the basics of Torah and fear of G-d, without any compromises, and - woe! what has happened to them, what is being done to them in Palestine! Every effort is being put forth so that not a single one of these children will remain religious. The entire community of the Holy Land is witness to the deeds and the behavior of the "guardians" of these children who are not permitting a single religious spark to reach them. They hold them tightly, so that only they and their guides will govern the children physically and spiritually, through every single means of compulsion and seduction. About this, the entire Yishuv is



Rabbi Akiva Sofer
"Rav of Pressburg"



Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer



Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik,
the 'Brisker Rov'.

up in arms. Many protest meetings have been held, some of which you have read about in the newspapers. Moreover, the entire community, man and women of all circles, protest publicly and mourn bitterly that at this moment when fury and anger have struck the Jewish people abroad; when the sword has demolished the best of our people - **that at this time there should be taking place within our Holy Land a spiritual annihilation run by Jews themselves against survivors who have escaped from Europe. Woe, what has befallen us!**

We have done all that we could. We have protested; we have screamed; we have waited; we implored these people time and again to desist from the steps they are taking. But to our sorrow, all our yelling and all our activity have been in vain. After all this screaming, after all the protests, the opinion of the children's "guardians" has not been altered in the least. Therefore, we find it necessary to raise our voice of protest to all our brethren in the diaspora, in every single land: Rabbis, communal leaders - whoever has the power to do anything in this matter - we beg of you, from the depths of our angered and torn hearts: Do not be silent! Do not stand by quietly! Do whatever you can in this matter! It is our obligation to save the remnants of Jewry: these poor children, who have not yet been destroyed. It is obligatory upon you to let your voices be heard in protest, loudly, from all over the diaspora against this **sh'mad** taking place, of compelling unfortunate religious children to leave their faith and the faith of their parents. Demand most forcefully that these children be immediately handed over to loyal hands which will give them the Orthodox education that their parents willed, so that they can continue in the manner they were trained and educated for, and not the type of education called "religious" given here by certain political groups, in which light and darkness are intermingled - a bit of sacred study mixed in among much heresy. For there is no doubt that these people will seek to show themselves clean-handed in the eyes of the world by placing a number of children into hands that will provide them with such a type of education. But that is merely pulling the wool over the public's

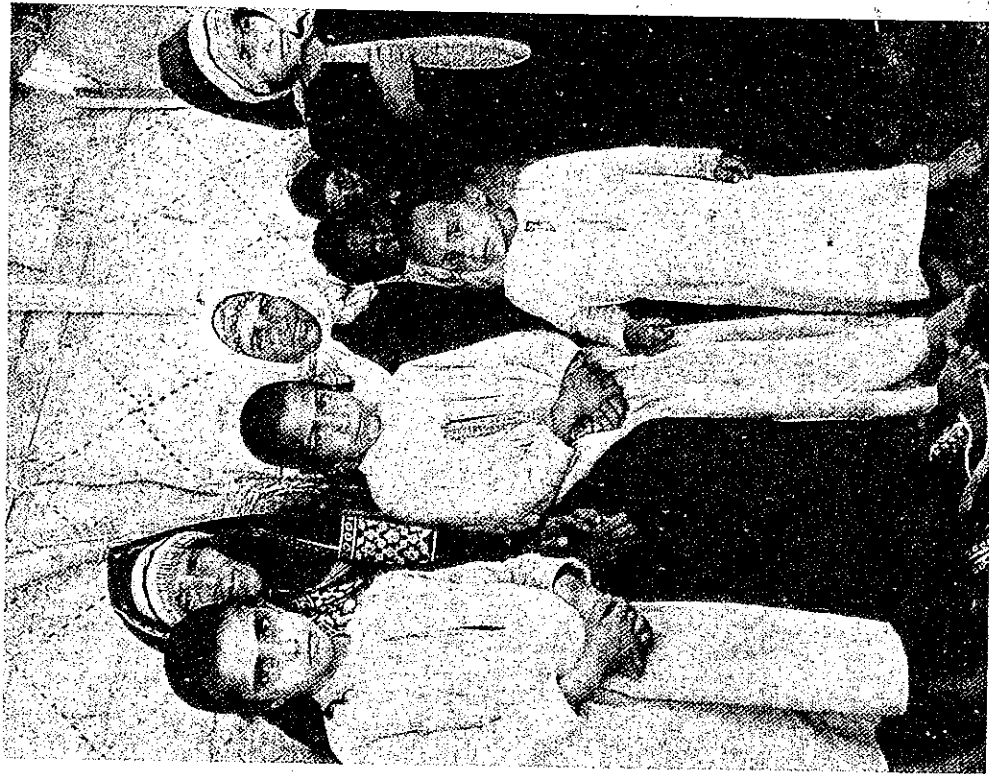
eyes. We, here, see the results of this education. All who have been trained by them are foreign to the spirit of Torah and the spirit of Judaism. The best of them do not have any Torah or pure faith. Therefore, we must demand vigorously, that these children be given the same pure education - in the ancient Jewish spirit - that everyone of them had received in his parental home. Only then will we have fulfilled our obligation and not be sinning against these children, the orphans of martyrs butchered by the Germans.

Realize that this is not a question of 1,000 children who have already arrived. They are preparing to bring another 30,000 children from Siberia and other lands. Let us not be misled. Let the entire Jewish public understand its obligation in this matter. Do everything in your power so that Jewish children will not be treated like the spoils of war to remain under the control of whoever happens to grab them and to be removed from our Holy Torah and from the traditions of our forefathers. Surely you, the rabbis of Jewry and the heads of Jewish communities, will utilize every means possible to put an end to these crimes by protests and by pressure on all the institutions that participate in supporting these children to make sure that your influence is felt. Fortunate are those who will have the merit of saving these children.

Signed, with broken heart and bitter spirit,

**Avrohom Mordechai Alter (Rebbe of Ger)
Akiva Sofer (Rabbi of Presburg)**

**Iser Zalmen Meltzer (Dean of Yeshiva Etz Chaim)
Yitzchok Zev Soloveichik (Rabbi of Brisk)**



This is the way the Yemenite Jews looked and lived in Yemen before they were brought to the "Promised Land". On your next trip to the "Promised Land" see if you can find any traces of this way of life. Travelers to Israel maintain that they cannot find any traces of it.

קִינֵי תִימְנִיָּה

גולת תימן מימינו כהן על דרך מבטב כענין הדת משכני תימן ועלו לארץ והסביר החייל המלכות פברת דברים של התנזרות בין תימן וציון כפי שלא ידעוה מדיבוי שמונה על ענינת תימן ויהי במשך זמן על הארץ היו דרך האנה ושכחו חלב על השמן נטפס התנהגות הישנה שחיה להם בתימן האחד קליהם כמספסם לארץ ופיר הקינות מביה על כל המבוי.

זו חלה לב אהרן לשמור ולעשות על פי תורת גל אהרן. ועמה הגם בקיבוץ לבם מאמונה נבחר. הפיר דרכיהם אשר מאז השוקים.

אברה ציון דבריו בנתיב. ותפנית מנולה יקרה כמפניו. אוי לי על זמן החלה פי' הפני מנין. אהרן לי ענה נחמה בשארית הנאמנים. והמה ישאו הנינים בקול נתי וקנינו. עד יקום מקרא שכתבו. ועקר כולם צדיקים.

יד קום מדיט

קול אנה ונלה נעקו עד שוקים. קול נתי וקניה מרוץ מרוקים. דברי קשות נוראות על כל לב דוסקים. ארץ תימן וציון שואנים ונאקים. מי יעלה דינו במאומם צדיקים. זמן יריב רבונת מי ידון דין עשוקים.

מי יריב רבונת. מי ידון דין עשוקים אברה תימן אוי לי על כמה דברי. בשנת המסות. שנים שבע מאות ועשר. נשארתי להרסה לא הרר לי ולא תואר. יום נסעתי לארצה שולמית אגן הסוהר. על ציון ארץ הקודש אני קריא הנבי. מרוץ להפאשתי דין על חוקים.

מי יריב רבונת. מי ידון דין עשוקים אברה ציון זאת חסאך זה פירתי על השפוך את בני כל מלך וקריה. מום נלחם לא יריד לא מצאו הנייה. מהם גיום בתחיות אחם מי עלייה. דברי אותם לשמים ולהמה ויהי. ומרוץ דין בעמך כמר לבם צדיקים.

מי יריב רבונת. מי ידון דין עשוקים אברה תימן אל תקשו עלי אברה. פי חמה כמספסם גלו לקבל דינים המורים. וקו אנהו שלוחים בנתיב וצד מאורים. וכל זאת לא עשינו כלה והרסם נחורים. ומו נעק עם תוקה אחת דתי להחריב. נפירים היו למנלה במשפסם וחוקים.

מי יריב רבונת. מי ידון דין עשוקים אברה ציון אלפי שנים המואר. ומני עשורים אחד ועני כלות לזאת. מתי יקרב חבא ומן קו המילואות. יקובצו ויבואו המורים כלל פואות. נגילה ונשמחה באל אלוהי הצבאות. לקיים דת נאמנה עלי לוחות חוקים.

מי יריב רבונת. מי ידון דין עשוקים אברה תימן כואי נשפחה יחי. איך ואפוא שמתוך דאיה שלום מפרה. ביום היותם ארץ

אחרת סמוכה

עמה קחתי שרירים כשכחו לב אנה. מרוץ בארץ. תימן הלנו בדרך מובה. שמתו תורה ומצות. נעו חזון רשעה. ענה בארץ קדשנו החולתנו נמנה. ענמו אודות ידור וכל מרה חשבה. השכחו ר' אלוך נשכחו.

מי ידון דין עשוקים אברה תימן חיינו דתי ורזים. שלוש הפלות ככל יום כלבנות עלינו. ועמים קנינום לתורה ערב ובוקר חורום. ענה בארץ חלולה דבר ה' בויב. לא תורה ולא הפלה זא און קשובה.

מי ידון דין עשוקים אברה תימן חיינו ממוינים כמנות צדיות רבע פאות ככל היום משונים. ומלכש נהרד מורה לוע קורש אנונים. אנה בארץ קדשנו הורשת זו הנפס. הלבשה נבירה משוקנת ותעבה.

מי ידון דין עשוקים אברה תימן שפרנו שבת כולכה. וזמי היום ומעמים כרת חוקה נכונה. ענה בארץ

the Yemenite Lamentations.

to other Jews, even in the face of the drastic holocaust that is destroying the Jewish people.

Books like this are usually entitled "The Black Book". But this is really only a book of tears. For in it are collected the tears of the gentle orphans who were stripped of the crown of their parents' faith in the G-d of Jewry and in His holy Torah; the tears of their martyred parents whose orphans were robbed from them both in this world and in the world-to-come; and the tears of Jewry at large for its children who were sundered from its Torah and torn from its faith in the Holy Land -- by Jews!

---Moshe Shonfeld, 1944



Beis Yaakov girls in a Polish village.

INTRODUCTION

The tragedy of European Jewry has reached its nadir as these lines are being written. The situation of our people is horrifying, and whoever has attempted to describe it has not found the means of expressing the extent of the cruelty, torture and persecution to which European Jewry has been subjected. It is no exaggeration to say that all of Europe has turned into one great cemetery for its Jews. Who could have imagined such a systematic annihilation of millions of Jews with no consideration given to the aged, to women, or to children -- annihilation unparalleled in the history of our people!

Agudath Israel¹ attempted to form a rescue committee to save the remaining Jews of Europe. We felt that even though the Jewish people are divided into several factions with widely divergent perspectives and goals, it was nevertheless imperative for us to unite into a single committee to rescue our unfortunate brethren. Committees of this kind, which included all major Jewish organizations, were established in Jerusalem, London and New York. Our goal was the formation of a separate committee which would be dedicated exclusively to rescue work. Unfortunately, we did not succeed in this, and, instead of a special committee, we were compelled to settle for an umbrella group comprised of assorted organizations and parties.

Even before this group was formed, we demanded the establishment of a special Appeal to Save European Jewry, a widespread appeal that would provide the enormous sums of money needed to rescue European Jewry. However, our demand was set aside by the Jewish Agency with the claim that it was impossible to focus on collecting funds for the Jews of Europe, since it was imperative to build the homeland. We replied, "What good is a homeland without a people?" Ultimately, it was agreed to merge this appeal with another one.

1. Agudath Israel, an organization of rabbis and observant Jews, was founded in 1912 on the German-Polish border with the purpose of fighting Zionism.



Cheder kids in Cracow, Poland before World War II.

under non-war conditions, would have received a full traditional education. Should their coming to the Holy Land be the factor that caused them to be torn from the bosom of their parents and from the Torah and Judaism? We explained to them that this affair would cause a major scandal and that all the fury pent up within Jews over the horrible destruction of European Jewry would burst forth if these children were taken away from their faith.

We explained to them that, as believing Jews, our faith is the content of our lives; that at this period when the nation is in dire straits, Jewish faith is the source of all of our hopes and from it we draw strength and courage in these confused times. We pointed out to them the sacrifices made by the Jews in exile for the Torah and for their faith. If they would give the Teheran orphans a nonreligious education, this would arouse great disillusionment and we would not be responsible for the reaction or the results. We explained that if a Kulturkampf must take place, now is not the time for it; not now when the Jewish people is being destroyed in fire and in blood. We pleaded, we begged, and we warned; but they refused to hear us. We wished to prevent fraternal strife if at all possible. We turned to the heads of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, London and New York: to Weizman, to Brodetsky; but we found no ear willing to hear our demands. Therefore, let these gentlemen not protest. They forced a battle upon us, for we could not consent to drown the scandal in an ocean of silence.

In this book, we present a brief review of the entire affair of the Teheran children. It is an incomplete description, for paper can not contain the entire story of this tragic affair -- of how; in the midst of the days of tempest and confusion in Jewry, the heads of the Palestinian settlement could not rise above their small-mindedness and created this scandal which shocked all of Jewry in Palestine and abroad.

And then came the affair of the Teheran children. These children were brands plucked from the Nazi hellfire, the remnants of the remnants. All of us saw in them a symbol of the horrible tragedy that befell European Jewry. As soon as we found out that the children would be coming to Palestine, we began to negotiate for them in order to fulfill our responsibility to raise them in a religious manner. We held numerous conversations with Mrs. Henrietta Szold, president of Hadassah, and with all the members of the Jewish Agency. We explained that it was impossible, after the destruction of Polish Orthodoxy, that their children should be handed over for irreligious education by secular Jews in Palestine. These children, had they continued to be educated by their parents

Many of our colleagues protested: Why did we prolong negotiations with the Jewish Agency? Why did we demean ourselves? Why did we not know in advance that they would deceive us? But we are content to have demonstrated patience in these fatiguing and unending negotiations. We are satisfied that we withstood the test until the absolutely last moment, that our conscience is clear. At a time when the Jewish people is gushing blood, we did not seek a war: we sought understanding. We sought to establish one bridge after another, to unite brothers rather than sunder them. But they did not wish that. They ignored us. The true attitude of those who speak loftily about Jewish unity and Jewish love was here demonstrated clearly. They are the people who ignore these issues out of narrow-minded factionalism. Not even the great tragedy of the Jewish people had the power to show them the way of understanding and truth.

However tragic this affair, the plight of the Teheran children has, nonetheless, opened the eyes of the Jewish public in the Holy Land and abroad to what is going on in Palestine in the religious and spiritual arenas. If initially this was strictly the case for the Teheran children, today already the question is being asked about the entire disillusioning situation of spirit and faith in Palestine. The case of the Teheran children serves as a sample of the overall situation in Palestine which has become a laboratory of sorts: for every one-thousand Jewish children brought in, one-thousand Jews step out devoid of Torah and mitzvos.

The Teheran children will go down in Jewish history as an example of physical and spiritual holocaust. "Teheran children" will symbolize the conflict within the Jewish people as to the shaping of its form and purpose and essence -- a battle between historical Torah-loyal Jewry on the one hand, and, on the other hand, secular Jewry which seeks to remove the nation

from the authority of G-d's Torah and is taking advantage of the tragic circumstances of the holocaust that enveloped the Jewish people.

In this book, we shall also point out the sad role played by the Mizrahi organization in the development of this scandal. The Mizrahi has no formal policy and wavers between two principles: the authority of the Torah and the authority of nationalism. Sometimes the first takes precedence, but most of the time, the second does. The internal fluctuation is the reason for Mizrahi's lack of success in education over the past twenty-five years: for no innocent child can grasp two-faceness; he is sensitive to contradictions. In the case of the Teheran children, too, Mizrahi demonstrated that party matters stood above the formation of a united front to save the children from spiritual annihilation, above the unity of the nation and above the love of one's fellow-Jews about which Mizrahi speaks so much. All our proposals for rapprochement with the Mizrahi in the matter of the Teheran children were rejected.

We hesitated long over whether to publish this book, whether to spotlight the shadows or to remain silent. But because of our love for our fellow-Jews, we are fully aware that reproof is necessary, that it is imperative to uncover the sores in our communal life just as a doctor picks open a wound in order to heal it, despite the pain of the patient. Fully aware that at the most serious moments in the life of our people, its prophets, its teachers, and its leaders did not stop reproving it -- moreover, at just such times they examined their private and public deeds ever more scrupulously to seek a cure for collective ills -- we find it proper to publish this book and to call the leaders of the Jewish public to wake up and see just how far matters have gone in the Palestinian Jewish settlement: to the point where minors, orphans, the children of martyrs, were removed from their faith and the Torah, not in the lands of the nations but in the Holy

Land itself! This battle has been joined against our will, but we shall continue to fight until some change comes about.

The situation of Jewry is awesome. The best and the finest of our people are being destroyed. We cannot fathom why this is happening to us, but we are certain that these must be the final pangs of the Messianic coming; and we, believers, sons of believers, can only reaffirm our great faith that our redemption is near. We see that we can rely only upon our Father in heaven.

All our appeals to the conscience of mankind, to the free world, to enlightened humanity, to the bearers of the flags of liberty and democracy fighting for human rights, to the governments of liberty and equality, were answered with one word: "Bermuda"! Why should a mankind that stuffed its ears so as not to hear the cries of women and children, the cries of millions of our fellow-Jews, the cries of those being butchered daily, now listen to our appeals and our protests? If ultimately we have no one to rely on except our Father in heaven, the question must be asked, "Is now the time to rebel against G-d? Isn't it time now to come closer to our Father in heaven? Can we allow the Holy Land, the King's palace, to stray so far from original Judaism? We focus all our hopes on the Holy Land: Can there be a land without a people? What good is the motherland if its people are being annihilated, if while we are occupied with building the land, Jewry's population centers are being destroyed one after the other?" The remnants of Jewry in Zion must realize that something must change in our mode of life, that we must draw some conclusion from the stormy events of our times, from the great destruction of the Jewish people.

Are we going to delude ourselves into thinking that love of fellow-Jews means to close our eyes and to let the evil in our midst spread even further? Surely we rejoice and are

1. The Anglo-American Conference on Refugees was held in Bermuda on April 19-30, 1943.

enthusiastic at every blade of grass that grows and at every stone put into place in the Holy Land. Every Jew in the Holy Land is worth his weight in gold. Under no circumstances will we agree with those who attribute to us a lack of love for Jews and for the Holy Land. But that love demands from us that we study in depth the bitter situation that has developed in Palestine in matters of the spirit and religion. The affair of the Teheran children is only an example of the abyss into which the new Jewish settlement is sliding as a result of the policy of pushing Orthodoxy aside over the past twenty-five years.

Without G-d's rule, without believing in the One Who made the world, there is no national unity, there is no authority, there is no communal discipline, and there is no common language. There are 1,001 factions in the Jewish community. Where is love of one's fellow Jew? Where is internal discipline even after Agudath Israel is left out? Where is self-sacrifice for Jewry at large? Where is participation in the anguish of the Jewish people at its destruction? The Holy Land as the center, the heart of Jewry, should be the place where mourning and pain are felt most, yet there seems to be no end to the dancing and celebration. In what direction is the Jewish settlement headed? Does it have any direction? If anything, it has 1,001 directions rather than one. What is happening in education? What is happening to youth? What is the content of its life? Why is this youth apathetic to whatever happens to Jewry? Does it empathize with the pain of the nation and its suffering? Is it possible to build Jewry strictly on the basis of land and language? Is it possible to exchange "Sh'ma Yisrael" -- the rich Jewish tradition of millennia -- for secular nationalism?

And what is the situation regarding modesty of women and family purity? The problem of population growth which became an issue in the Jewish settlement answers the question: Someone is quoted as having said, "If 150,000 religious people

would settle in the Holy Land, they would soon become a million; and if a million nonreligious would come, they would decline to 250,000." And now it has become necessary to organize a special committee to protect the honor of Jewish women. How far we have fallen!

Where is the beauty and the glory of the Sabbath, of the Jewish Holy Days? And where is our sacred Torah which has accompanied us throughout the generations? Is it possible to take the dregs and the lees from the cultures of the world's nations and to translate them into Hebrew, to throw out all that is precious and good in our holy Torah, and to blend what is left and to call this pottage Jewish culture?

Just as it is impossible for a mother to close her eyes to a child's bad behavior even if he is her most precious son, so is it impossible to maintain an ostrich policy of closing one's eyes to the faults of the Yishuv (settlement). Because of our love of Jews, we must open up Jewish eyes to what is taking place in the Yishuv, to demand and demand again changes for the better. G-d is waiting for us. It is impossible to build a holy land while removing its soul from it. It is impossible to remove portions of Judaism, as did the Reformers in their day, and to say that this is Judaism. It is no longer feasible to continue along this road.

The world is in confusion. Destruction confronts us at every step. The attitudes of the world's nations to the Jews vary. Some wish to destroy us, and some seek to discover the nucleus and the content of Judaism. But where will they find it today—in the Polish ghettos? In the ruins of the European Jewish cities? Or in the Holy Land? And will they find pure Judaism here?

We do not seek war with anyone nor do we seek to cause anyone anguish. Our heart is breaking over the disunity in Jewry, but we must make every effort to change the situation in the Yishuv, to bring about a decisive turning point in the life

here so that its inhabitants will see where they are headed and return to the Torah and the tradition of Jewry.

Let us shake off the dust of the exile, all the ideologies foreign to the Jewish Torah which we took or were smuggled to us from the nations of the world. Let us return to our new-old Torah. Like Ezra the Scribe, who, in his time, purified our people of non-Jewish women, so let us purify our camp of foreign ideals and idols. G-d's voice calls to us from the midst of the tempest, demanding self-appraisal and repentance. Let His voice penetrate through our ears to our hearts and to our core. Let the response of Jewry as a whole be heard: "I shall go and return to my first husband." A turning point must come in the Yishuv: a turning point, not a civil war. An end to disunity based on love for one's fellow-Jew. If the Yishuv comes closer to this turning point, that will be in the merit of the Teheran children and the result of this volume, which has no purpose other than to serve as a rallying cry to the Yishuv to bestir itself and do return to the Redeemer of Jewry and so to bring about the ultimate redemption.

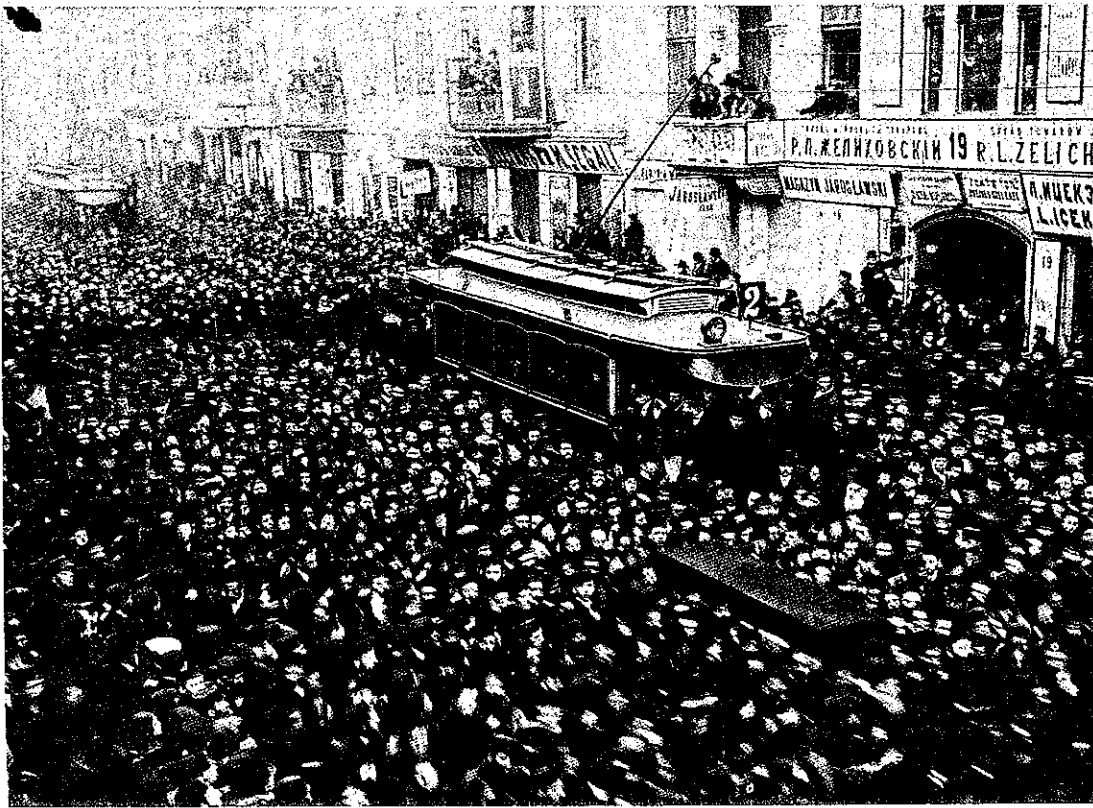
CHAPTER I

JEWISH EDUCATION IN POLAND

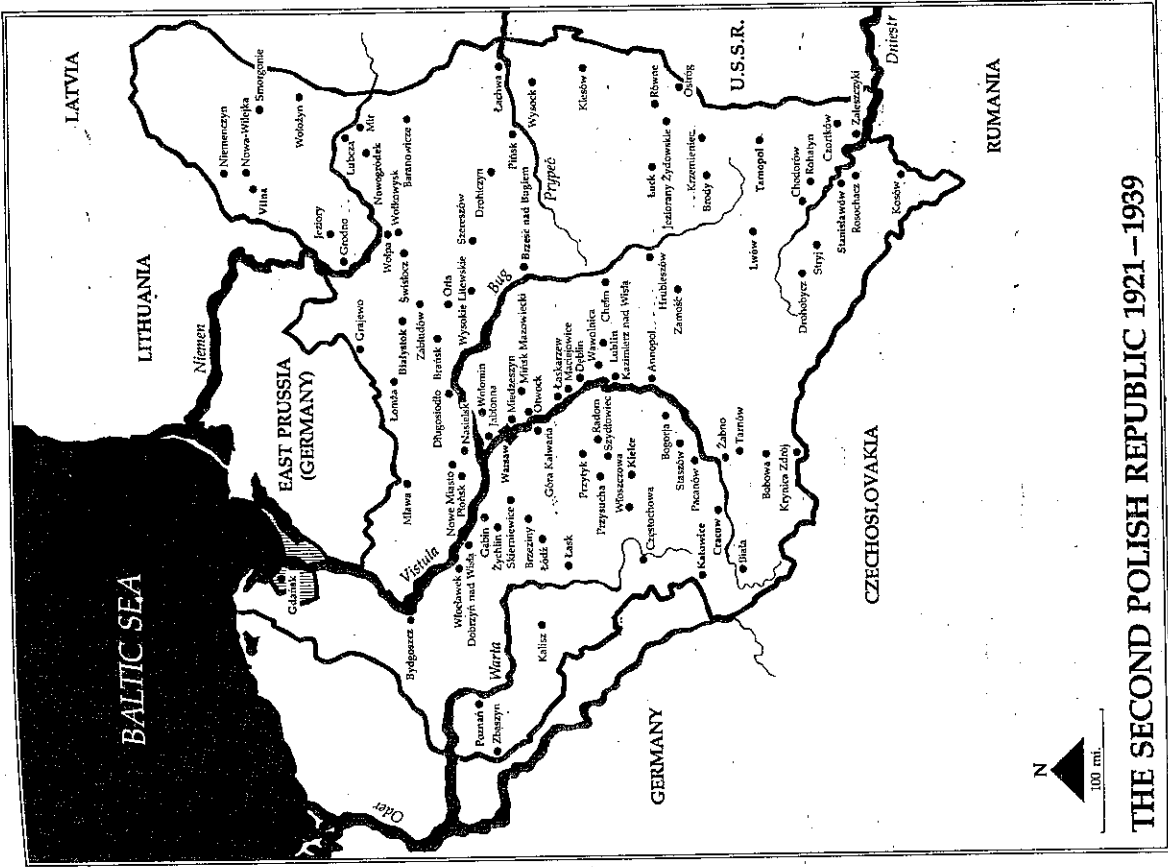
One cannot really understand the great evil done to the Teheran children without knowing the educational situation in Poland, the country of origin of these children. A person who was never in Poland and who does not know the character of Polish Jewry may be surprised at the deep emotion and shock of Orthodox Jews in the Holy Land and throughout the world at the sundering of Polish refugee children from Torah education and their being forcibly educated as atheists. Such a person will ask, "How are these children different from other refugee children who are also given an atheistic education?" Only someone who saw Polish Jewry in its heyday, that original, vibrant Jewry, loyal to the Torah and mitzvos (commandments), so full of Torah-study and so attached to chassidism -- all of whose ways were stamped with the seal of tradition and religiosity - only someone who knew the Jews of Poland as ready to give their lives for the tradition of their forefathers, as feeling no sacrifice too great so long as they could educate their children to Torah and fear of G-d; only such a person can evaluate the tragic loss to Orthodox Jewry and the sin committed against the parents of these children by the men who dared treat them as if they were their own chattels: the officials of the Jewish Agency.

Overview

Poland was first in Torah and in mitzva-fulfillment from the time Jews went to live there and remained so until its destruction. Even during the holocaust years, Polish Jews demonstrated wondrous self-sacrifice for Judaism. The horrors of the years 5408-5409 were relived as was the glory of Jewish sanctification of G-d's Name by Polish Jewry. Their traditions had been maintained from generation to generation. Now, as then, Jews jumped into flames to save Torah scrolls; Jews were



The funeral of Rabbi Elia Haim Meisel (1821-1912) in Łódź.



THE SECOND POLISH REPUBLIC 1921-1939



Yeshivah students on Nałewki Street. Warsaw, 1928.

sentenced to die for refusing to desecrate the Sabbath, for maintaining secret kosher slaughtering, for maintaining religious schools in which they taught the Torah to Jewish children in secret; and Jewish girls committed suicide rather than be violated. Not only rabbis and chassidim and scholars but also ordinary people, plain Jews of the masses, rose up to sanctify G-d. Even the apparently "empty" Jews of Poland demonstrated how full of sanctity they were. Such were the fruits of the education given and received by the Jews of Poland.

At a time when more than 50% of the Polish populace was illiterate, there was no Jewish boy who did not learn the Hebrew alphabet. Even the most ignorant Jews wished their children to know how to pray, how to say *kaddish* after them. There was no village in Poland without a *cheider* or a Talmud Torah, and even the Jews who lived isolated in hamlets would hire an instructor to live in their homes and teach their children the Torah. Jews who lived in abject poverty would scrimp from their food money to pay tuition. This was not an ordinary drive to give their children culture or education, for in Poland there were government public schools for the Jews, closed on the Sabbath and Jewish Holy Days, in which Jewish religion was taught. But these parents did not accept any of this. They strove to give their children a Torah education. Even those children who spent half a day in public school would spend the second half of the day in *chadorim* or Talmud Torahs.

Educational System and Statistics

The different Jewish parties in Poland maintained separate educational networks. We will mention them briefly and then cite statistics that give a clear picture of the educational situation and the educational goals of Polish Jewry.

The Agudath Israel educational institutions were all part of the Chorev Federation which included Talmud Torahs and



Hasidim outside a house of prayer on Saturday. Cracow, 1938.

chadorim for boys under the name *Yesodey HaTorah*, *Bais Yaakov* schools for girls, and also preparatory *yeshivos* and major *yeshivos*, seminars and seminaries. These educational institutions, operated in a traditional Jewish spirit, had as their goal to raise a generation loyal to the Torah and to fear of G-d and to provide their pupils with knowledge of the written and the oral Torah. In order to fulfill the requirements of the state, which had passed a compulsory education law, the Chorev schools taught a limited amount of secular knowledge, thus obtaining state licensing and freeing their pupils from the obligation to attend government public schools. These secular studies were taught only in the **chadorim**, in the Talmud Torahs, and in the *Bais Yaakov* schools. The *yeshivos* taught only Torah without any admixture of secular studies.

Educational institutions in which the language of instruction was Hebrew and which taught in the spirit of secular Zionism were organized into the Tarbus Federation which included kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools and seminaries. In addition, the Zionist Federation maintained schools in which the language of instruction was Yiddish. They were organized as the Schulkult Federation. High schools in which the language of instruction was Polish and which educated in the spirit of Zionism were organized into a network called Dr. Braude's High Schools.

The left-wing labor party established its own educational network called CYSHO (Central-Yiddish School Organization) which included kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools and seminaries. The language of instruction was Yiddish, the goal pure secular Yiddishism. The Mizrachi also had an educational network of its own, *Yavneh*, which included kindergartens and seminaries. Its educational goal: the Mizrachi spirit.

In addition, the communities maintained their own

educational institutions, the overwhelming majority of which were religious.

All of the above were public educational institutions. There were also private educational institutions, primarily **chadorim**, which maintained their unique integrity.

The figures that follow are taken from very reliable sources. The figures up to 1929 are taken from an article by Dr. Aryeh Tartakower, "The Schools of the Jewish Public in Poland," which appeared in the *Dr. Braude fun Polische Yuden*.* The figures up to 1937 are from the *Lexicon fun Polische Yuden* (vol. 1)* which was published in 1939 just before the Nazis entered Poland, from the article by G. Hecht, "Twenty Years of Schooling for the Jewish Minority in Poland", and from the article about *Agudath Israel* in that lexicon. The figures for the *Yavneh* schools were taken from Dr. Kahane's book *L'Cheshbonah Shel Tkufa*, published by the *Yavneh* School Society.

A comparison of the figures for institutions and pupils of all the Jewish networks combined with the total number of institutions and pupils in the Chorev network indicates the importance of the Chorev network in education: In 1929 the total number of public educational institutions was 534; Chorev institutions 580. Pupils in all the educational institutions totaled 68,226; in Chorev institutions 73,311. In 1935 all other public educational institutions totaled 679, while there were 1,277 Chorev institutions. The pupils in all the other institutions numbered 83,697; in Chorev institutions 109,500.

Dr. Tartakower, in his article, asserts:

The Chorev network includes a far greater number of institutions and of pupils than all the other

*This is a very rare book, Mr. B. Mintz generously made it available to us from his private library.

Jewish educational organizations in Poland combined.

Also Mr. Hecht, in his article in the *Lexicon*, writes:

The most common and the most popular were and remain the Chorev and the Talmud Torahs where thousands of children are raised in a pure Orthodox spirit.

Regarding the above figures, it should be pointed out that they do not include the private **chadorim** and Talmud Torahs which were not part of the Chorev network and which forewent any government privileges in order to keep secular studies out of their programs. All of these were absolutely chassidic institutions of the old kind which did not deviate from their tradition. We do not have accurate figures for the number of children that attended these schools. But we can go by the figures given by Dr. Tartakower for Warsaw, where the private **chadorim** had 8,000 pupils, **half** the Jewish children of elementary school age in Warsaw. If this was the case in Warsaw, where "new winds" were blowing, it was all the more so in the conservative small towns. One must also include the yeshiva students in Lithuanian Poland, in yeshivos united by the Vaad Hayeshivos, in which thousands of students studied.

Another interesting fact that we learn from these figures is that in the various educational networks there is a decline in the number of institutions and pupils or a very small increase; whereas at the same time there is an obviously great increase in the number of institutions and pupils in the Chorev networks. It would seem that parents perceived the negative results of nonreligious education and were especially careful to give their children traditional, uncompromising education. In the Tarbus network, one sees a decline in the number of schools and a small increase in the number of pupils. About CYSHO, Mr.

Hecht notes in his article in the *Lexicon*, "There are no current numbers, but there is a definite decline in the number of schools and pupils." Shulkult, too, shows a decline in the number of pupils. Braude's High Schools shows a decline in the number of schools and of pupils. In the Yavneh system, there is a degree of increase which is not even 14% of the increase in the Chorev system and is only 7% of Orthodox education in general. The Tachkemoni seminary operated by Mizrachi in Warsaw was also in constant decline, as indicated by the figures from the *Lexicon*: In 1925, there were 206 students: 1930 -- 220; 1931 -- 204; 1932 -- 185; 1933 -- 178; 1934 -- 169; 1935 -- 159.

These numbers draw a lucid picture of Polish Jewry at its peak: 80% of Polish Jewish children received a Torah education. From their youngest days, treasures of traditional Judaism were opened to them. Even those who in maturity left the ways of their fathers still came under the protective illumination of the Torah to keep them from being entirely lost to Jewry.

The Chorev schools, especially the Bais Yaakov girls schools, inculcated in their pupils a firm Torah world perspective. The Agudah youth organizations comprised masses of organized youth. In 1935, Zeirei Agudath Israel had 25,000 members in 450 branches; B'nos Agudath Israel had 20,000 members in 300 branches; and Poalei Agudath Israel had 10,800 members in 152 branches -- together a total of some 60,000 organized young people, to say nothing of tens of thousands affiliated nonmembers. All of these were products of the Orthodox schools. When tragedy struck, they remained firm. The ninety-three teachers and students of Bais Yaakov who became a symbol of Jewish sanctity and purity derived their spiritual heroism from a Bais Yaakov education in the spirit of Agudath Israel.³

³These girls took their own lives rather than be defiled by the invading Nazis.