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The Heder Metukan

Abstract

Jewish education during the transition period in Jewish life in the three decades prior to the first world war was going through a period of groping and trial before it found its true expression in the form of the new Improved Heder. The Heder Metukan came into being because Jewish parents, teachers and community leaders were struggling to find a positive form of modern Jewish living, which would satisfy their needs as modern Jews dissatisfied with conditions as they were, but looking towards the future with hope and with courage. The program of the new Heder, which was revolutionary in nature, exerted influence on the youth of the Russian Jewish community, because it addressed itself to the actual needs and problems of the day. It granted the past a place of importance, but concerned itself in larger measure with the present and the future. It withstood the outside pressure of both the assimilationists and the ultra-orthodox, and forged its own experience.

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THE HEDER METUKAN

by

JUDAH PILCH

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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A P P R O V A L

This dissertation, entitled
THE HEDER METUKAN

by

Judah Pilch

Candidate for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

has been read and approved by

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Date April 28, 1952

THE HEDER METUKAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	pages
A. JEWISH LIFE AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	1 - 11
1. Political Handicaps	
2. Economic Collapse	
3. Inner Cultural Life	
B. JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES	11 - 37
I. <u>The Traditional School</u>	
1. The Heder	
2. The Traditional Talmud Torah	
II. <u>The Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment</u>	
III. <u>The New School - The Product of the Age</u>	
1. The Haskalah Heder	
2. The Reformed Heder	
3. The Improved Talmud Torah	
4. The Government Schools	
5. Trade Schools	
6. Girls' Schools	
C. THE IMPORTANT CHANGES IN JEWISH LIFE WHICH MOTIVATED A NEW EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATION	37 - 41
D. THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH GAVE RISE TO A NEW TYPE OF JEWISH LEADER	41 - 51
1. The Hebrew Intelligentsia.	
2. The Bnai Moshe	
3. The Private Hebrew Teacher	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	pages
E. THE RISE OF THE HEDER METUKAN OR THE IMPROVED HEDER	51 - 57
F. THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEW SCHOOL	57 - 68
1. The Influence of Pestalozzi and Froebel	
2. Tolstoy's Influence	
3. The Influence of Ahad Haam	
G. THE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF THE HEDER METUKAN	68 - 72
H. THE ROLE OF HEBREW IN THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY	72 - 74
I. THE CURRICULUM OF THE HEDER METUKAN	74 - 95
1. The Homel Curriculum	
2. The Warsaw Curriculum	
3. The Six-Years 'Problematic' Curriculum	
J. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION	95 - 106
1. A Method Apotheosized	
2. The Phonetic Method	
3. The Observation Method	
4. Discipline	
K. THE PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS OF THE HEDER METUKAN	106 - 107
L. HEDER METUKAN AUSPICES AND SCHOOL BOARDS	107 - 109
M. TUITION FEES AND SCHOOL FINANCES	109 - 112
N. TEACHERS, TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHERS' ORGANIZATION	112 - 124
O. TEXTBOOKS AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE	124 - 132
P. CRITIQUE OF THE HEDER METUKAN	132 - 143
Q. SUMMARY AND EVALUATION	143 - 149
CONCLUSION	149 - 152

FOREWORD

Jewish education during the transition period in Jewish life in the three decades prior to the first world war was going through a period of groping and trial before it found its true expression in the form of the new Improved Heder. The Heder Metukan came into being because Jewish parents, teachers and community leaders were struggling to find a positive form of modern Jewish living, which would satisfy their needs as modern Jews dissatisfied with conditions as they were, but looking towards the future with hope and with courage. The program of the new Heder, which was revolutionary in nature, exerted influence on the youth of the Russian Jewish community, because it addressed itself to the actual needs and problems of the day. It granted the past a place of importance, but concerned itself in larger measure with the present and the future. It withstood the outside pressure of both the assimilationists and the ultra-orthodox, and forged its own experience.

In making the study of the Heder Metukan, we deemed it advisable to preface our discussion of the subject by a brief survey of the major aspects of Jewish life in Russia at the end of the past century which led in the main to the development of a new outlook on Jewish education, i.e. the political, economic, and the cultural. Special attention was given to a review of Jewish education during that period in order to see more vividly the newness of the new school.

American Jewish life has not yet found its true expression. We seek a type of life wherein the American modernism and the authentic form of the

Jewish cultural heritage will admit of resolution into a workable synthesis. And for that we need a new Jewish school, a new education. We believe that the story of the Heder Metukan has a bearing on our present-day problems.

But since no two situations are exactly the same, we do not imply that the past experiences serve as a pattern for us to follow. The Heder Metukan does, however, deserve earnest study because it exemplifies a dynamic effort to solve the educational problems which changing conditions of the modern period placed before the Jew. There is something to be learned from that chapter in the history of Jewish education. It will help us discover the program for our own schools which will join our tradition with the needs of the modern Jew in America.

A. JEWISH LIFE AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I. Political Handicaps

The era of half-reforms which characterized the early period of the reign of Alexander II (1855-81) aroused hope among the Jews of Russia for gradual and progressive alleviation from oppression. The emancipation of the serfs in 1861, and the attempts at other reforms in order to pacify the rising discontent of the Russian masses, brought with it a temporary improvement in the political and economic life of the Jewish people as well. It was during this short period of relative amelioration of Jewish hardships that the early Maskilim 1) saw the possibility of full Jewish participation in Russian life and advocated modernization of Jewish life as a means of attainment of civil rights.

But the accession of Alexander III to the throne of Russia in 1881 ended the somewhat improved, though still precarious position of the Jews during the reign of Czar Alexander II. Under the new Czar, the Jews of Russia were subjected to renewed and augmented, as well as more calculated, acts of persecution and violence. The hopes for at least partial emancipation which many Jews had previously entertained were thus rudely shattered. Leaders of the Russian government, influenced by the reactionary Pobiedonostzev, the right hand of the new emperor, were no longer satisfied with sporadic and casual persecution of Jews. They set out to "solve" the Jewish problem with organizational skill and with total disregard of humanitarian considerations. The renewed attacks upon Jews were henceforth methodically and carefully planned and skillfully directed. Under the guise of saving the Russian peasantry from Jewish exploitation or from an unassimilable foreign element

1) Maskilim is the Hebrew name for the adherents of the movement of enlightenment, which advocated modernization of Jewish life.

hostile to true Russia, etc. - the cliques of high-ranking arch-antisemites, with the help of influential newspapers, organized pogroms throughout the Jewish Pale of Settlement. Beginning with the year 1881 and continuing intermittently for some 25 years, these pogroms imperilled the security of the Jews as human beings. Little did the Russian people know that in order to divert the revolutionary sentiments of the masses from themselves, the Emperor and the landowners planned to spread Judaeophobia. In more than 200 Jewish communities 2), large and small, physical assaults, raids, looting and massacres took place. Jewish existence became unbearable. So barbaric were these pogroms, so great was the horror that the entire civilized world became horrified. But so determined was the government not to leave the Jews in peace, even after the various representations made by humanitarians both in and outside Russia, and by the several commissions which were appointed to investigate the Jewish question, that special laws, in addition to those already instituted in previous years, were enacted, further restricting Jewish rights and bringing greater disaster upon them. The famous May Laws of 1882 - Temporary Orders Concerning the Jews (temporary in the sense that it was not necessary for the Orders to obtain the sanction of the State Council, but only the approval of the Cabinet and the signature of the king) prohibiting Jews to engage in business on Sunday, were followed by merciless Jewish expulsions and the Numerus Clausus law, limiting Jewish students in secondary schools and universities to 10% in the Pale of Settlement, to 5% outside of the Pale and to 3% in St. Petersburg and Moscow. In the nineties these "Temporary Rules" of 1882 were continued. In 1891, a special law called for the expulsion of Jewish artisans from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novgorod, Riga, and Yalta. This law applied even to discharged soldiers, who until then had been enjoying special privileges. The State Liquor monopoly of

2) History of the Jews in Russia and Poland by S. Dubnow, Vol.3, page 28

1894 deprived 200,000 Jews of a livelihood, and eliminated all of them from the countryside. By the end of the decade there were 650 special laws that dealt with Jewish rights, or more correctly, restrictions of their rights. The brutality of the Russian regime reached almost the state of absurdity, when in 1890 the governors of some of the states in the Pale imposed upon Jews the obligation of taking off their hats before any official as a sign of respect.

The situation grew still worse under the rule of Nicholas II (1894-1917). Jew-hatred among the population was openly encouraged. The insistent demands for reform 3) accompanied by revolutionary manifestations were added factors to the government policy of mistreating the Jews. The participation of some Jews in the political parties 4) that advocated political liberty and equal rights for all people and which threatened the very throne, proved to be a convenient pretext to persecute the Jews. New pogroms took place (Shpola 1897; Nikolayev 1899; Chenstochov 1902 and Kishinev in 1903) which shocked the entire civilized world, and the Jewish community was panic-stricken.

These deplorable conditions marked a turning point in Jewish history. The Jewish intelligentsia, full of wrath against the reactionary government and shame for their own people who did not try to defend themselves 5) set out to seek solutions for Jewish helplessness. One of these solutions was Zionism with its concomitant theory of Hebrew cultural revival, which in turn gave birth to a new educational orientation.

II. Economic Collapse

These political conditions had shaken the very foundations of Jewish eco-

3) Timid appeals from nine Zemstvos for a measure of democracy

4) Secret circles of Jewish revolutionaries began to be termed in Vilna in the eighties.

5) See Bialik's "B'eir h-hareiga"

conomic life. Pogroms, revolutions and famine, expulsions and methodical discriminations in the hitherto Jewish fields of economic endeavor increased frightfully Jewish pauperism. The petty traders and artisans constituted the largest proportion of the employable Jewish population. There were also some Jewish in agriculture, ^{and} a comparatively small percentage in the liberal professions. According to the Russian census in 1897 6), of every hundred Jews gainfully employed, 3% engaged in agriculture, 7% in the free professions, 11.9% in domestic and public work, 39.3% in handiwork and light industry, and 38.8% in petty trade and commerce. If one bears in mind the fact that this disproportionate number of Jewish artisans and petty traders were confined to the Pale of Settlement, where the general population consisted of an impoverished peasantry and a great army of "superfluous" elements made up of unemployed, one can readily understand the plight of the Jews in eking out a livelihood. - On the other hand, it is also important to note that this peculiar nature of Jewish economic existence, is a direct outgrowth of their political inequality. In the Pale, which included ten states of Russo-Poland and fifteen states of Ukraine and White Russia there lived in 1897, according to the census, 4,900,000 Jews, or 96% of all Jews of Greater Russia. The density of the Jewish population was such that Jews constituted in the Russo-Poland 14% of the general population and in the Russian states 11%. Owing to the fact that these very states of the Pale were economically backwards, there was no market for the unchecked expansion of the typically Jewish trades and hence a great competition in these occupations ensued. Had there been a possibility for the Jews to settle in all of greater Russia, their ratio to the general population would have been 5% 7), their trades

6) Bolshaya Russkaya Encyclopedia, Vol. 24, pp. 85-102

7) Hasotziologiah Shel Hayehudim by A. Ruppin, Vol. 2 p. 91

and professions would have been more productive in the sense of greater demand for their economic callings. No wonder then that in the Pale Jewish participation in typically Jewish trades was four times more than was the case in the states outside of the Pale. Hence the rise of the so-called Jewish Luftmenschen, uprooted from firm economic positions which worked havoc on all of Jewish economic existence.

The economic plight of the Jews surpassed even that of the poverty-stricken superfluous elements of the Russian masses. The discriminations against them on the part of the government, the poverty of their Gentile clientele and the lack of lebensraum to initiate new economic ventures - all of this resulted in hunger and deprivation for the masses of Jews.

In all countries where capitalism developed new areas of economic endeavor, the Jews were afforded opportunities for active participation in the capitalistic economic expansion. They thus had the possibility to gain in social prestige as well. But this was not the case in Russia. Lestshinsky 8) points out "The principle of homo-economicus as the central motif in the economic life of the capitalist society, a basic premise for a society which believes in full interplay of forces, brought about the gradual equalization of Jews. Even in Russia, although the Jews were certainly far from political emancipation, those elements from among them who were the active participants in the capitalist development, were given special status and special privileges. Thus there came into being the category of Jewish "first guild" merchants, certified craftsmen, and professionals, who became economically and civically independent, at a time

8) Yiden, Dubnow Fund, Paris 1944, Vol. 1, p.390

when the Jewish masses were still deprived of all rights and in a state which is constantly affected by discriminatory laws." But the overwhelming majority of the Russian Jews who lived in a country where capitalist development was very slow, with the exception of the few Lestshinsky refers to, remained not only socially segregated, and with a feeling of economic worthlessness and "unproductivity", but also without means for a bare livelihood.

This economic plight of the Jews constituted another cause in the radical changes which took place in Jewish life in the period 1882-1905. New forces emerged which sought to eradicate the political and economic difficulties and abnormalities. These forces fostered among other things a new orientation with regard to education.

III. Cultural Life

Culturally, the majority of Jews lived as in the days of old. The Jewish religion continued to be the very essence of cultural life. It motivated all social and intellectual activities. Customs, ceremonies, rituals, folkways - all stemmed from one source: religion. There was strict adherence to the Shulchan Aruch, literally "Prepared Table", the sixteenth century code in which the religious and ethical teachings of Judaism are expanded into a body of regulations designed to govern the Jew's life down to the minutest detail. The masses of people were content with praying, reciting the Psalms, and observing all regulations of the Shulchan Aruch. The slightest deviation from a custom met with reproof. The wearing of a short jacket, trimming the beard, or reading of secular books even in Hebrew, was looked upon as a sign of free-thinking. The synagogue continued to serve as the house of worship and house of assembly. It satisfied the intellectual, social and religious needs of the people. This institution radiated peace, rest and warmth. The itinerant preachers (Maggidim)

would deliver addresses which contained exhortation to piety and goodness. Worshippers would linger to gossip and to ^{engage in} encourage any friendly discussions. But the same synagogue would also serve as a place for passionate controversies and quarrels.

The following two excerpts will illustrate some of the aspects of synagogue life of the time. "In our community", writes the correspondent MK in the Knesset Hagdolah 9) "there are thirteen synagogues and in addition a number of 'Minyanim' and all is well. There is always a great deal of noise; all pray in loud voices, all drink liquor in memory of the departed (called Tikun), and all surround the mourner while their prayer-shawls and Tefilin are still on them, It is a holiday in the Heder because there is not one ¹⁰⁾ Jartzzeit/ceremonial in which the hungry me-lamed does not participate, making every effort to elaborate on the good qualities of the deceased so as to prolong the Tikun up to midnight. All business ventures, all quarrels, all gossip, all types of criticism against town leadership - their place is in the synagogue. On Sabbath, and on Festivals, there is quarrel over 'Alyiah' 11). The Hazan and the Shamash would ordinarily take this opportunity to score a certain grievance, and there is shouting until the throat fails to respond to the urge for more yelling. Often all quarrel ends in a free-for-all fight. Even such an occurrence as Mr. X's insistence that the reader of Mussaf service should be Mr. Y; Mr. Z. rising and clapping his hand on his Humash shouting loudly that the reader Mr. X. will take too long a time for his chanting of the Mussaf and that he will cause people to feel great hunger." These aspects of Synagogue life were criticized by the enlightened Jews, but their

9 Vol. 4, p. 102

10 German-Jewish term to designate the anniversary of a death

11 Hebrew for "going up," applied ritually to the invitation to go up to the platform for the reading of the Torah.

protests, except in individual cases, proved unsuccessful. Most of the Jews could not see any sign of decadence in their religious life and they remained attached to their old customs.

The home, too, was rooted in old customs and traditions. It kept aloof from modernism and from knowledge of a changing world. The following will illustrate the mood of the time, which prevailed in the Jewish home

"The Baal Habait ¹²⁾ at whose table I ate the first 'third' ¹³⁾ a very pious Jew, was dissatisfied with me because I failed to behave like a Hasid ¹⁴⁾, especially when washing my hands in the morning and because generally speaking, my hand washing at all times, was not done in the manner of Hassidism, (a 'religious freedom that I permitted myself after long inner struggle), and moreover, because I remarked to my pupils that it is a stupid custom, because you do not drive away the Tumah ¹⁵⁾ from the fingers. Every now and then the Baal Habait used to ask me 'religious questions' and I endeavored not to give any definite reply. That evening I sat at the table along with all the rest of the family eating the hot soup with proper mannerism. The father of my students, who sat at the head of the table asked, "Is it true that you told my son that the Goyim ¹⁶⁾ too have a soul?" I was a bit bewildered, but I had to admit the truth, and answered that during a conversation on a certain topic we discussed this matter and that I remarked affirmatively to the query whether the Goy too has a soul. The face of my host reddened and he asked; "But the Goy does not put on Tefilin, does not read the Shema, does not say Grace, how can he have a soul?" My reply was: "The Jew puts on Tefilin, and the Goy kisses his cross, which hangs

¹² Literaly, the owner of the house.

¹³ The winter months were divided between three employers whose children he taught.

¹⁴ Follower of popular movement that rebelled against formalism of rabbinic Judaism.

¹⁵ Defilement

¹⁶ Gentiles

on his neck, and that he too, says Grace. I could not finish, because my host pounded on the table: "A Jew who compares a cross to Tefilin should not be housed in a Jewish home. Get out!"

The above two descriptions point to the fact that the prevailing conditions did not favor the introduction of modernism. The masses resisted not only assault from the outside, but also the revolutionary forces from within. They developed an inner self defense and resented all criticism of their practices. Haskalah 17) made little impact upon the lives of the masses. The precarious state of their political and economic existence made them seek solace and consolation in their attachment to their faith, and critical of any attempt at reform. They were very distrustful of the reformers. The Shulchan Aruch was to all intents and purposes a living Judaism and the Rabbinic authority was questioned by the few only.

S U M M A R Y

In summarizing the chapter on Jewish life during the last two decades of the last century, we find that the constant assaults upon the Jews in the ghettos of Russia and Poland made Jewish existence very precarious. The all-out attacks were very hard to endure. They weighed heavily upon the Jews. But the backbone of their morale was not broken. The people on the whole maintained their spirit and clung steadfastly to their religio-national faith. Their sufferings prevented them from heading the call of those Maskilim who advocated Russification and adjustment to modernism. The Jews could have no trust in the culture of a people

17) The movement towards the modernization of Jewish life which originated in Germany about the middle of the 18th century and which fought the exclusive sway of the Talmud and in favor of modern education, culture, and manners.

whose leaders engaged in "uncultured" acts of terror and discrimination. It should not be forgotten, however, that living in an isolated environment, subject to constant attack, could in no way be seen as a normal existence. The cultural life of the group unavoidably reflected the conditions of its physical life. It was naturally orientated towards those manifestations which contributed most clearly to the defense of its identity - the palpable, highly visible manifestations which are embodied in ritualism. But this over-emphasis on ritualism acted as ^a detriment to true cultural creativeness. Synagogue life was not always at its best. Decadence gradually set in there and made inroads into the home as well.

Thus we see that religious life, the backbone of Jewish morale, was an antidote to assimilation and a strong fortification against the outside onslaught, but was not strong enough to rejuvenate its potentialities from within. It was to this problem of re-introducing the creative element in Jewish cultural life and safeguarding it against further decadence, that the nationalist movement addressed itself. A small fraction of enlightened Hebraists undertook to nurture the vital forces of Jewish culture as independent from ritualism and functional religion.

This seeking of "liberty and light" from within, and this quest for self-rejuvenation stimulated the young Hebraists to devote themselves to the cause of Jewish cultural development. The masses, while still mistrusting these "reformers", have in time come to see their genuineness of purpose, and due to the direct contact with them, have gradually learned to give them an attentive ear.

The growth of cultural nationalism, modern Hebrew and Yiddish literature paved the way for a modern Hebrew-Cultural school.

B. JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES

In the dreadful anguish of those days, when decrees and pogroms shattered the ground under their feet, the Jews resisted secular education with good reason. They were afraid of the stream of the new culture which would engulf their Jewishness. They had faith in their old educational institutions and thought that the study of Bible and Talmud is more important than the study of botany, history or geography.

There were eight types of schools in existence in the eighties and nineties of the last century. Two were the traditional type schools, serving the overwhelming majority of Jewish children, the other six were the product of the new age. Since schools are related to the fortunes of society of which they are a part, the description of these schools will not only help us understand the educational patterns but also the socio-cultural currents which advocated the establishment of new educational institutions.

I. The Traditional Schools

1. The Heder

As already noted, the masses of Jews resisted reformation. Hence they maintained the traditional school, the Heder. Though privately owned, the Heder was in a certain sense a public institution¹⁸). The general public was interested in the Heder because it was to many of them the only educational agency which served them. (The Talmud Torah, as will be noted, served the children of the poor.) This public interest created a favorable attitude to the Heder which persisted for many years and to some degree exerted influ-

18) Haheder, by A.M. Lifshitz, Hatekufah, Vol. 7, Nissan-Sivan 5680, Warsaw

ence on its program. The very fact that a poor teacher would attract fewer students, gave the public some measure of control over the Heder. As it is known, the physical aspects of the Heder were deplorable. It was ordinarily a one-room school, housed in the small hut of the melamed¹⁹), poorly lighted and ventilated, with no accommodations for play. The same room, in many a case, served also as living quarters for the melamed's family. The pupils in this one-room school, were in attendance from morning until evening. Those who had to wait for their turn at the large table, headed by the melamed, used to play in the yard or on the street, and on rainy days sit in the same room, carelessly engaging in whatever game would not arouse the wrath of the melamed or his wife. A description by Yekhiel Shtern will best illustrate the physical aspects of the Heder. The inside consisted of a large square room, divided in two by a screen. Behind the screen was the teacher's bedroom and kitchen. We used to call it "the teacher's alcove". Over the opening of the alcove hung a red sheet covered with countless white dots. We would wrap ourselves in this sheet and play hide-and-seek . . . Through the second door opening in the same screen one could see the dark kitchen with the rusty chimney-stove, full of dishes and kitchen furniture. There was also a big belly-front buffet on which the youngsters would clamber . . .

At the west wall, between the opening to the kitchen and the hall door, stood a big wooden, closed alcove. It was a pantry and the teacher's wife was always either taking something out of it and carrying it to the kitchen or bringing something back to it from the kitchen . . . On the alcove were piled up old torn prayer books and Bibles which the teacher and his helpers would take down for class. In the corner near the same wall and not far from the door

19) Melamed is the Hebrew name for teacher

which led to the hall stood a large barrel of water and near it on a bench a big brass can. On the ground near the barrel stood a large wooden trough with two handles. In this trough would be collected the left-overs of the children's meals, all kinds of paper, which the children would throw into it, also the water from the brass can which the children used for drinking. This corner was always wet and slimy. Near the north wall stood a long wooden bench. Behind the bench was a combination bed-bench, which served as bench during the day and as a bed at night. The teacher would sit on a little pillow on this bench-bed, wearing a vest, but no jacket and a skull-cap on his head. He would set his twisted pointer into the prayer book or the Bible used by the children, who were seated near him on a long bench at the table along the west wall. At the other end of this table, which went all along the east wall, was a helper who taught another group of children. The east wall came to an end with the glass door which was used only during the summer 20).

a. Heder Dardeki for the very young, from three or four to seven, where children were grouped into three groups: beginners, who studied the alphabet, intermediates, who studied syllable formation, reading and blessings, and those who read fluently and were ready for the study of the Pentateuch. The Heder Dardeki, in certain communities, was also the only co-educational type of a school. It was known as Heder Irbuvyah, 21) where girls were admitted to learn Ivri^h (reading of Hebrew), together with boys. In most of the traditional H^adarim there were one or two behelfers (assistants) who not only helped in instruction but also performed such services as transporting the very young to and from

20) A Kheder in Tyszowce, By Yekhiel Shtet^h, Yivo Annual of Social Studies, N.Y. 1950
21) Haheder B'Hayei Ameinu by Zevi Scharfstein, New York 1943, p. 81 pp. 154-5

home, playing games with them, etc. The teacher or melamed of a Heder Dardeki was in most cases ignorant of worldly matters, uncultured and uncouth, ignorant even of higher Jewish learning ²²).

b. Humash Heder This school served boys who could read fluently, knew most of the benedictions, all blessings and some prayers and were to study Humash (Pentateuch). The students spent in this department another two or three years, acquiring knowledge of all five books of Moses, by studying the weekly portion and the Rashi Commentary. Often they were also taught Targum, the Haftarah of the week, the cantillation of the Teamim and certain aggadic material, the latter as preparation to Talmud. In the Humash Heder the children learned occasionally Ethics of the Fathers, and the Piyutim (Liturgic poems) for the holidays. The melamed was of a more scholarly type and a more refined individual.

c. Finally the third type of Heder, the Gemara Heder, where boys entered at the age of ten, after having had completed their course of study in the Humash Heder. This Heder had an enrollment of very few students. Tuition fee being higher, the age of the children already permitting apprenticeship at an artisan's workshop or help at home, the number of students at this rung on the educational ladder dwindled down considerably. In this Gemara Heder the children were introduced to Talmud. The beginners started with Nezikin and covered approximately ten to fifteen pages of the Tractate, the intermediates studied Gittin or Kidushin ~~per semester~~ and covered from 40 to 50 pages of the text, while the more advanced students were instructed in Shabat or Pesakhim or Eirubin, and studied as much as 150 pages per semester ²³). All study was supplemented by Rashi and Tosafot commentaries. From Tuesday to

²² Slomo Hillels, in Shvilei Hakinuch, Tishri 5703, p. 5
²³ Haheder B'Hayei Ameinu, p. 80

Friday there was part time given to the review of the Sidrah (weekly portion of the Pentateuch). The brighter students were given an assignment for self-study. In addition, there was instruction in Midrash Eicha, and the Megilot appropriate to the holidays 24). Some students were also taught writing Hebrew and Yiddish and elements of Arithmetic. The melamdin were Talmudic scholars, some of them well versed in all of the Jewish classical literature. While the methods of instruction varied in these three types of Hedarim, the common feature was that all learning involved memorization, translation into Yiddish, and constant repetition in order to attain fluency 25).

It is important at this juncture to note that only in the Polish states (Vislavskei Kray) the study of Russian was permitted in the Heder in order to counteract the influence of the Polish language and Polish nationalism.

In these traditional Hedarim the overwhelming majority of children of elementary school age were to be found

2. The Traditional Talmud Torah

The Talmud Torah was a free public school for the children of the poor and for orphaned boys who were given an elementary Jewish education. The elders of the community were in charge of the school. They provided the finances, which were derived from the Jewish tax on meat and from private contributions; they also hired the teachers, and "supervised" instruction. There was a Talmud Torah practically in every community in the Pale. In certain middle-sized and large communities the number of students in the Talmud Torah was several hundred. The following description of a good Talmud Torah in Slonim is given by a cor-

24) Skirah al Hitpachut Hahinuch HaIvri BeBessarabia, Tishri 5703, P.6

25) Changing Conception in Jewish Education by E. Gamoran, pp. 90-104

respondent in Knesset Hagedolah 26), "This institution stands out as a pillar in the city of Slonim. The number of students is 500. There are nine rooms in this house, meaning that there are nine classes. The studies are excellent. In the eighth class in particular one is impressed with the study of the Talmud. The teacher is the venerable Reb Zevi Ha-Cohen Resnick of Moitcha, who makes paths in the sea of the Talmud and even in stormy waters . . . The students are being examined every week by the Ab Bet Din²⁷⁾, the local rabbi. There are also two teachers for the Russian language²⁷⁾. Seventy are the students who take up the so-called general subjects and train their hands in Orthography which is taught by the teacher of Hebrew, Reb Abraham Itzhak Zaklad. The income for the year 5648 was 2,800 rubles; the expenditures 3,000 rubles. The following are the names of the individuals who made their contributions to the institution this year (there follows a list of eight people who contributed the total sum of 2,300 rubles). The house is under the direct supervision of the following people (there follows a list of six individuals) and Reb Leib Mishkin is the "Mashgiach" (overseer) of this house. At this point it is important to greet and pay tribute to the following ladies (list of four women) who prepared food for the poor of the Talmud Torah, as well as garments, and for all their efforts for the poor from whom will come forth the word of Torah, may their names be blessed." This type of Talmud Torah cannot be considered the predominant one. In the larger cities (Odessa, Vilna, Minsk) there were wealthy and influential gabaim, who were subject to the Haskalah stimuli. There the Talmud Torahs were adequately staffed and managed and the needs of the poor were cared for. In Odessa, for example, there existed a good school whose principal, since 1881, was the famous writer S.J. Abramowitz²⁸⁾. In smaller

²⁷⁾ One must remember that in the Polish states the Russian language was taught in all Jewish schools

²⁸⁾ The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol 12, P.39

²⁶⁾ Knesset Hagedolah, Vol. 3, p. 81

communities, however, the description which follows mirrors the conditions as they existed. This account of two Talmud Torah schools was written by a correspondent from the city of Bobroysk. 29) "The school of the Hassidim is numerically greater than the Talmud Torah of the Mitnagdim, because the former are in the majority. I shall therefore speak first of the Talmud Torah of the Hassidic community. There are six rooms, six melamidim and from 120 to 130 students. This is the curriculum: first form - Reading of Hebrew script and study of Prayers; second, third and fourth - Humash; fifth - Humash with a little from Rashi's commentary; and beginning of Gemara. The students take part in some secular studies (not all of them, but those whose heart wishes outside knowledge) for two hours a day; from 8 to 9 in the morning the teacher will train them in penmanship both Hebrew and Russian, and in the evening at this hour (8 to 9) they will listen to the instruction in Russian, and in the four elements of calculation from the mouth of one of the teachers of the government school for beginners, because thus commanded the governor of the state when he gave permission for the house, that also an accredited teacher should lecture one hour a day (this condition did not find favor in the eyes of some of the enemies of Haskalah and rejectors of knowledge, and they wanted that this teacher receive a wage for abstaining (Prisha) . . . but they did not succeed because this teacher is under oath and did not want to err . . .; several of the students whose parents cannot afford to cloth them and also to feed them, will get here some clothes and sometimes food. But the truth is ^{that} the ways of the house management are bad, and its students are wild and dirty and they grow up without Torah and good manners (Derech Erez) because the management is in the hands of a stupid Hassid who sanctifies and purifies himself in the waters of the Mikveh (Ritual bath) to atone for

29) Knesset Hagedolah, Vol. 4, pp. 100-1

his sins, the sin of usury . . . and in the hands of such a man is the entire school, and he does as he pleases, because the Gabaim, though respectable citizens, do not bother much, but are members in name only. This is the story of the house called 'Talmud Torah' d'Sfardim'. And the Talmud Torah of the congregation of Mitnagdim is so far as curriculum, both holy studies and the secular ones, is concerned, about the same, with the difference in size, because in it there are only four rooms, four melamidim, and 65 pupils. And may the name of the first Gabai be mentioned with praise. He is the Maskil Reb Mordecai Hurwich, who knows what he wishes and fulfills his mission faithfully. But 'One little bird does not bring the summer in his wings', says the German.

The finances for the two schools are derived from the following sources: individual contributions, charity boxes, sale of Yartzeit candles, from the Mi-Shebeirach 30) pledges on Sabbath, donations at weddings and circumcisions, and also monthly dues of members. But a detailed account of income and expenditures I do not know, because it is known that there is no blessing in anything which is open to the eye."

And another report from Vinitza, Ukrain^e depicts the conditions in a Talmud Torah: " According to our Pinkas 31) the Talmud Torah was already in existence in 5586, when the elders decreed that all women should give to its fund two gulden per week. From that time until this day, ~~from that time~~ we are in the habit of building a Talmud Torah - in most dirty places, in the narrowest alleys, under heaps of garbage, the melamidim receiving a wage that does not

30) A special benediction recited in honor of the individual called up to the reading of the weekly portion of the Pentateuch

31) Knesset Hagedolah, Vol. 4 pp. 132-34

provide for bread alone for their families. The students are the sons of the poorest of poor, dressed in rags. But who does not know the nature of the Talmud Torah and who does not know its students, sickly, pale-faced with bent backs from sitting eight hours every day on the benches, heads down on the prayer books, Humashim, or the Gemara and all of them shouting and crying until the age of almost fifteen. And the melandim, may the lot of all Israel's enemies be that of the melandim. Who does not know the miserable melamed, men who are not fit to do any kind of work, men who are ignorant of real knowledge, hungry for bread, men of this type take the Retzuah (a leather strap) and become teachers in a Talmud Torah and give our children to drink from broken wheels until this bitter water absorbed in their bellies make their inside pain and their souls rot . . . The students learn Humash, misinterpreted by a melamed, with a sentence or two from 'Metsudat David'. But if the teacher does not understand the scriptures himself and does not possess the sweetness of lips and the thorough knowledge of the language to appreciate the spirit that hovers over the holy books, no interpretation and explanation is of avail. The child will not know the language, will not understand the laws of the Torah. And before the student receives knowledge of Bible they already place before him the Gemara, and there is discussion on the laws of matrimony and marital state, and therefore when the youth leaves the Talmud Torah, he does not know what religion is and what it demands of him."

It is important to mention here that the government permitted the teaching of Russian and general subjects in the Talmud Torah. The Law of 1844 32) which provided that there be one teacher for every 25 pupils 33) in a Talmud Torah and that children above the age of eight be taught Russian, remained in

32) K Istorii Natshalnovo Obrozavanyea Yevreev Rossi, Branson, St. Petersburg, 1896, p.19

33) Spravochnaya Kniga, pp.52

force. But very few were the Talmud Torahs where general subjects were taught. In the Hamelits of the 4th of May of 1892 there is a report that in Kremenchuk, an inspector, after having visited the Crown Schools, wanted to examine the pupils in their achievements in the Russian language, but found soon enough they had not learned the language and threatened to close the Talmud Torah.

However, during the first decade of the present century, the Talmud Torah gave evidence of having been influenced by the nationalist movement and the spread of Hebrew as a living language. Here and there young modern Hebrew teachers (34) joined the staff of the Talmud Torah and introduced the study of modern Hebrew, Jewish History, and songs. Here and there the old Talmud Torah was transformed into a modern Hebrew school. In certain communities, the school's increased effectiveness attracted children from better homes, too. (35)

By the year 1900, the majority of the Talmud Torah schools were very little affected by the modern trends. Most schools remained as in the days of old, deficient both in physical arrangements and educational methods.

II. The Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment Among the Jews in Russia

In order better to understand the nature of the new types of schools to be examined in the following section of our study, it is important to take note of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews in Russia. For this Society played an important role in the educational history of the new

34) Midarko Shel Moreh by Ch. A. Zuta, pp. 84-87

35) Hapedagog, Vol. 1, p. 163

schools and more especially, in the movements for the modernization of Jewish education.

The Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia was organized in 1863, with headquarters in St. Petersburg. The aims of the Society were: To promote culture among the Jews and to develop in them a love for it; to spread the knowledge of the Russian language among the Jewish masses; to help publish useful works and periodicals in Russian and in Hebrew; and to aid the young who wished to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of knowledge, and of the sciences. (36) The famous motto of the Hebrew poet Judah Leib Gordon, the executive secretary of the Society, "Be a Human Being On the Street, a Jew in your Home"^(in his poem: *Haritzel Ami*), became the major plank of the organization's program. They believed that enlightenment is not only a good thing in itself, but also an aid in Jewish struggle for emancipation. In the early years of its existence, the Society's activities were limited to the extending of financial help to select, eager students to obtain a general education, and to the stimulation of interest in the Russian language, which it was felt should be included in the Jewish schools. The Society would also furnish books to a member of educational institutions, particularly the Russian translation of the Bible. At that period, their membership (350 in 1880) and income (37) was very small.

In the Eighties, the Society's leadership decided to increase its membership by reducing the annual dues. The Odessa Chapter existed since 1865; other branches were organized in a number of other cities, too, and new personalities - men who were closer to the masses - joined the ranks of the Society. The new members held the conviction that the Jewish leadership ought to take

36) Rosenthal, J. L. *Toldot Marbel Maskalah BeYisrael*, St. Petersburg, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 9

37) *Ibid*, p. 208

greater interest in its own Jewish culture and its own Jewish educational institutions and not confine their interest and energy to the dissemination of Russian language and culture among the Jews. In the wake of this expansion and orientation, a greater interest in Hebrew literature began to manifest itself among the members. In 1884 the Society's report (38) showed an expenditure of 27,832 rubles for the following activities: aid to private and public Jewish schools, support of students at universities and trade schools and publications. We thus note that the Society turned its attention to concrete work in the area of Jewish education. Talmud Torahs and even certain types of modernized private Hebrew schools were given financial support. It is worth noting at this point the following important regulations that governed the inclusion of schools for financial support (39):

1. Only schools, be they private or public, that have no sources of income to enable them to carry out their program adequately, and which receive no special support from the government
2. A school will be eligible for a subvention, provided there is place on its curriculum for the study of the Russian language. A school where Russian is not taught, cannot be eligible for a subsidy from the treasury
3. In lieu of the subvention, the private school will have to obligate itself to accept a number of poor students; and grant to be applied at the rate of ten rubles per annum, per indigent pupil.

38) Rosenthal, J. L. Toldot Marbei Haskalah BeYisrael, Vol. 1, p.208, Chart on Expenditures

39) Ibid, Vol. 2, pp. 39-41

4. The school that applies for support will have to show: a) a copy of the charter for the institution that was issued by the government and b) the text of the program of studies, including methods of instruction.

In the years that followed, the Society became even more concerned with problems of Jewish education. It maintained a number of its own schools in large communities, aided in the establishment of trade schools and girls' schools, extended aid to Jewish libraries, organized special seminars for its own teachers and for those who wished to attend, and after 1902 extended its moral and financial support to many more Jewish schools, including the Hadarim Metukanim. In connection with its enhanced interest in improving Jewish education of all types of schools, the Society engaged a number of specialists who visited communities, made studies of local conditions, gave whatever advice they could give for improvement, and rendered reports at special meetings, convened by the Society. These reports constituted important information on the status of Jewish education and helped the Society determine the extent of its aid to the Jewish schools, in keeping with the ever-growing interest in education.

The Society in the capital city, (St. Petersburg), as can be seen from the above brief survey, as well as its branches in Moscow, Kiev, and Riga, did undergo changes. The Hebrew cultural renaissance and the nationalist movement had their impact even upon the old-type advocates of "adjustment". The original assimilationist orientation gave way to a more favorable attitude to Jewish cultural values and their institutional forms. The widening of its structural base gave the Society the characteristics of a more democratic agency. In 1902 the

Society convened a conference of all school leaders in the country and in 1907 the number of its members was 40,000. (40) And yet it retained, although to a small degree, its assimilationist spirit (41) which was especially manifest in the leadership of the Odessa branch. It was in that city that there developed an ideological struggle between the nationalists and the assimilationists which brought to the fore the old point of view of "enlightenment". The problems of Hebrew studies in the schools supported by the Society became the bone of contention (see chapter on "The Influence of Ahad Ha'am"). That group of the Odessa chapter - the proponents of the original ideas of the Society - who were advocating Russification (in 1903) maintained that the primary consideration "be given to general studies and that Hebrew is pure philology, to which Jewish schools need not give special attention". The nationalists on the other hand, - recent arrivals in the Society - fought for the expansion of the Hebrew studies, to be on a par with general studies. In 1904, new chapters were organized in a number of communities in the Pale and the Society redoubled its effort on behalf of intensive Jewish education. New schools were opened, some of the old established schools were aided, some of the Hadarim Metukanim were supported, and the cause of education found its champions in the Society's ever-widening membership.

The Society, despite its relative ineffectiveness to spread Russian culture amongst people, oppressed by an "uncultured" Russian government, and despite its limited activities in the first three decades of its existence, it nonetheless served the interests of Jewish *education*

40) Toldot Hahinuch BeYisrael, Zvi Scharfstein, Vol. I, p.390

41) Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, page 424

education

education in a number of areas, the most important of which was in the quest for modernization. In this connection it should be noted that the Society had on its staff some of the great minds of the time, men who excelled in intellectual creativity. In addition to the talented poet, J. L. Gordon, whom we already mentioned, the Society could boast the active participation of such men as the Russian Jewish poet, Simon Frug, the writer J. L. Rosenthal and the noted educators A. Khanshtam and Dr. M. Charma and Dr. Nissan Touroff, (who now resides in New York City).

III. The New Schools - The Product of the Age

And now we shall examine the other six types of schools that were in existence during the period under consideration.

1. The Haskalah Heder

The Maskilim fought the traditional Heder. According to their view, the Heder was a private venture that failed to give the children an adequate education even in the field of Jewish studies, and because of its deplorable physical facilities, antiquated methods of instruction and unqualified teachers, prevented the children from normal development. Due to the influence of the Maskilim and owing to the fact that some parents in the larger communities wanted for their children a better type of education, there came into being a Haskalah Heder. In many of its aspects, this school was the forerunner and co-existent of the Heder Metukan. "In the second half of the nineteenth century, writes Dr. I. Eiger, sporadic attempts were made to reform the Heder in the pedagogic and hygienic sense. These were, however, ventures of

a private nature. It is known that a Haskala Heder was organized in Poland in the early eighties, which was a sort of Heder-School, and was very satisfactory." ⁴²⁾ In the Nineties, this new type of school, conducted under private auspices, was to be found in other provinces. The Maskilim asked for the following reforms in the Heder ⁴³⁾ 1) to communalize it, 2) to modify its program in the following areas: a) not to translate into Yiddish, but rather in German, b) not to teach the Pentateuch according to weekly portion, but place Bible as center of curriculum, c) to introduce letter writing and melitzah (current Hebrew literary idiom) d) not to "pilpulize", e) to postpone the teaching of "Nezikin" and "Nashim" and f) to critically teach the ideas of religion and to purify it. To meet these demands of enlightened parents, here and there resourceful melamdin re-organized their schools. This new type of a Haskalah Heder appeared in a number of cities outside the Pale. Zuta mentions a school of this type in the city of K. ⁴⁴⁾, where he served as teacher. Mr. Katzoviz speaks in his Memoirs of such a school in Poltava ⁴⁵⁾. In a correspondence to Hashachar, Mr. E. Diamond, describes this school as follows: " This house (school) was organized for the youth of those parents who can pay their full tuition. There are four teachers who instruct in Hebrew, Bible, Russian, Mathematics, etc. . . I was very much impressed with this school. It is self-evident that the Poltava Jews are not used to this type of training, only one in a thousand who would send his child there, although all is managed in the spirit of true Judaism. ⁴⁶⁾ The same writer also mentions a similar school in St. Petersburg ⁴⁷⁾.

It seems that only in the larger communities where a Jewish middle-class,

⁴²⁾ Report by I. Eiger at meeting of Society, Viestnik, No.I, 1910, St. Petersburg

⁴³⁾ See Haheder, by A.M. Lipshitz

⁴⁴⁾ Midarko Shel Morah, pp. 59-62

⁴⁵⁾ Shishim Shnot Hayim, p.88

⁴⁶⁾ Hashachar, No.4, 1878, pp.183-184

⁴⁷⁾ Ibid, p.185

subject to the stimulus of the advocates of enlightenment, and eager to modernize the Jewish education of their children, hired private teachers of good standing and helped them to establish such Haskalah Hadarim. The number of these schools was insignificant, and hence had very little effect on the general situation.

2. The Reformed Heder

According to the by-laws of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment (organized in 1863) no private or public schools were entitled to support unless the study of the Russian language was included in its curriculum. ~~48)~~ Consequently, the private Hadarim where Russian was not taught because of government prohibition, did not receive financial support. At a meeting of the Society on the 27th of December, 1902, it was decided to give support to the Hadarim-Metukanim (see subsequent chapter) as well as to private traditional Hadarim, provided the latter was reorganized as a "Collective Heder." 49) This implied for two or more private melamidim to merge their schools, combine their classes and house them either in one building or in one court yard. Another provision by the Society called for improving sanitary conditions and the introduction of recesses every one and a half hours. The growth of these collective Hadarim was hindered by the spread of the Hadarim Metukanim, which in the first decade of the 20th century reached their peak. Only in Lithuania where the Hadarim Metukanim met great resistance, there collective reform-Hadarim grew in numbers. According to an inspector's report there were in 1910 forty-three such schools in the region out of a total of 105. 50) The program of study,

~~48) Haskalah, No. 1, 1878, pp 185~~

49) Vestnik, Organ of the S.D.E. No. 29, 1914, P. 26-28

50) Ibid, No. 23, 1913, p. 25

however, was not much different from that of a traditional one-room Heder.

3. The Improved or Reform Talmud Torah

In a number of communities that were subject to the influence of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment, Talmud Torahs were established with the aid of the Society that came nearest to a regular elementary school (in our day, it would be similar in nature to the all-day school). True to its aim to secularize Jewish education (in anticipation of emancipation) the Society leaders endeavored to influence existing educational institutions to introduce modernism. Since the Talmud Torah was a public institution, they succeeded in a number of cities where some of their members resided, to reform the city Talmud Torah or improve it. In certain instances, they gave special grants to introduce a program of general studies in addition to the traditional Jewish instruction. According to I. Eiger ⁵¹⁾ successful schools of this type functioned effectively in the province of Podolia, (Zhvonetz, Krilovtzi, Murovane) where secular subjects were taught alongside the Jewish studies. In Southern Russia a number of the Talmud Torahs served all types of Jewish children, some of whom paid tuition fee. In the report submitted by S. Ratner ⁵²⁾ these modernized Talmud Torahs supported by the Society "have gained the sympathy of the people in these cities where they functioned and have shaken completely the world of Melamdim."

The number of these schools was, however, insignificant and constituted no competition to the Heder. The reason for their inability to grow numerically

⁵¹⁾ Vestnik, No. 1, 1910

⁵²⁾ S.B. Ratner, "Sovremennyy Heder ee Zadatchi Obchestva" in Minutes of meeting of Society of 1912, in Vestnik, No.20, 1912, St. Petersburg

was the antagonism of the religious Jews who saw in them an attempt at de-Judaization, and because of their inadequate program of Jewish studies. As a matter of fact, this attitude toward this new type Talmud Torah is given in an article in the Society's organ as a warning against minimizing the importance of traditional Jewish studies. ⁵³⁾

4. The Government or Crown Schools

These schools came into being as a result of an imperial edict of 1844 calling for the establishment of elementary first grade (city schools) and second grade schools (district or Uyezd schools) and rabbinical institutes for teachers and rabbis. ⁵⁴⁾ These rabbinic schools at Vilna and Zhitomir were closed in 1873 (see chapter on teacher training). ⁵⁵⁾ The aim of the 1844 decree, according to historians was to Russify Jewish education and to bring the Jewish child into closer contact with Russian culture. S. Dubnow points out that the 1844 ~~edict~~ ^{which read:} edict was accompanied by a secret *ukaze*. "The aim pursued in the training of the Jews is that of bringing them nearer to the Christian population" ⁵⁶⁾. Coming from a government which inflicted pain and cruelty, the Jews saw in this act a policy of compulsory conversion and regarded all these schools with great suspicion. The famous "Shkole Nei Zhelayem" (Schools we do not wish) was characteristic of the Jewish attitude towards these schools. The urging of the Maskilim notwithstanding, these schools were boycotted by most people. ⁵⁷⁾ They were unsatisfactory to them also from the point of view of curriculum and organization. The entrance requirements called for an ability to translate parts of Humash, and to know prayers. This implied a need for

53) Ch. Sh. Kasjdan, Vestnik No.23, 1913

54) L.M. Bramson, Istoriia Natchalnavo Obrazovanya Rossiye, St. Petersburg 1896

55) A. Levinson, Hatenuah Haivrit Bagolah, Warsaw, 5695, p.269. ~~1912~~ pp. 49-52

56) S. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Vol. 2, p. 58

57) I. Rosenthal, Toldot Marbei Haskalah B'Yisrael, Vol. 1, 1885, St. Petersburg p. 74

Heder study before entering the Crown School, and owing to the fact that Rashi and Talmud were not taught at all in the Crown schools, meant also that additional Jewish studies were necessary during attendance at Crown schools and after graduation from them. Then, too, these schools giving the child only the elementary knowledge of Russian and Arithmetic did not prepare them for life. According to a special study made by the Society in 1866, the following reasons for the rejection of the Crown school were given in the summary of findings: 58)

1. Fear for missionary activities within the schools
2. The attachment to the traditional system of education
3. The melámdim's vested interests
4. The inadequacy of Jewish education in the school
5. The distrust to government institutions

Thus, because of the objections of the majority of parents, the number of schools grew only from 98 with 4022 pupils in 1863, to 220 in 1889 with over 13000 pupils, still a relatively small percentage of the entire child population. 59)

In the eighties and nineties, the period under consideration, there were Crown schools in all large communities, particularly in the district towns (uyezdnaya goroda), but the enrollment there was very meager. In the city of Vinitza, (Ukraine) with a relatively large Jewish population, according to a report in Kneset Hagdolah, there were in 1884 in the first grade government school 84 students and in the second grade school 121; a total of

58) P.O. Marek, "Perejitoye", Vol. I, 1864-1873, pp. 129-132

59) Hatenuah HaIvrit Bagolah, by A. Levenson, p. 262

203. The number of graduates that year were 7, the number that left before graduation during the year were 47 ⁶⁰⁾.

The above is a striking proof of the fact that these schools were not looked upon with favor by the average parent.

A very interesting description of the Crown school is given by the Hebrew writer Shlomo Hillel's. He writes, "Such government schools were established also in Bessarabia in the seventies in the district cities. Bessarabian Jewry did not proclaim openly "Shkoli Nye Jelayem", as did Lithuanian Jewry, but during the first ten years, a secret boycott was in effect and parents did not send their children to those schools. There were then beautiful buildings to house these schools, new furniture and school equipment, books and materials a principal and teachers, but no students. When the principal saw that it is bad business and that it is an insult to him and to the entire community, what did he do? He took a policeman and began to tour the city to look for Hadarim and to force the melamdin to send their pupils to the Crown school until one or two p.m. and then they would return to Heder. What did the melamdin do when they learned about this misfortune? They placed scouts on all street corners adjacent to the Heder street, and these scouts when they saw the "shining brass buttons", hurried to inform the melamed, who in turn hastened to remove all books and benches; children jumped out of the window and scattered everywhere - there was no Heder. This cunning succeeded only on two occasions. Finally, the melamed was caught in the act of teaching. This was against the law and the melamed was fined ⁶¹⁾, and the Heder closed . . . Later

⁶⁰⁾ Kneset Hagedola, Vol III, p. 178

⁶¹⁾ Each Melamed was required by law to obtain a license.

when children began to attend these schools, the wrath of officialdom was appeased and the melamedim were told to obtain a license for the fee of three rubles and be permitted to teach. Since then there hangs on the wall in the Heder the melamed's license with the picture of the "great teacher" on it. Thus the melamed enjoys freedom, which costs three rubles, a rather large sum of money for a poor melamed to spend." 62)

The curriculum of these new schools consisted of Prayers translated into German, religion taught in the Russian language, Bible, Russian, Grammar and Composition, Arithmetic, Geography and a short History of Russia. Composition, Geography and History were taught in the third grade. 63)

That these schools proved unsatisfactory from all points of view is to be seen from the relatively small percentage of Jewish children of school age who attended these schools in 1899. That there was no increase in enrollment in the first decade of the present century is attested by the rapidly growing number of modern Hebrew schools.

5 IV. Trade Schools

Vocational education for children to be given in special schools under Jewish auspices was encouraged by many Jewish leaders and by the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment. Motivated by the desire to show the non-Jews that Jews are productive in non-trade occupation, the Maskilim who advocated Russification sought to organize trade schools, and in the 1880's trade schools

62) Miskar al Hitpatout Hahinuch HaIvri B'Bessarabia, Shvilei Hahinuch, Tishri 5703, p. 7

63) See Branson, p. 93

already existed in Zhitomir and Odessa. In the eighties, the time of general awakening (Jewish nationalism, Jewish socialism, Am Olam, Bilu), when the idea of gradual normalization of Jewish economic life through self-aid became popular among certain elements of Jewish leadership, the number of trade schools increased to 85. ⁶⁴⁾ While it is true that there were many Jewish artisans and craftsmen, nevertheless their work was limited to the areas of shoemaking, carpentry, tailoring and hat making and their skills (with few exceptions) were not on a high plane. To expand the possibilities for engaging in other trades and technical vocations and to enable Jewish youth to get a real technical education, the movement of vocational education gained momentum. In addition to the Society, there were two other organizations that aided this movement: Ort and Ica. Ort was organized in 1880 in St. Petersburg by a number of intellectuals who aimed at reorienting and reconstructing Jewish economic life in Russia by promoting skilled trades and agriculture. Ort opened trade schools in Minsk, Vilna and other communities, besides its manual training schools for boys and for girls, in which the indigent pupils are provided with food, clothes and books. ⁶⁵⁾ In 1891, The Ica became interested in the project and prior to its colonization work in Russia in 1900 supported a number of these trade schools. Finally, a number of Talmud Torahs added to their curriculum a special course in technical work.

Some of these schools taught carpentry, sewing, (for girls), ~~metal~~ hat making, metal pouring and mechanical drawing. Agriculture was encouraged after 1900 in special school gardens vis-a-vis a number of Talmud Torahs. The

⁶⁴⁾ Toldot Mahinuch B'Yisrael, by Zevi Scharfstein, Vol. I p. 388

⁶⁵⁾ Bramson, p. 96

Talmud Torah of Vilna organized a special trade school in 1890 which not only taught trades, but also such subjects as practical Geometry, Mechanics, and elements of Physics. ⁶⁶⁾

A description of the Minsk Trade School we find in Kneset Hagedolah ⁶⁷⁾
"In the ten years of its existence this trade school (Remesleynoya Utchiliche) made remarkable progress. They boys learn crafts in iron and wood. There are more than 100 students. There is a fund of more than 10,000 rubles. The famous philanthropist Visetsky of Moskow was the first to contribute 500 rubles to this fund. They teach the boys also Russian, Arithmetic and occasionally Hebrew. There is also a lot of teaching of singing, and who knows if some of them may not even become good Hazanim. ⁶⁸⁾ But despite this seeming progress, the number of children in the trade school in 1903 was only 4447. ⁶⁸⁾

6. Girls' Schools

As already mentioned, girls were admitted to some of the Dardeki Hadarim, but were never permitted to attend the Humash and Gemara Hadarim. Nor were there girls to be found in the various Talmud Torahs. There were, however, private schools for girls in the larger communities, such as Kishinev, Minsk, Bahmut and Chernigov.

In 1874 the Society decided to pay special attention to girls' education, and organized its own school for girls in St. Petersburg. In the years that followed they extended some help in the organization of girls' Hebrew schools

⁶⁶⁾Spracvochnaya Kniga, Voprosam Obrazovanya Evreev, St. Petersburg, 1901, p.71

⁶⁷⁾Vol 3 p. 93

⁶⁸⁾Toldot Hahinuch, p. 388

in Minsk, and Kishinev. The private schools served the girls of the wealthier class of parents. The institutions supported by the Society were also serving the daughters of the moderate-income classes.

In the small towns, for the majority of people, the facilities for girls' education were limited, however, to the Heder ^{Irbeviak} ~~Irbeviak~~ and the special "Rebbizin" schools. The Rebbizin was a woman instructor who gathered in her room a group of girls and taught them prayers, blessings and some Yiddish writing.

During the period of national awakening there emerged a number of modern Hebrew schools for girls, whose program provided for an intensive Jewish education: Yehudia in Vilna, ⁶⁹⁾ which was organized by Bnot Zion; Madame Rakovskiy's School in Warsaw ⁷⁰⁾ and the two schools in Horodishtch and Holta, were the better known institutions for girls' education. In the latter two communities, according to a reliable report, special attention was given to "an all-around education for girls". ⁷¹⁾

Another development in girls' education is the establishment of Sabbath schools, due to the efforts of special women groups. Thus we read in Luach Ahasaf of 1897 ⁷²⁾ that in Kharkov special government permission was given to a certain Mrs. Saltikava to open a special Sabbath school for girls, and that 30 voluntary women teachers instructed in that school. The need for so many teachers was due to the fact that this school divided its students into 33 groups, and each group consisting of 5 to 6 students, and taught by a

⁶⁹⁾ Vilna by Israel Cohen, p. 314

⁷⁰⁾ Yamim V'Leilot by M. I. Fried, p. 165

⁷¹⁾ See report of Dr. Landauer at meeting of Society, Voskhod, N^{os} 21, 23, 1903

⁷²⁾ Luah Ahasaf, 1897, p. 332

special teacher. There was also a Sabbath school for girls in the city of Shavell. There, too, special permission of the government ^{to} operate the school was obtained. There were hundreds of students in attendance in the Shavell school. Even in far-away Baku, there was a Sabbath school where girls attended on Saturday evening from 6 to 9. ⁷³⁾ In these Sabbath schools the student body consisted of adolescent girls and major emphasis, of course, was given to secular studies, whereas the Jewish studies were, according to the reports submitted to the Society, "inconsequential."

SUMMARY

From this Brief survey of Jewish education at the close of the century it is apparent that the old Heder and the traditional Talmud Torah with their emphasis on conservation were still the predominant types of schools. While it is true that here and there a genuine effort was being made to organize modern schools and to improve conditions in the old institutions, these efforts had only a limited effect on the general situation. The masses of people ^{clung} to the old type of education. The Nationalist movement while it had its roots in the age-long religious yearning for redemption, was primarily a modern movement. Its aim was to awaken the people to want to become masters of their destiny and wait no longer for Divine aid to bring redemption. As a modern movement it could not approve of a Jewish education which was purely religious in character and which lived the past only. There was need for a new school, which would combine tradition with modernism, rootedness in the past with eager anticipation of a brighter future, in order to bring up a generation of modern Zionist-minded Jews and in order to compete successfully with the age-old school system. Such was the pattern of the Heder Metukan, as we shall see in the chapter that follows.

73) Hapdagog Vol. I, p. 288

THE IMPORTANT CHANGES IN JEWISH LIFE WHICH MOTIVATED A NEW EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATION

As already observed, the question of Jewish survival became most urgent and demanded a radical solution. The revived anti-Semitism in Russia under Alexander III, with its tragic pogroms and bloodshed, brought great disillusionment even to those assimilationists who had entertained the hope during the reign of Alexander II that emancipation was around the corner, and that Russian Jewry was to meet the new era with a redoubled effort towards modernization and adjustment. The Russian Maskilin, who originally supported the German Haskalah movement which called for modernization of Jews and Judaism, realized that Russification without true emancipation would lead to conversion and complete extermination.

The pogroms of 1881 shattered their dream for acquiring equality. They began to see in Russification the danger of complete cultural and ethnic disintegration. In fact, the more intelligent Jews began to realize that they were misled by the promise of assimilation. Even from among those Maskilin and wealthy Jews outside the Pale who had drifted completely away from their people, there were many who returned to the fold. The greater the anti-Semitic attacks upon the Jews became, the greater Jewish consciousness reasserted itself. Jewish leaders of all groups began to do a great deal of stock-taking and soul-searching. New concepts and ideas evolved and new movements emerged. These new ideas stirred spasmodic, often chaotic organizational activities, but nevertheless gave impetus to the rise of new institutions. ~~While~~ ^{The} old concept of merging and assimilating with the rest of the population to the extent of ethnic dissolution was abandoned by many of its very advocates, ^{and} there emerged the new idea of Jewish nationalism: to solve the Jewish problem through

self-determination and self-emancipation. This new movement took on various forms (it was originally not necessarily synonymous with Zionism or Palestinism) One form was self-determinism in the Diaspora. The exodus to Argentine, U.S.A. and Western Europe was motivated both by a desire to escape oppression and by a will for re-nationalization. The youth groups, "Am Olan", which came into being with great spontaneity in Kiev, and in other cities, were aiming at the establishment of model Jewish agricultural settlements in America, based on the principles of communism. This idealism, writes Abe Cahan, was shared by many ordinary Jews, traders, craftsmen and workers. Having become imbued with the spirit of the young intelligentsia, they sold all their possessions and joined the parties of immigrants who went to America to establish a New Jewish life. ⁷⁴⁾ Another form was the seeking of the ultimate solution through elimination of oppression of both classes and nationalities which gave rise to the early Jewish national-socialists. The Jewish socialist circles in Vilna, Minsk, Bialystok, and Lublin, ⁷⁵⁾ were augmented by the more class-conscious members of the early Jewish proletariat of those textile manufacturing cities, and paved the way for the organization of the Bund in 1897, the first union of all existing Jewish-socialist groups and trade unions. In the wake of the changes brought about by the very slow processes of gradual industrialization (the by-product of the Industrial Revolution, which reached somewhat belatedly the Western provinces of the Russian empire) there appeared in the eighties a Jewish proletarian class. This Jewish proletariat was engaged in the light industries of textiles, tobacco, matches, leather goods and ready-made garments. It was estimated that 45000 Jewish workmen were employed

74) *Bleter Fun M'ain Leben*, by Abe Cahan, Vol.2, p. 117

75) See *Die Yiddische Sotsialistische Bewegung in Yiden*, Vol.3, New York, 1942, p.828

in the newly established industrial plants in the larger communities of Western Russia ⁷⁶⁾. This Jewish proletariat and the socialists from among the other social groups were convinced that a free Russia would liberate the Jews from all hardships and disabilities. But as nationalism became the dominant theory of other oppressed minorities in Europe, (Poland, Hungary, Ireland and all the Balkan states under Ottoman rule) the Jewish intelligentsia began to advocate becoming a nation once more. It became evident to many a leader that salvation lay in nationhood. Thus, Jewish nationalism became the ever-growing movement of Russian Jewry, which laid the foundation for both territorialism outside Palestine, national-cultural Autonomism ⁷⁷⁾ and Zionism.

In addition to the ^{writings of the} penitent Hebrew literati of the time who seethed with nationalistic enthusiasm (Smolenskin, Gordon, Lilienblum) there appeared N. Sokolov's work "Sinat Olam (Warsaw 1882) in which he brought to the fore the idea that emancipation would not help, because of the animosity against the Jewish people which was an innate tendency in the non-Jews ^{This essay by}, aroused great provocation. The same year there appeared Leon Pinsker's "Auto-Emancipation" in which the author advocated ^d the establishment of a Jewish state as the only remedy for anti-Semitism. The impetus of these two brochures was great and impressive. Ben Yehuda's letters in Ha-Shaar, coupled with the stirring, passionate love for Zion which resounded in the writing of Smolenskin, kindled in the hearts of the people a genuine desire for national and cultural regeneration. Gradually the groups of "Lovers of Zion" came into being. The press, particularly Hatzefira in Warsaw and Hamelitz in St. Petersburg and Rozaviet in the Russian language gave great support to the new movement of Hovevei Zion.

76) Yiden, Vol. 3, p. 532

77) Even Dubnowism, which was concerned with the mass of Jewry, destined to remain in the Diaspora, advocated nationalism by proclaiming the nationhood of Jewry even outside of Palestine

Ahad Haam soon appeared on the scene as the theoretician of Cultural Zionism and organized the Bnai Moshe circles whose high-minded members were pledged "to put their abilities and their spirit at the services of the spiritual and moral rebuilding of their people". Then came the Bilu, who actually went to Palestine, and established the settlement of Gadera; and the Katowitz Conference in 1884, the first Jewish international assembly of all groups of work in Palestine, and finally the rise of Herzlian political Zionism and the early Zionist Congresses.

It was in these years when new ideas caught the fancy of the people, that the problem of education gained new significance. That these new movements had their effect on the entire Russian community in awakening in them a feeling of human worth and self respect is an historic truism. The movement of Jewish nationalism, no matter what its political and economic aim, was also to a large degree, an educational movement. It not only produced a new literature in Hebrew and Yiddish, art and music, but it stimulated the establishment of a new type of school, the Heder Metukan, which laid the cornerstone for modern Jewish education in all the Diaspora and in Palestine. For these Jewish nationalists rebelled not only against Russian oppression and the abnormal state of Jewish political and economic life. They rebelled primarily against the status quo in Jewish socio-cultural life. The old type of education was subjected to severe criticism, along with certain aspects of synagogue, ^{and} home ~~and~~ ^{its} life. But this was a criticism prompted by love of ^{the} people and tradition, and not by a determination to escape from them.

Our survey of Jewish education at the eve of the rise of these new revolutionary forces in Jewish life and during the early stages of their telling effect showed that very little progress had been made in the field of education.

Despite the movement for adjusting the curriculum of the Jewish school to the needs of the age, and despite the intensive work of the Maskilim and their organized effort through the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment, the majority of Jewish children were still to be found in the traditional Heder and Talmud Torah. While here and there we see an organized attempt at change, motivated by the theory of adjustment, (improved Talmud Torahs, Trade schools, private schools for instruction in Russian) the people as a whole did not respond to the stimuli of these moderns. It is only through the efforts of the Nationalists aided by the new groups of Hebrew-oriented idealists who penetrated into all Jewish communities, that the educational problem found its partial and temporary solution.

D. THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH GAVE RISE TO A NEW TYPE OF JEWISH LEADER

1. The Hebrew Intelligentsia

In these eventful years of the eighties and the nineties, the new ideas found a strong echo in the "shtetl" ⁷⁸⁾ in the Pale. While to all intents and purposes it still retained its identity, it became, nonetheless, receptive to the theories of Hebraism and Nationalism. The force of this new idea was irresistible. Gradually there developed in the small towns in Russia a new type of Jewish intelligentsia.

In many a "shtetl" there were small groups of Maskilim who received the Hebrew periodicals and who attended conferences convened by the Lovers of Zion. Some of them were Talmudic scholars from among the "Klei Kodesh" ⁷⁹⁾

78) Shtetl is the Yiddish name for the small Jewish community in the Pale
79) Klei Kodesh is a Hebrew idiom, denoting all religious functionaries.

the Gemara melandim included, other - public spirited laymen with a good Jewish educational background. There were to be found at the time, practically in every community, a number of Jewish homes that served as "Batei Vaad Lachachamin" ⁸⁰⁾, where discussions on Jewish life and letters were held, where new books and periodicals were available and where capable young men were heard from and were listened to. These were the homes rooted in Jewish tradition, but open to Haskalah influences. Everyone felt an overpowering urge to do something for the realization of the new dream. Even vis-avis the synagogue and the yeshivah (in those places where yeshivot existed) there were occasional deviations from the traditional norm. Magidim who were Lovers of Zion, and local maskilim, were given the platform to preach the doctrine of national revival and cultural renaissance. Masliansky was the most popular and pre-eminent of these speakers. At times special meetings of the Hovevim (Lovers of Zion) were held in the synagogue, and Hebrew was heard as a spoken language. In the periphery of the yeshivot there were some maskilim who attracted some of the most able young men for special discussions at their homes. Yeshivah students were frequently found with "secular" Hebrew books and pamphlets which, once obtained, went through many hands. The intellectual atmosphere was pregnant with new ideas; the hearts of the nationalist maskilim were filled with dreams.

The following are descriptions of these new ^{leaders who} ~~faces which~~ had risen amidst the old environment. The Hebrew writer, S.L. Blank reminisces: ⁸¹⁾ "The cradle of my childhood, Dinnivitz in the Ukraine, . . . The sons of Israel are merchants of the woolen products ⁸²⁾, salesmen, bookkeepers, and agents of all

80) Batei Vaad Lachachamin is a Hebrew term meaning the homes where the intellectuals gathered for social and cultural purposes

81) Sh. L. Blank, Shvilei Hahinuch, Nisan-Elul, 5704, p.180-83

82) German colonists established woolen factories in that community

types . . . There are among them readers of Hamilitz, Hatzofeh, Haskalah⁸³⁾, communal workers, and ardent Lovers of Zion. There is width and ease, "the spirit of the age" in their abodes. And then the large market square: . . . Here a big general store, the owner, a scholarly Jew, wise and humorous, a reader of the Hamelitz and Hatzefirah, who looks into the Haskalah books. He is very pious and one of the devout worshippers of the Sadigura's synagogue. He writes his letters in the Hebrew idiom of the time. His home is a meeting place for all types of Jews, who come in to look into the Hebrew periodicals and have a discussion on politics. The teachers, the maskilim, the first among them, Mr. X who taught Bilbe, Gemara and Grammar. He himself reads Haskalah books and makes it obligatory for his students to write Hebrew compositions in the modern idiom . . . Then the Heder of X. The melamed is a great scholar, a lover of modern Hebrew literature, one of the very devout dreamers of Zion, a well-mannered and gentle person . . . His students learn Bible, Talmud and Haskalah literature. The major prophets and portions of the Psalms, as well as poems of Adam Hacoheh, M.I. Levenson, and J.L. Gordon. *They learned by heart.*

A. Goldgeil writes in the Jubilee issue in honor of Rabbi Moses Rosenblatt⁸⁴⁾ "The maskilim of our town convinced his (Rosenblatt's) father to take him to the maskilim-melamedim . . . He (the child) then learned that besides the Gemara there are Haskalah books and philosophic books, and he was spellbound by these books and read them day and night. . . . When the maskilim decided to establish a Hebrew library, in order to give our youth an opportunity to read the contemporary Hebrew literature, he was one of those who brought this project to

⁸³⁾ Hebrew periodicals

⁸⁴⁾ "A Tekufah Fun 60 Yor" New York, 1936, pp. 10-16

a state of realization. We gathered all types of Hebrew books from the homes of the maskilim and acquired a number of new books from the newly established publishing houses (Tushia, Ahiasaf, etc.) and the famous community leader, Mr. X gave us a room in his home, and every day at a given hour, we conducted a library . . . Soon we organized in our town and in the adjacent community the first clubs of "Safa B'Urah" and "Dovrei Ivrit".

And Katsowitz ⁸⁵⁾ writes, "In those days Dr. L. Pinsker wrote his brochure "Auto-Emancipation", in which he maintained that there is no hope for the Jews in exile and that everywhere we are considered as strangers, wandering poor, who live at the mercy of others and no general progress will improve our condition. The only remedy is an autonomous Jewish state. Our venerable writers, Smolenskin, Lilienblum, began to convince us that we have to return to the land of our fathers. We in the small town of Pershtespina got to work. I am one of the Magidim. I speak to the young who believe in internationalism, which will erase the concept of nationhood. I explain that with the development of international understanding each ethnic group will be able to further its own cultural capacities for the benefit of all mankind . . . When I finish speaking to the young, I turn to the old, who say that we have to wait for the Messiah to bring salvation and redemption and that we (the nationalists) hasten the process against the will of God. I bring arguments from our Prophets and sages that it is a great mitzvah to settle in Palestine. Almost all inhabitants of our village are becoming "Lovers of Zion". Zuta ⁸⁶⁾ describes the personality of an ardent worker in Charkov. ^{He is} ~~He is~~ the agent of the firm of rubber over-shoes in Charkov and environs. In his youth he was a maskil of the type of

85) "Shishim Shnot Hayim", p. 174

86) Midarke Shel Moreh, p. 58

J. L. Gordon, a free-thinker and an advocate of Haskalah. With the growth of Hibbat Zion he became not only an enthusiastic Lover of Zion, but also a devout traditionalist, even to the point of attending the synagogue. He was a true communal worker. The agency provided a fair livelihood, but in addition to being an agent for overshoes, he was a free agent for all Hebrew publishers of Warsaw, Vilna and Odessa, who sent him their publications for sale in that region. All these books were to be found alongside the boxes of galoshes, and he used to urge all his customers to acquire those goods as well."

This was the atmosphere of romanticism which radiated warmth and which spelled idealism. And these were the new forces in Jewish life that penetrated into the most remote corners of the Jewish dispersion in Russia, strengthening the position of Hebrew and Jewish nationalism. In their midst we find small nuclei of young people who extended the frontier of Jewish political and cultural life beyond the positions acquired by their forerunners.

2. The Bnai Moshe

The Hibbat Zion movement ⁸⁷⁾, which brought with it exaltation and fantasy to the Russian Jews in particular, and which appeared to great masses of Jews as the threshold of liberation (Athalta d'Geulah) was soon destined to become involved in petty worries of colonization. The [~]gradiose dream of mass exodus, as Lilienblum and others envisaged it for the immediate future, stumbled against a rock of cold facts and reality. In order for the dream to become a reality, there was a great need for education. For it was soon realized that the miracle

87) The Hibbat Zion movement was the pre-Herzlian form of Zionism. The organization came into being in 1881, but could not obtain legal status until 1890, and then only under the title of "Society for the Support of Jewish Laborers and Workmen in Palestine and Syria", because any avowal of nationalist aims would have ensured the hostility of the Czar's government.

of return would have to be earned in hard work, patience, and finances. The time was not yet ripe - and the human material was not suited for settlement in Palestine. The more farsighted among the Lovers of Zion had to focus their attention on the masses of people and to begin to educate them. "In the time of the belief in miracles, the center of thought lies in the land that is to be provided; in the time of reality, the center of thought lies in the body of the people. It was in order to transfer the center of attention from the objective to the subjective, from the geographic country to the psychological state of the people, that the Bnai Moshe was founded." 88) This was an order consisting of approximately 100 men who took upon themselves the duty of servicing the spiritual and moral rebuilding of their people. Motivated by an orientation which "prefers quality to quantity," the Bnai Moshe played an important role in stimulating all intellectual forces for a revived Judaism. They endeavored to purify Hibat Zion from its chauvinistic elements and fought at the same time the adoration of old traditionalism *per se*. Influenced by their leader Ahad Haam who maintained that "1800 years of exile enfeebled the national will, hence it was a prerequisite to engage in intensive educational activity among the masses of Jews so as to reawaken their spirit and equip them intellectually and spiritually for the rigors of the Zionist project", they placed great emphasis on education, both as means and end. Ahad Haam bid them to give special attention to the education of the coming generation, "so that there may grow up and appear on our scene a generation of men who will not kneel before the Baal and the dust of Jewish enemies he will not lick; men who will be proud of their people and exalt in our nation's honor, men whose heart will be

88) Shmarya Levin in Brandeis Avukah Annual, New York 1927, p. 137

warm and give them no rest, men whose wisdom will cause them to judge rightly and give them the knowledge to understand the time and place for each object - this generation of men will save Israel". 89)

The influence that these men of Bnai Moshe exerted upon the Jewish intelligentsia was very great. They raised hundreds of disciples who were to be found everywhere in the country. It was in a large measure to their credit that many of these disciples were the creators of the modern Hebrew school. It is needless to say that Ahad Haam's insistence on the "spiritual revival", as expressed in his writings, found an attentive ear in the persons of the younger maskilim, some of whom stood at the helm of modern Hebrew schools both in Russia and in Palestine.

3. The Private Hebrew Teacher

Imbued with the spirit of Jewish nationalism, subject to the stimuli of Bnai Moshe, and the Hebrew literati, dissatisfied with the status quo conditions of Jewish life - many a young Jewish intellectual chose selfless and devoted service to their people, in the field of education. In the late eighties and in the nineties we find numerous Jewish populists scattered throughout the Pale as private Hebrew teachers and particularly as leaders of Jewish youth groups which they themselves organized. Their aim was to engage in T'hiat Ha-levavot - Revival of the Jewish Soul; their means was the education of youth, to prepare them for a new life of self-knowledge, self-dignity and service to their people in the spirit of Hibat Zion. In the words of M. I. Freid, "Parallel with the spreading of the Zionist movement and its development in Poland, there comes into being a new era in Jewish education. The young teachers make every

89) Ahad Haam in "Derech Mahayim", written for the Bnai Moshe, on Adar 7, 5649; which later appeared in the essay "Misayon shel Hitzliah, in Kol Kitvei Ahad Haam, Dvir, Tel Aviv, 5703, p. 438

effort to instill a new spirit in the hearts of the youth whom they train . . . They know that the Heder is defective and weak and that there is a need to introduce radical changes". 90)

And Hillel's ⁹¹⁾ writes: "Among the teachers engaged in private tutoring, there were many serious-minded people, equipped with great knowledge of Jewish sources and with deep understanding of secular world outlook, well-mannered people, respected by parents, pupils and the entire community. Although there were rumors that they disregard many an observance and a custom, their influence was great on all elements, particularly the youth. Their students later became the organizers of the groups "Safah Berurah" and "Hovevei Sfat Eiver", whose members employed Hebrew as a spoken language. From among these students came forth the idealistic best of Zionist youth, that carried upon its shoulders the revival movement and constituted the membership for the Second Aliyah".

Katsovitz describes these teachers, "the idealist of Poltava", who became famous in later years (Alexander Ziskin Rabinovitz, M. Kritchevsky, and Moshe Aaron Boruchov) ^{as the men} ~~"these are the teachers . . ."~~ who dedicated their lives and warmth of their souls to the education of the young, so that they may be faithful to their people and develop in them a sense of self-worth. To their great fortune, their work was crowned with success, because many of their students became in time the great fighters in the war for our existence and survival." 92)

Some of these Hebrew teachers wandered to distant places outside of the Pale. Zuta worked in Kharkov, and Yekaterinoslav, Yehiel went to Nikolayev and then to Kazan, the capital of the Tartarians "to train the children of the

90) Yamim V'shanim, Vol. 2, p. 162

91) Shvilei Bahinuch, Tishri 5703, p. 7

92) Shishim Shnot Hayim, p. 123

cantonists of the Czar Nicholas ⁹³⁾. Most of them, however, performed their mission in the Jewish centers of the Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland and Bessarabia. Among them we find the originators of the Heder Metukan program. Ishai Adler in Homel, who "attacked with the strength of a revolutionary and with the flame of youth the old educational system and fought for its rejuvenation and renewal within and without". ⁹⁴⁾ Hayim Arie Hazan, in Grodno ^{who} saw "the need for the revival of the souls of the people of Israel alongside the revival of the land of Israel and to this end he began to pay attention to the improvement of education in the spirit of Zionism". ⁹⁵⁾ Then there were K.I. Silman, Sh. Z. Pugatchov, Hayim Aaron Kaplan, Sh. L. Gordon, I.I. Glass, P. Shifman, all working in different communities and pioneering in the establishment of a new educational institution, which would bridge the gap between the old tradition and the new socio-cultural ideas and currents.

The efforts of these men were not in vain. They attracted the younger people and enlisted their cooperation for the common cause: the new education. "And we the young, writes Zevi Scharftstein, who studied grammar and learned by heart J.L. Gordon and M.I. Libenson's poems, and shed tears at the reading in Mapu's "Ahavat Zion" about the love struggles and pains of the heroine - we envied the older ^{Hebrew Teachers} ~~ones~~ and formed for ourselves the club "Hatechiah". Our first task was to spread Hebrew and general culture among the daughters of the poor, whose fathers could not afford to send them to the Russo-Jewish school (Crown School) or to engage for them a private tutor. We hired a private room and we became teachers-volunteers. Every "teacher" taught one hour

93) Darko Shel Moreh, p. 9

94) Natan Goren in Heid Hahinuch, No. 8, 1949

95) Avraham Yaffe, in Heid Hahinuch, No. 6-7, 5706

a day, gratis. Young men, 16 and 17 years old, taught girls of 12 and 13, and there was great rejoicing in our abode". 96) Scharfstein himself became later a pioneer for a better education and one of the teachers in a Heder Metukan in Berditchev.

About the idealism of these young adults we read in the essay by Sh. L. Blank. He writes: "In those days a few school was founded in our city by the Zionist youth, in which besides Hebrew, Bible and history the students were given courses in general subjects. Most of the teachers were voluntary workers. They were the sons of middle-class parents and novices in teaching. All of them were inspired by the idealism to spread knowledge and love for Zion among the people, and worked very hard to do the job of teaching faithfully and conscientiously." 97)

SUMMARY

In the midst of the old environment there developed a new pattern of life. A unique Jewish person has evolved who does not break away from tradition, but who acquires new tastes and new habits. He derives vitality not only from the richness of the old classics, but from the freshness of the new Hebrew literature. He puts his mind and heart not only in the pure spiritual realm of thought, but in actual work in the world of today. There is a new life-feeling which dominates this unique Jew. It is the feeling of the new mission that history entrusted to them. It is incumbent upon them to revive an old language as the prerequisite for the revival of the people and ultimately the land. We thus find a new Maskil layman, the ardent Hebraist, the devout Zionist, who cooperates with the young enthusiasts, the modern teachers, the young Hebrew writers, for the attainment of a common goal.

This new environment in Jewish life was conducive to the development of the new clientele for the new educational enterprise: The parent, the teacher and the child. They in turn built the Heder Metukan.

96) Thilati B'hinuch, Shvilei Hachinuch, Nisan-Elul, 5704, p. 167

97) Shvilei Hachinuch, Nisan-Elul, 5704, p. 185

E. THE RISE OF THE HEDER METUKAN OR THE IMPROVED HEDER

We thus see that there were a number of factors in operation that weakened the position of the traditional Heder and ultimately gave rise to the Heder Metukan. By way of summary, these were the factors: 1) The Hibat Zion movement, an outgrowth of rebellion against the precarious state of Jewish life which threatened the very existence of Jews and Judaism, 2) The Hebrew Culture movement, which sought to revitalize Jewish cultural life, preserving the best and noblest of the old and adding to it the vigor of new Hebraic creativity, and 3) The new type of a Jewish intellectual, the modern private Hebrew teacher. These new forces spelled a great dissatisfaction with the traditional type of Jewish education as exemplified in the Talmud Torah and the Heder. For these schools could not meet the demands of the new age, which were being felt in every Jewish community. From all sides there were demands for changes, for a new program in Jewish education. The Lovers of Zion especially sought to bring about a radical change in the educational system and were ready to organize new schools, whose program would provide for a Hebrew-nationalistic and general-cultural education. A great many of the parents were already inclined toward giving their children some knowledge of modern Hebrew and of secular subjects. Neither the Heder nor the Talmud Torah could provide this type of education. The Crown schools or the private schools were considered to be nests of assimilation. Hence the need for a new school became more pressing.

These new schools were called Hadarim Metukanim. The reason for the choice in name is due in the main to the following circumstances. The reactionary government, fearing for its existence, watched very carefully all

Russian schools in order to stem the tide of liberalism among the youth. Even the Crown schools for the Jews were "guarded against the threatening winds." The Hadarim, however, were free from all suspicion. "The government considered them as purely religious schools, having no social nor political objectives. Hence the supervision over them was very superficial. Every man who brought a certificate from the government rabbi to the effect that he had some knowledge of Jewish religious studies and a certificate of good behavior from the police, and after a payment of a fee of three rubles, received a license. The Zionists exploited this situation and opened new Hebrew schools, naming them Hadarim Metukanim, in order to denote its religious character. The choice of this name for the school attested to the continuity of the old and thus aided greatly in its development. The middle class Jew saw in it the traditional institution that existed through the ages, but that became improved in accord with "the spirit of the new age."⁹⁸⁾

The early Hadarim Metukanim were thus established by two elements: 1) private idealistic Hebrew teachers; and 2) groups of Hebrew culturists and Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion). Hillel's tells of two private Hebrew teachers who established the first Heder Metukan in Bessarabia in the town of Soroki. "They sent special circulars to parents, written in a poetic style, engaged a special person as their public relations man and soon enough received inquires from nearby communities to send them copies of their circular and practical instructions as to how to go about opening a Heder Metukan."⁹⁹⁾

98) Toldot Mahinuch B'Yisrael, By Zevi Sharfstein, Vol 1, p. 367

99) Skirah al Mahinuch HaIvri B'Bessarabia, p. 9

It was in the city of Kishinev, years later (in the nineties), that the Zionist groups engaged a special educator and established a Heder Metukan. Similar attempts were made in other communities of Bessarabia, Benderi, Baurkiov, and Bieltzi. Freid records, in his book "Yamim V'Sharim", the opening of the first Heder Metukan in Homel by Yishai Adler and in Warsaw by Sh. L. Gordon. Both schools were established through private initiative. Sharfstein maintains that the first school was opened in Pinsk by Ch. P. Bergman, another case of a private venture. Zuta speaks of his efforts to organize a Heder Metukan in Yekaterinoslav. He, on the other hand, received the aid of the local Zionists. About the school in Nikolayev, where Yehiel functioned as teacher, we read in Buduchnost that the school was already in existence for more than two years, "and that it is to marvel at the amount of energy given by a small group of Zionists to this school." ¹⁰⁰⁾ This points to group initiative in the founding of the new school. Thus we see that a combination of private and collective effort went into the establishment of these new schools. By the close of the century the Heder Metukan appeared everywhere in the country. The extent of its growth and some of the reasons for its popularity are to be seen from an objective evaluation of the newly created situation at a meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment. Mr. L. S. Katzenelson ¹⁰¹⁾ in his speech states "We must not forget that the old Heder has for a long time ceased to realize its major objectives due to the changed economic conditions of our people. In the past, the Heder with its own pedagogic means could give its students a great deal ~~deal~~ of basic Jewish knowledge at the time when they attended from early

¹⁰⁰⁾ Buduchnost, No. 29, 1902

¹⁰¹⁾ Vjestnik, December 1902

morning until late in the evening up to the age of 15. But when the parents now can afford to keep their children in the Heder only up to the age of 10 or 12, in order to bring them at this age either to the Crown schools, for general studies, or to ~~prepare as an~~ ^{send them to} artisan for apprenticeship, the children leave the Heder with a very meager knowledge of Jewish subject-matter and very frequently drop to the level of "Amei-Haaratzim". 102) But the general advancement and success in the pedagogic world had its impact upon the Heder and the melamed. In the first place, it had a favorable effect upon the Talmud Torahs, which constituted (and still do) the worst type of Hadarim. Thanks to the direct influence of our Society and its material support, many of these poor schools improved, and with the proper personnel can now give children, in addition to general studies, a sufficient knowledge of Jewish studies. But besides this, there evolved in the last few years in many communities a considerable chain of the so-called improved Hadarim or Hadarim Metukanim which hold a promise (according to competent opinions) to produce good results in the future. With less time lost, these schools, because of their improved methods, manage to give their pupils an intensive knowledge of the Hebrew language, which competence will give them in later years a spiritual joy in reading a Hebrew book. In time saved, the children can learn the elements of secular studies. The committee of this Society, recognizing the significance of this newly emerged type of Heder, already expressed its solidarity, truly only in a few cases, and promised the moral and material support of the organization."

The fact that the Society had taken note of these new schools at a special

102) Amei Haaratzim is a Hebrew term denoting "ignoramuses"

meeting (although in the very same speech and in the discussion that followed there was a great deal of criticism of the Heder Metukan), and that prior to this meeting a special committee was appointed to study the newly developed educational institutions and their role in the general scheme of Jewish cultural life, and later on promised moral and material help to the new schools, is indicative of the prestige that the Heder Metukan gained even in the non-Zionist circles.

In the first decade of the current century, more schools were established in and outside the Pale. The visit of Herzl to Russia, the first Zionist congresses, and especially the first conference of Russian Zionists in Ellul 5662 in Minsk, where Ahad Haam promulgated the slogan of "Kibush Beit Haseifer", exerted a tremendous influence on the Russian Zionists, and the number of Hadarim Metukanim grew steadily. The establishment of Hovevei Sfat Eiver in 1907 with a charter from the government heralded a new era of intensive activity. While there are no definite statistical data on the exact number of schools, it is nonetheless possible to assume that there were Hadarim Metukanim everywhere in Russo-Poland, not only in the larger communities but in the small towns as well. In Vilna,¹⁰³ in Grodno,¹⁰⁴ in Berdichev,¹⁰⁵ in Zitomir, in Kovno, in Sedletz,¹⁰⁶ in Telepeshti¹⁰⁷ even in the far-away Simpheropol¹⁰⁸ and Kutais. In reading the chronicles in the first Hebrew pedagogic periodical "Hapedagog" one finds news items about the

103 Vilna by I. Cohen, p. 355

104 See Yaffe in "Heid Hachinuch", No. 6-7, Jerusalem, 5706

105 See Sharfstein "Thiloti B'himah", p. 167-8

106 Budutchnost No. 30, 1902

107 Ibid No. 32

108 Hapedagog Vol. I, p. 36

establishment of Hadarim Metukanim in a great number of communities. Tulchin, Smolensk, Bialystok, Kremenitz, Rashkov, Kalki, Dumbroven, to mention but a few of the cities where new schools were organized in the year 1902-03.

But the following important fact must be established at this juncture: Notwithstanding all evidence to the rapid growth of the new schools, they still constituted a relatively small percentage of the total Jewish schools in the country. In the province of Volynia, a typical region in the Ukraine populated by Jews, for example, there were in 1903, 706 Jewish schools with a student body of 14,472. Out of this number 660 were old Hadarim with a population of 11,038. ¹⁰⁹⁾ If we bear in mind that in addition to the Hadarim there were modern private schools, Crown schools and Talmud Torahs, we can readily appreciate how (insignificant) in number were the Hadarim and their total student body. Mr. S. B. Ratner in his report to the Society on the Hadarim in the province of Kiev ¹¹⁰⁾ maintained that the new schools constituted about one-half percent of all the Jewish schools in the country. He also observed that of the 213 Hadarim that he visited, 16 were called Hadarim Metukanim. This would indicate that the new schools constituted about 7½% of the total schools visited. It is therefore very unlikely that the ratio of the new schools to the general number of existing schools would be 200 to 1. It cannot be a scientifically valid figure, in the light of the statement that among 213 schools, 16 were Hadarim Metukanim. The figure given (one half percent) is in all likelihood more of a figure of speech than a real statistical number. But be it as it may, all evidence points to our contention that the number of the new schools was rather small.

¹⁰⁹⁾ Spravochnaya Kniga, Voprosam Obrazovaniya Evreev, St. Petersburg, 1901, p. 658

¹¹⁰⁾ S. B. Bramson, Vestnik, No. 20, 1912, p. 58-9

F. THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEW SCHOOL

1. The Influence of Pestalozzi, Froebel and ~~Galton~~

The work and teachings of the great master Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi exerted a great influence in the nineteenth century European educational circles. Since many of the young Jewish university students abroad were to be found in Germany and in Switzerland and had access to the works of Pestalozzi which were written in German, and since practically all Russian Maskilim of the period who never lived in a German environment had a reading knowledge of German, it is not surprising that the educational philosophy of some of the outstanding educators of the century found a very attentive audience among the Russian Jewish intelligentsia. Some of the Jewish students in Berlin actually visited the new schools in Germany, attended lectures by German educators and were very much impressed with the new ideas in education. ¹¹¹⁾ What especially appealed to the young Jewish educators were 1) Pestalozzi, the social reformer who believed that society can be regenerated through education; 2) Pestalozzi, the teacher and servant of the people; and 3) Pestalozzi's concept of "the natural and harmonious development" of all faculties of the child.

Since the task of the Jewish intelligentsia was to regenerate the people, and since Ahad Haam's thesis of "Hachsharot Halvavot" (preparation of human souls) implied continued educational processes, the Pestalozzi idea of education of the masses as a prerequisite for a better social order - found great enthusiastic response in the hearts of the young educators. "Pestalozzi is

111) Midarko Shel Moreh, p. 69

one of the great minds and great leaders who developed a social consciousness. Not the question of the 'Universe' is the center of his thought, but the question of 'Man'. At the time when we hear L. Feuerbach say that 'G d is his first thought, and that 'wisdom' the second and 'man' the third and last, we can certainly say about Pestalozzi that 'Man' was the first and the last of his thoughts. Pestalozzi gave preference to the theory of man over all other theories . . . The worth of man we hear in the words of Pestalozzi's beloved hero, when he speaks to Arner, the aristocrat, "the beauty of man is the most esteemed and noblest beauty in the world." This anthropocentric view (that sees man as the center of creation) - aesthetically speaking - occupies in Pestalozzi's philosophy the same place as man's consciousness occupies in the theory of Pythagoras, who claims that man is the measure of all that is to be found upon the earth . . . Public education ~~of great significance~~ is possible therefore, if we acknowledge the capacity of humanity for development and progress . . . and if we have faith in man." 112)

These ideas which were discussed in the Hebrew Pedagogic Journal, served as excellent tools in the hands of the Jewish educational reformers, who maintained that the Jew can and should be re-educated.

Pestalozzi as a teacher and a human servant was emulated by many of the young Jewish teachers. While the great master, in his attempt to regenerate society by means of education, spent many years trying to render service to the poor masses, the young Maskilin, too, endeavored to tackle the arduous task of educating ignorant children and adults in the midst of degrading surroundings, because of their faith in the capacity of the Jew to "Uplift himself"

112) Hapedagog, Gracov, 1903, Vol.I, p. 39

and in the process of education as the only means for the "uplifting". Pestalozzi's idealism, his readiness to help the common people, served as an inspiration to the nuclei of Jewish nationalists, who were convinced that a synthesis of general and Hebrew knowledge would spell salvation for their oppressed and depressed brethren.

But of particular influence was Pestalozzi's pedagogic theories. ^{His} ~~the~~ rejection of the teaching of mere words and the introduction in its place of studies based on observation, reasoning and experimentation, his statements on "sense impression", the organic development of man which lead to the belief that the child can be developed as a whole - morally, physical, mentally (heart, hand and head) - were interpreted by the Heder Metukan educators to imply for Jewish education "that there is no room for religious dogma, because all education must be sensed or at least be related to phenomena in the world of actualities." ¹¹³⁾ The concept of harmonious development of all "faculties" of the child implied the elimination of rote learning and the inclusion of certain activities. The method of learning must change from the repetition of ambiguous concepts unrelated to life and in its place the analytical method, based on observation of real objects or the discussion of ideas known to the child. And above all, the exercise and direction of physical and moral powers of the child, which in the context of Jewish life meant to involve the child through the school in a Hebrew speaking, nationalist movement, ready to serve the people in its hour of need.

Freebel's ideas of the importance of early childhood education through natural, but directed self-activity, (a miniature society where social cooper-

113) I.I. Glass in *Hapedagog*, Vol. 1, p. 157

ation is the predominant feature), found great adherence in the circles of the Hebrew teachers. The interpretation of the Kindergarten concept in Jewish circles did much to weaken the theory of classical study even for the very young (the old Heder procedure) and strengthened the hands of the modern Hebrew educators, who adhered to the naturalistic-social philosophy of Rousseau and Pestalozzi. It took a long time for the Kindergarten idea to become known to the Jewish parents in Russia. Even at the time when the Heder Metukan was already a reality there were no Kindergartens in Greater Russia (the first Kindergarten was established in Warsaw in 1909). But the Froebelian concept of education had its impact nonetheless. The ~~idea~~^{elements} of play, manual work, socialization, and construction, as educational means for self-expression were already practiced in some of the modern private schools conducted by the nationalist Hebrew teachers. In the curriculum of the Heder Metukan certain provisions were made for these activities in the primary grades. Both the theorizing on Froebelian ideas and the need for their application in Jewish education were widespread. The woman writer Bat Ami discusses the philosophy of Froebel in Heatid ¹¹⁴), in which she speaks of the need for a Hebrew Kindergarten movement. The educator Noah Pines, in Hapedagog ¹¹⁵) discusses the "Spieltrieb" of the child as a natural tendency, which can be utilized for the normal "unfolding" of all capacities and talents and laments the fact that the Jews gave little attention to the great educator's theory. An interpretation of Froebel's ideas and their relation to Jewish education we find in Everyeskaya Shkola ¹¹⁶) and at the Teachers' Conference in Ursha in March 1902. ~~and~~) The

114) No. 45-46, 1903

115) Vol. I, pp. 4-19, 48-71

116) Vol. I, January 1901

discussion at that conference on the meaning of discipline, the negative aspects of punishment, the nature of play and song, points to an appreciation of Froebelism and a quest for its application with the very young. "L'Hityaleid" and "S'Hitpaeit" (to act as infants with the infants and to act as little children with the children) - the two watchwords of the conference, are indicative of the great influence of both Froebel and Pestalozzi on the modern Hebrew teachers.

2. Tolstoy's Influence

Tolstoy, as is known, was a great lover of his people. In working for the common people, he was aware of their ignorance. He maintained that despite their "contemptible side" they were "lovable" people, groping towards the light. They were waiting, as it were, for a leader or leaders to show them the way. Tolstoy opened a school for the poor peasants, endeavoring to understand their needs and help them satisfy these needs through education. He abandoned his aristocratic position in society and gave all of his talents and wealth for the service of the common people. While it is true that his mysticism was gaining mastery over his intellect, he was nonetheless exerting a great influence upon the entire Russian intelligentsia.

The Jewish intellectuals were also impressed with Tolstoy's ideas. They, too, saw in him the new dreamer of a world without hate. His first novel, "A Russian Landlord", which dealt with the eternal conflict between the ideal of the prophet and the indifference of the public, appealed especially to some of the nationalists. For in that novel Tolstoy depicts the helplessness of the peasants who can understand such a phenomenon as a tyrant who beats them, but who are suspicious of a friendly master who is kind to them and cannot recognize in him their true friend. The Jewish intelligentsia saw in that

portrayal some characteristics of their own people. The Hebrew poet Bialik ¹¹⁷⁾ has given expression to a similar thought in his famous poem, "Ahein Hatzir Haam", in which he sees their suffering, their resignation to life in exile and forgives them their inability to recognize the true friend and his true idea ¹¹⁸⁾. The modern teachers were especially impressed with Tolstoy's statements on education. The following are some of them, which were of particular interest to the Jewish teacher: "The basic premise in all education is the truth. And for parents to be able to show their own children the truth of their own lives, they will have to make a special effort to lead a good and honest life. I am therefore saying that educating ourselves and improving our own ways is a prerequisite for the education of others. Children imitate their teacher; the teacher must therefore be a model person. When a child sees a teacher scolding people, being angry, telling others to do things he himself can ^{not} do, boasting, striving for pleasures only, speaking evil of others - the child is apt to do all this himself. But when a child will ^{see} the ways of modesty, ^{self-}restraint, love of labor, devotion to goodness and righteousness, and the like - he will be doing - in all probability - all these things himself. For the power of the ^{good} deed is one hundred times stronger than words about morality, no matter how wise and noble they may be . . . To be honest with the children and not to hide from them all the innermost stirrings of the soul - is the essence of education. If pedagogy is the science through which we train children to be good at a time when the teachers themselves are not - it is indeed a barren and empty science which will never bring the sought-for results. ¹¹⁹⁾

117) This poem in its English translation "Surely the people is Grass" is to be found in Complete Works of H.N. Bialik, edited by Israel Efros

118) Reference to Herzl

119) Tolstoy Lev Nikolayevitch, Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 271

The challenge was accepted by the young Hebrew teachers: Honesty in education, action instead of words, were regarded as having true educative value. These were viewpoints that were shared by the new philosophers of the modern Hebrew schools.

3. The Influence of Ahad Haam

In his famous essay "Lo Zeh Ha-derek" which appeared in Hamelitz in 1899 (12th of Adar II) Ahad Haam points out the need for "a strengthening of faith and a kindling of the will to attain the goal "of Jewish colonization in Palestine. The Jewish national ideal required spiritual preparation through the education of Jews to their common responsibilities. Instead of hasty colonization which may bring more disappointments, "let us endeavor to give the idea itself strong roots and to strengthen and deepen its hold on the Jewish people not by force, but by the spirit. Then we shall in time have the possibility of doing actual work". He advocated quality of effort as a decisive factor in colonization, rather than quantity. Quality implies education. The basic premise of quality also implies a recognition of Jewish existence in the Diaspora for many years. Consequently, there is the need for educational endeavor in the Galut not only as preparation of manpower for the regeneration of the land, but also in order "to wipe out the spiritual taint of the Galut" and habituate Jews to live in honor and in dignity, ready and capable to preserve their spiritual genius. This genius, which is a national characteristic, is concerned with implementation of truths, about man and universe, enunciated by the Prophets. The Jewish people, a collective organism, and not an aggregate of individuals, could further experiment with prophetic teachings in a land of its own. But the restoration of the land

cannot take place at a time of decadence of Judaism and by Jews who are confused and spiritually decadent. Hence the need for self-discipline, culture and above all education.

This approach to Zionism made a profound impression in all Jewish circles. While it evoked much opposition, it created also among all practical Lovers of Zion, a new climate of opinion which was very favorable to the revitalization of Jewish education. The Bnai Moshe (see page 75-7) who set out to re-educate the people, influenced many of their leaders, among them writers and educators. The latter in particular conceived of their mission as being in keeping with the theory of Ahad Haam, and viewed their daily tasks, among which was reviving the Hebrew language, as a prerequisite for national cultural revival. But while in his major essays Ahad Haam did not define the exact nature of the national education, let alone its implications for the education of children and youth, in his speech at the meeting of the Odessa Committee of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews, he ~~did~~ ^d outline his concept of education in ~~very~~ ^{very} certain terms.

"What is the general meaning of 'national education' that we demand. It is not the needed type of national education which implies constant talking about 'nationalism', to praise and beautify before the children their people and its unique qualities. The best European pedagogues have already come to the realization that with this sort of national education, its shortcomings are greater than its virtues, in that it is apt to take on a distorted form of 'chauvinism', as we see it today in France. But what is a true national education? It is the education that makes children absorb the spirit of their nation without their knowing it (B'lo Yodin), by bringing to them all general

human values in the spirit of their (children's) nationalism. The nations living a normal and healthy national life - for them this type of education is self-propelling, without any artificial efforts from any side. The spiritual atmosphere that surround the youth of such a nation is full of so many national elements, that every child from birth on, his physiognomy, is continually being molded by the national spirit, without his knowing it. And when all aspects of life are nationalistic, the school, too, of necessity becomes basically a nationalistic school. Even those studies that are apparently of general human value, as mathematics or nature study, even they are not free from a nationalistic tint, because in the case of mathematics, it is being used in each country in a measure or in a weight current in that country, and because in the case of nature study, the child gets to see and learn firstly those natural phenomena (plants, animals) which are to be found in his country. The nationalistic basis for education is more predominant in the study of geography and history, but above all, the most important tool of national education is the study of the national language and its literature. The language gives national substance and form to the entire inner world of the child, and in the best works of literature he finds moral and aesthetic thoughts that gradually become his, an integral part of his spiritual individuality, and through these media there is created such a strong bond between himself and his nation, that in the latter he sees for himself all that is good and noble in a general humanitarian sense.

Do the Jews have a desire for this type of a national education? . . . And what is the nature of the national education that they want and the "Society" does not . . . It is clear that our demand for the expansion of the program

of the study of Hebrew and its literature is a basic scientific pedagogical point of view. We do not wish to have our children learn all the time about the great merits of our national culture. These high-sounding 'Melitzot' about the superior qualities of Judaism, 'Melitzot', through which some people want to implant 'love for the nation' in the hearts of the children - they are, on the one hand, undesirable procedure in the schools, for they arouse an exaggerated national pride, and on the other hand do not suffice to bind the hearts of the children to their people with a strong and true bond, if they are not aided by a knowledge of that Judaism whose praises children hear, a true knowledge drawn from the primary sources. Conditions of our life have caused our children to grow up in an atmosphere which is foreign to the spirit of their people; on all sides they are surrounded by ways of life, which not only do not aid to develop in them unconsciously the mental and emotional national traits (as is the case with other peoples) - but, on the contrary, they are deterring factors in the development of our own national traits. The same is the case with regard to the school. The language of instruction is of necessity the vernacular, and the very studies are organized and arranged in order to conform to the characteristic life-needs of each country, that in ^{so} far as the Jewish students are concerned, they deprive them of those inherent nationalistic traits, as already mentioned, which apply to all students of nations who live a normal life. What is therefore left for us to do in order to develop in our sons the Hebrew national spirit? It is well known, that only one branch of all branches of study is left in our hands with which to enhance our national spirit according to our wish, and which we can utilize to attain our goal with greater vigor. This branch is of course our national language and literature. We have to try with all our might to see to it that ~~the spirit of our children be equal to the~~ ^{have sufficient}

^{Knowledge}
~~domains~~ of our national tongue, as in generations past, to the extent that they may be able to read the Bible and the best of the latter day literature. And this reading must serve in our schools as a primary means in the development of the general humanitarian spirit in the hearts of our children. It is important that they draw their first knowledge about the noble truths of the human spirit and the general human cultural values from our original national sources. In this way only can we create that organic bond between the individual and his national group, it is only this bond and nothing else that is capable of producing in the future the wholesome natural men in whom the elements of "man" and "Jew" will be fused and will become an organic whole, and there will cease the inner conflict and dualism between the two - this tragic phenomenon that we find in most of the students of our present day school . .

We are not speaking about teaching the Hebrew language in a philological way, as is the custom in the gymnasia with regards to Latin. In all our schools and Hadarim Metukanim where Hebrew is taught according to our educational objectives, grammar is the least and last of their ^{important} studies. We are not interested that our children should know the dry rules of etymology and grammar, these exterior forms of language, ^{we want them to} ~~but~~ absorb the living spirit which is in the Hebrew language, which is tied up with the spirit of the people and with the cultural creativity for thousands of years. Our national tongue, while it ceased being a spoken tongue, did not cease developing from then until now as a living organic body. In our age every one agrees in the psychological function of language, and there is even a school of thought that maintains that language created thought and not vice versa."¹²⁰⁾

~~That Ahad Haam's philosophy of Jewish life generally and his viewpoints~~

¹²⁰⁾ Halashon V'Hachinuch, publication of Ivriah of Bern, Cracow, 5667, pp 6-13,
translated by J.P.

G. THE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF THE HEDER METUKAN

That Ahad Haam's philosophy of Jewish life generally, and his viewpoints on education in particular, as well as the educational theories of Pestalozzi, Froebel and Tolstoy, played an important role in the formulation of the educational objectives of the Heder Metukan, will become evident from an analysis of the educational objectives of the new school. After a period of soul searching and stock taking, and after 10 years of trial and error in the work of the Heder Metukan, these objectives were clearly defined and formulated. But it must be pointed out at the outset that the aims and functions of the Heder Metukan as promulgated by its founders were related to educational practice in a few areas only. With all good intentions on the parts of parents, lay leaders, the Zionist groups, and the teachers, the school lagged behind the educational objectives promulgated by its theoreticians. What were these objectives?

A. To infuse all of Jewish education with the breadth of life by transforming the bookish Hebrew into a living, vibrant, spoken language. Through Hebrew the Jewish national renaissance will be more genuine and more meaningful. The revival of the language is to take place in the school. From there it will reach the home and the entire community. (See role of Hebrew in another section).

B. To create a synthesis of Jew and Man. Heretofore all education in Jewish schools was primarily religious, with no relation to the world of thought and contemporary life. On the other hand, all humanistic or secular education in Crown schools or in non-Jewish schools had no relationship to Jews and Judaism. This dualism resulted in confusion, disharmony and in poor education for the child. The need to humanize Jewish education by introducing all human elements that were in the past relegated to other types of schools, mostly under non-Jewish auspices, became imperative. Removed from the stream of life, the Jewish schools produced theologians, ghetto Jews, but not balanced personalities. It is, therefore, implied in the very nature of this analysis that the new schools would have to do away with this dualism. "We will have to nurture our youth by ourselves, all of the per-

sonality of the youth, all his soul, not part of it. This we can attain if we do not base all of Judaism upon religion, if we do not shape out for ourselves a theologically conceived world, but see the world as it is and find our place in it." ¹²¹⁾ This synthesis of Hebraism and Humanism if blended into a workable school practice would raise a new generation of worldly Jews, at home in their own socio-cultural and ethnic milieu, as well as in the general human society of which their group is an integral part. Hence the need for the construction of a new curriculum which would embody the principle of a liberal arts' education and the basic elements of Hebrew culture. All subjects would have to be taught in the Hebrew language and from a nationalistic point of view. It also implied the gradual removal of Jewish students from the general non-Jewish schools, because in the latter they would absorb the nationalism of that people whose schools they attend, which would tend to create confusion of mind and weakening of the Hebrew nationalist spirit. Only the Russian language should be taught as a foreign language for practical purposes.

B. To Improve Jewish Education

Improving the Jewish studies meant

to give greater emphasis to such subjects as history, literature and lay less stress on specifically religious subjects. Purely religious teaching was to be left to the family. The school should not engage in it. It was to be a public school, an inter-party institution which together with the family would mold the character of the child. One would supplement and implement the work of the other. "Only the school must be separate from the family, but not education itself."

121) I.I. Glass in *Hapedagog*, Vol. 2, p. 150

Improving Jewish education also meant the use of the direct method, basing education on sense perception, and relating much of education to life, and to the child's interests. Hence the contention that it is not necessary to teach Shulhan Aruch and Talmud in an elementary school, and that much of the Biblical text material which was taught in the early grades in the old school, must be modified to suit the needs and the interests of the child. "Bible stories should be told to the children in a simple and easy form. All story material suitable for children that is to be found in the Pentateuch can be told even in the first grade, provided the children would be listening with interest and would enjoy them." 122)

The emphasis on child's interest, even in the area of Bible instruction is indeed a revolutionary approach in the Jewish school procedure. For in the traditional Heder, the child was introduced to the study of Leviticus immediately after having had acquired the rudiment of Hebrew reading (Ivri) Improving education also implied character building. "Ethical concepts need not only be taught, but must be experienced in a child's environment. This, too, is the function of the school." 123) "

8. To Democratize the School

Every reform in education must derive its authority from the people. If education becomes the concern of one group it is apt to become narrow and unrelated to life. Irrespective of all opposition, particularly on the part of the strictly orthodox, the school must be more of a folk-school, a true democratic institution. Girls as well as boys should be admitted. The entire

122) K.I. Silman in his report on the Ursha Conference, Hapedagog, Vol.2,p.31

123) Ben Zev in Hapedagog, Vol. 1, p. 255

community should be concerned with the school, because it is primarily the community's educational agency. "All education which is not the fruit of the creative spirit of the masses will not become an integral part of the people and will be of no avail."¹²⁴⁾ The philosophers of the Heder Metukan advocated a unified Hebrew public school which would train all children for Jewish citizenship. This "Jewish citizenship" meant active participation in the new movement, an appreciation of the new values of Jewish secularism, and a readiness to serve the people in their hour of need. In this democratic school a new type of Jew would be fashioned, who will speak Hebrew, will defend himself against attack, will fight for a place for his people in this world, and will live the life of cultured Jew-man.

D. Physical and aesthetic education as an integral part of education

Since there is an organic relationship between the physical and mental make-up of the individual, it is important to give careful consideration to the physical well-being of the learner, a phase of education heretofore unknown in the Jewish school. It is basically a function of the home. Unfortunately, to do this there must be, in addition to the will, also means for achieving it. Many parents may be poor and in no position to give their children the needed food, physical exercises, etc. Hence, one of the educational objectives of the new school is "Hizuk Haguf" (physical health); to achieve this it is necessary to have a school physician. "It is very important, writes Ben Zev, "to know if physical weaknesses and defects are the reasons for certain patters of misconduct or not. We may observe mental and spiritual abnormalities in the children, and not know that they are a direct outgrowth

¹²⁴⁾ Hapedagog, Vol. 2, p. 254

of physical illness, which affects mentality and character. We see frequently lack of attention which interferes with regular study, but very frequently it is due to poor hearing. Then too, laziness may be a direct result of mental fatigue which in turn may be the after effect of illness . . . Education thus bids us to have, in addition to parent and teacher, also a physician." 125)

Next to the physician's care there is a need for gymnastics in an orderly and systematic manner. It is also essential to have play, proximity with nature, some manual work, and particularly walks and outings. If one bears in mind the fact that early Zionist literature (Hebrew romanticism) gave so much attention to the need for strengthening "the weak Jewish body" and that the slogan of "Niyeh K'chol Hagoyim" 126) implied also physical fitness, we can readily understand the inclusion of physical education in the school platform as another major educational objective. As to the area of aesthetics, it was maintained that the cultivation of the aesthetic tendencies of the individual is an important phase of the new education. Aesthetic education was conceived both as a means and an end. As a means, in order to develop the imaginary and creative faculties of the individual and as an end in itself to afford opportunities to live in an atmosphere of beauty and joy. The new school was to encourage its students to engage in drawing, music and declamations of poetry. The school should bring its pupils into contact with objects of art. It was believed that "objects of art will strengthen the aesthetic feeling and the imagination and will purify and develop good taste". Songs, drama, arts and crafts and poetry were consequently to be included in the school program.

SUMMARY The above examination of the educational objectives may be summarized by quoting from an appeal to parents, which appeared in the publication of the Warsaw

125) Hapedagog, Vol 2, p. 152

126) Let us be like other peoples

Heder Metukan program, entitles "Programa L'Hameish Shnot Halimudim b'Hedarim Hametukanim". It called the attention of the parents to the aim of the school, "to give a complete and effective education: Knowledge of Hebrew and general studies (the equivalent of two years in a gymnasium) in a short (5-6 years) period of time; to develop in the child a love for our language and our culture - Childhood and Naturalism (Yaldut V'Teviut) in a Hebrew form - these are the words carved in on the banner of the Heder Metukan".

H. THE ROLE OF HEBREW IN THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Even before the emergence of the B'nai Moshe who laid stress on Hebrew as a major educational factor in the cultural revival of Jews and Judaism, the Hebrew language and its use and study became a real ideal. ^{The} ~~Its~~ protagonists of Hebrew among the nationalist-oriented Maskilim grew from day to day. The young nationalists in particular (the autodidacts, the self-exiled university students in Germany and in Switzerland, and the "enlightened" Yeshivah students) have persistently and stubbornly adhered to a policy of self-discipline and spoke among themselves Hebrew only. Many a Hebrew-speaking club came

into being in various parts of the country and some of the older children who studies Hebrew either privately or in some of the Talmud Torahs where modern teachers taught Hebrew, were organized into "Dovreiv Ivrit (Hebrew speaking)clubs.

With the rise of the organization for the advancement of Hebrew "Safa Berurah" in Odessa and elsewhere and the spread of the "natural method" (Ivrit b'Ivrit) movement, the use of the Hebrew language became the ultimate purpose in all education. It is important to note that so many of the early organizers of the Heder Metukan were Hebrew-language-intoxicated individuals. Ability to speak Hebrew became a goal to be attained in all schools. All other major educational problems occupied a secondary position. The question of relationship between Hebrew and general studies, the question of selection of material from the vast sources of Jewish studies was not discussed as frequently as the problem of effective and efficient teaching of Hebrew. The linguistic element in the educational practice was emphasized at all times. With the intensification of attacks against Ivrit b'Ivrit and the Heder Metukan by the melamdim, some of the writers, anti-nationalist Maskilin, orthodox leaders and laity, (see chapter on Critique of Heder Metukan) the need for the defense against those attacks brought to the fore a chauvinistic attitude to Hebrew as the most important element in education. During the period 1904-1910, when the hands and spirits weakened considerably, there was still great stress given to the linguistic aspect of the Heder Metukan. This intoxication with the Hebrew language is best illustrated with the following quotation from Shmarya Levin, "I found much joy in my Hebrew writing. I speak not of the content but of the language. The mere use of Hebrew was a delight to me."¹²⁷) To many a contemporary Maskil

¹²⁷) Shmarya Levin in Youth in Revolt, p. 277

the "mere use of Hebrew" was an end in itself. The use of Hebrew as a spoken language became "new style", a new pattern of behavior, which was imitated gladly and with great pride. "Many of the youth of the wealthy homes were bragging of their use of Hebrew as a living spoken language."¹²⁸⁾ While the great intellectual leaders Ahad Haam¹²⁹⁾, Bialik, Frishman, Zeitlin, Berditchevsky, employed the vernacular (Russian or Yiddish) in their daily life and in their public appearances, the teachers of the Heder Metukan followed in the footsteps of Ben Yehudah in Jerusalem, and practiced the slogan "Ivri, Dabeir Ivrit!" (Hebrew, speak Hebrew!)

It is important to bear in mind this great enthusiasm for spoken Hebrew so that we may better understand the curriculum of the new school and the methods of instruction.

I. THE CURRICULUM OF THE HEDER METUKAN

Since there was no central organization for the Hadarim Metukanim throughout Russia to coordinate all educational activities and decide upon uniform major policies, particularly in the area of curriculum, it is no wonder that the program of activities of these schools continued to vary from place to place. Not until the early conferences of teachers, called together on their own initiative, and not until the formulation of educational objectives by the professional leadership in the late nineties and in the first decade of the twentieth century, was there to be found a consciously designed pattern of a curriculum which would be followed by any number of schools. In the early stages of the development of the Heder Metukan we find individual

¹²⁸⁾ Darko Shel Moreh, p. 85

¹²⁹⁾ Ahad Haam, with his dislike of anything that smacked of artificiality, was no advocate of the use of Hebrew as a spoken language by those who had not been brought up to speak it naturally (see Ahad Haam, edited by Hugo Berman, East and West Library, Oxford, 1946, p note to page 310)

teachers working out a curriculum with the help of laymen, which best reflected their particular philosophy and which met certain local needs.

To begin with, it is important to note that despite the theoretical pretensions of working with a modernized balanced curriculum, in some of the Hedarim Metukanim secular studies were not taught at all. In others there was some instruction in general subjects, either in the Hebrew or in the Russian language. It is important to point out again that since the new schools retained the name Heder, it was assumed by the government officials that Russian would not be taught there. Thus we find that in the Heder Metukan of Grodno, under the direction of H. A. Hazan "the language of instruction of all Jewish studies was Hebrew, including drawing, singing and physical education, while all other general subjects were taught in Russian."¹³⁰⁾ Grodno was situated in Russo-Poland, where the teaching of the Russian language was permitted, and consequently general studies were not only part of the school curriculum, but were taught in the Russian language. This was the case not only in Grodno. We read in Vestnik, the publication of the Society, that in Tshita, Poland, a new Heder Metukan was opened where the Russian language as well as Jewish studies were part of the program.¹³¹⁾ In Lodz they taught History, Geography and Russian ¹³²⁾. On the other hand, in Bessarabia, where the study of Russian was prohibited, as was the case in the Ukraine, "there were several schools where they tried to teach the general subjects in Hebrew"¹³³⁾. That this prohibition was in force through the entire history of the Heder Metukan (up to 1914) is to be seen from a resolution

130) Avraham Yaffe, Heid Hahinuch, No.6-7, 5706, Jerusalem

131) Vestnik, No.29, 1914, p. 112

132) A.K. Epstein, Shvilei Hahinuch, Teiveit, 5703, p.115

133) Sh.Hillel's in Skirah al Hitpathut Hahinuch B' Bessarabia, p.10

adopted at a meeting of the Council of Rabbis of Bessarabia to the effect that "it must be endeavored to make the government permit the teaching of the general subjects in the Heder, because many of the parents have no financial means to hire for their children a special teacher for the secular studies"¹³⁴⁾. That in the Ukraine the situation was not much better in so far as the inclusion of general studies is concerned, we can see from the minutes of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment (for their meeting of Dec. 25-27, 1902), when the question of the Heder Metukan was discussed. One of the Board members called the attention of the Central Committee to the fact "that in the old as well as in the new Heder, due to existing government regulations, the study of secular subjects is impossible and students must acquire knowledge of these subjects elsewhere." Wherever teaching of non-Hebrew subject matter was undertaken, it was done either through the medium of Hebrew as the language of instruction or it was taken on at the risk of placing the school in jeopardy. In the Heder Metukan in Ekaterinoslav they taught Arithmetic and Geography in Hebrew and an attempt was made to introduce nature study as well through the medium of the Hebrew language.¹³⁵⁾ Instruction of the Russian language was given to these children outside of the school building. In Pereshtchpina, on the other hand, they taught the Russian language as well as Arithmetic¹³⁶⁾. But this work was illegal. As a member of the Bnai Moshe, the teacher of that school had to overlook governmental prohibitions, since his was the task of a missionary.¹³⁷⁾ Mr. Ratner in his report to the Society told of Hadarim Metukanim in the province of Kiev "where every day from one to one and a half hours were given over to

¹³⁴⁾ Hatzefirah, July 19, 1913, p. 9

¹³⁵⁾ Midarko Shel Moreh, p. 84

¹³⁶⁾ Shishim Snot Hayim, p. 179

¹³⁷⁾ Ibid, p. 178

the teaching of the Russian language." 138) Mr. Isakovitch reported of his visit to a Heder Metukan in Megilna (Province of Chernigov) where the Russian language was taught from one to one and a half hours per day. 139) It seems that this illegal activity was undertaken in order to compete successfully with the Talmud Torah where Russian was taught, with the Crown schools, and particularly with the private Russo-Jewish schools.

This situation presented great difficulties and in time became a contributing factor in the decline of the Heder Metukan. The alternatives between abandoning the secular subjects from the curriculum or Hebraizing all of them (with the exception of the Russian language) constituted a real dilemma. No wonder that the theoreticians in formulating the educational objectives (see previous chapter) worked on the premise that the new school was to be a Hebrew national school where all elements of education would be fused into one harmonious program conducted in Hebrew.

The same discrepancy existed also in the area of teaching the traditional religious subjects. In some Hadarim, prayers and Shulchan Aruch were included in the program; in others, excluded. The teaching of some prayers and portions of Shulchan Aruch was practiced in the new schools of Bessarabia. In the Yekaterinoslav Heder Metukan, on the other hand, although children were wearing skull caps and recited V'Haareiv and Modeh Ani before the lesson, no special instruction was given in Prayers. Nor do we find reference to religious instruction in the description of the Poltava school.

In the Homel "model school", prayers were included for all six years, but

138) Vestnik, No. 27, 1911, No. 20, 1912, p. 61

139) Vestnik, No. 27, 1911

not the study of Shulhan Aruch ¹⁴⁰⁾, whereas in the program worked out by I. Glass there is a provision for prayers in the first year only ¹⁴¹⁾, (the course of studies being of six years). From the critical comments touching upon the Heder Metukan which were published in the periodicals, it is to be seen that the religious atmosphere of the schools varied. In "Budutshnost" ¹⁴²⁾ P.M. described a Heder Metukan where the teacher maintained that all miracles were legends, and that the world was evolved or created millions of years ago. In the same publication, however, we read of a Heder Metukan in Sedletz, which according to the reporter was a copy of the old Heder. ¹⁴³⁾ in its traditional approach to subject matter. We thus see that the inclusion or omission of old Heder religious studies in the school program depended primarily on the local teacher and his school board or on parents' attitudes to this particular phase of school activity.

The study of the Hebrew language and literature, however, either in content or in form, constituted a common element for most of the Hadarim Metukanim. With very few exceptions (the "mushroom schools" which were opened by incompetent melamidim) schools of any given locality followed a program which included spoken Hebrew, and employed the "natural method". While it is true that prior to the introduction of Ivrit B'Ivrit in these new schools, there were variations in the methods of instruction of the Hebrew language, it is nonetheless evident from the examination of all data that Hebrew and Bible taught in Hebrew, were subjects included in all school curricula. Hebrew, consequently, may be regarded as the underlying motif of

¹⁴⁰⁾ Hapedagog, Vol. II, p. 36

¹⁴¹⁾ Ibid, p. 116

¹⁴²⁾ Budutshnost, No. 26, 1902

¹⁴³⁾ Ibid, No. 36

the Heder Metukan; as the common denominator, as the sine qua non for all educational activities of the modern school.

Attempts at outlining a curriculum for the Heder Metukan based on the educational objectives of the leading educators of the time, and on practices of teachers, were made in Homel and in Warsaw. In both cities groups of educators participated in the formulation of objectives and in the outline of a program. The following is an English translation of the two curricula, which served as patterns for many schools throughout the country.

THE HOMEL CURRICULUM 114)

First year (18 hours of study per week)

HEBREW: To know the objects and the scenes that surround the pupils (classroom, school, school-yard, the park, the street, the field, the woods, etc.) Oral stories. Writing and reading according to the phonetic method; Comprehensive reading of stories, which will be retold afterwards by the students themselves, oral little poems; to transmit in a useful way the first knowledge of the principles of grammar; simple stories from the Bible up to the death of Moses.

ARITHMETIC: The four fundamentals up to 10

PRAYERS: Mode-Ani; Torah Tzivah; Shma; V'Ahavta; Birkot Hatorah; Hanehnin; Tzitzit.

TEXTBOOKS: Sufa Haya, Part I; Grazovsky's "Beit Seifer Ivri, from parts I and II. Yellin's "L'fi Nataf; Epstein's Ivrit B'Ivrit.

Second Year (2½ hours per week)

HEBREW: Reading of Hebrew text with explanations of grammar rules. Practical lessons (Shiurim Mamashiim); to outline in writing the essence of the material that was read in answer to teacher's questions; to acquire knowledge of poems and fables; to acquire in a practical way the grammar rules re nouns construct and absolute, and conjugation of verbs in the forms of Kal, Nifal and Hitpael.

BIBLE : From Genesis, Joshua, Judges and Ruth; knowledge of events according to their order.

PRAYERS: From Yetzeir Or to Shmoneh Esrei

ARITHMETICK The four fundamentals in tens up to 100

TEXTBOOKS: Grazovsky, parts 2 and 3, and from the fables of J.L. Gordon

Third Year (2½ hours per week)

HEBREW: Comprehensive reading on topics related to events in life and historic and descriptive stories; to tell in writing the content of the material read in answer to (easy) questions; to be able to outline in writing items suggested by the teacher; construction of sentences; parts of speech; change of vowels in nouns and verbs, easy concepts about vocalization, learning of poems and stories by heart.

HISTORY: A systematic course in the History of the Jew up to the destruction of the Second Commonwealth, and a knowledge of all important places in the geography of Palestine.

BIBLE : Exodus and Numbers; Samuel 1 and 2; Kings 1 together with chapters from the Twelve Minor Prophets, that relate to the history of those epochs.

PRAYERS: Psukei D'Zimrah; V'hu Rahum; Nishmat; Shmonei Esrei shel Shabat
(to explain all these prayers or to teach them by heart)

ARITHMETICK: The four fundamentals in the hundreds

TEXTBOOKS: Bet-Seifer Ivri, Bible, Hamoreh; Rabinovitz's History of the
Jews, Chapters 1-3, and from the poetry of Gordon, Dolitsky,
Maneh, Frishman, Shlalag, Bialik, Tchernichovsky, and others.

Fourth Year (2 1/2 hours per week)

Hebrew: Reading about life situations and studies of nature as well as
from history and Palestinography; to write essays according to
a prescribed schedule; to elaborate on certain topics (if possible) and
their condensation; a systematic course in grammar; reading of selected
samples from the choice of Hebrew literature and the study of some of them
by heart.

HISTORY: From the fall of the Second Commonwealth to the period of
Maimonides

PALESTINOGRAPH: Knowledge of Palestine geography; and an elementary knowledge
of general geography

BIBLE: Deuteronomy with selections from Rashi; Kings II, Ezra and
Nehemiah and chapters related to the above from Jeremiah and
Lamentations; Pirkei Abot (Ethics of the Fathers)

PRAYERS: The prayers for Sabbath and Festivals

TEXTBOOKS (None are listed)

Fifth Year (1 1/2 hours per week)

Hebrew: Reading of selections from the literary writings of various
~~writings of various periods~~; the study of the history of literature;

reading from "Bin Yakkov"; selections from Mishnah; to write stories in accordance with a schedule; descriptive writing; learning by heart of special materials

HISTORY : To the contemporary period

BIBLE : Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Psalms and Daniel (Chapters suitable for children)

PRAYERS : Selected Piyutim (Slihot)

TEXTBOOKS : Story of Literature, by Sh. L. Gordon

SIXTH Year (18 hours per week)

HEBREW : To get to know the works of the best writers in the various periods; to write simple stories, letters, compositions as outlined by teacher; continuation of study of Mishnah and chapters from the Talmud

HISTORY: Review with special comment on most important events

BIBLE : Complete study of Bible and Review

PRAYERS : Piyutim and the history of certain prayers

THE WARSAW CURRICULUM 145)

First Year - Age Group 6

Time: 24 hours per week: 18 for Hebrew studies
6 for Russian

Hours: From 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (together with recesses)

Homework: None

145) Programa L'Hamesh Shnot Halimudim b'Hadarim Hametukanim, Shel H.A. Kaplan, Sh. Z. Pugatchev, Warsaw 1907

Subjects:

1. Adjustment to Hebrew Speech Through conversations about
a) objects and scenes that surround the child in school, class-room, in park, street, field and woods; b) oral short and simple stories; c) children's songs and games.
2. Names from the Bible ¹¹⁶⁾ from Creation to the death of Moses
(in the second half of first year)
3. Benedictions and Prayers a) Nehem'in, Modeh Ani, Torah Tzivah, Shma, Birkat Hamazon (up to Hazan et Hakol)
4. Reading and Writing, employing the phonetic method
Remarks: Teaching of reading begins about six weeks after classes begin, so that the child may get adjusted to the Hebrew speech and understand what the teacher is talking about
5. Reading with Comprehension (during the second half of the year from the text "Sfat Yeladim" by Berzov-Bergman
6. Grammar Elementary knowledge of grammar rules: a) numbers, b) connecting Vav; c) Definite Article; d) the letters ^{et et amed} B, Ch, L, M, em
e) concepts of past, present, future and imperative

Textbooks: Sfat Yeladim, 1 and 2

Aids in Teaching: Pictures - Leitman - Shreiber

Second Year - Age Group 7-8

Time: 32 hours per week: 20 hours for Hebrew studies
12 for General Studies

Hours: From 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Homework: Lessons for homework to all class pupils

116) It stands to reason that what is meant by "Sheimot Mikivvei Hakodesh" is the study of the lives of the great men of the Biblical period

Subjects:

- HEBREW : a. Comprehensive reading from the books "Sfat Yeladim" 2 and "Olameinu"
- b. Observation and Object lessons (Predmetniye Urokee)
- c. Composition of simple short stories in writing
- d. Learning of poems and fables
- e. Grammar; adjective, numbers, use of verbs in Kal form in Hasrei Pei Nun, Pei Alef, and Lamed Alef; the Vav Hamhapeich, according to the Book "Dikduk L'talmidim" by Sh. Kantarovich
- BIBLE : Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers according to "Sipurvei Hamikra", Moriah Publications
- HISTORY : (Oral lessons and in books) From Joshua to the Second Commonwealth
- EXPLANATION OF PRAYERS: From "Yotzeir Or to Shmoneh Esrei"
- MUSIC : Individually and in chorus
- TEXTBOOKS : Sfat Yeladim, Vol. II; Olameinu; Dikduk L'talmidim; Hazamir, by N. Pines
- AIDS IN TEACHING: Picture - Minhuld - Schreiber; the Conversation Method for Pictures by I.I.Glass, publication of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment

Third Year - Age Group 8-9

Time: 32 hours per week: 20 hours for Hebrew Studies
12 for General Studies

Hours: From 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Subjects:

- HEBREW:**
- a. Comprehensive reading of stories; reading historic and descriptive material from an anthology
 - b. Scientific conversations on matters of geography, hygiene, etc.
 - c. Compositions in writing as per schedule and as per teachers questions
 - d. Learning of poems and dramatic skits by heart
 - e. Grammar: Use of all seven verb forms in Shalemin, according to Biblical and Mishnaic idiom; analysis of parts of speech, change of vowels in nouns and in verbs, some concepts about vocalization
- BIBLE:** Joshua, Judges, Samuel I. and II, Kings I and II
- HISTORY:** From the Second Commonwealth to the Gaonic period
- Remark: In the teaching of History, teacher will use a Palestine map
- EXPLANATION OF PRAYERS:** Psukei D'Zimrah; V'hu Rahum;; Nishmat, Shmoneh Esrei shel Shabat
- MUSIC AND DECLAMATION:** In chorus and individually
- TEXTBOOKS:** Ben Ami, Vol 2 by Sh. Ben Zion; Dimduk L'Talmidin, Vol. II, Hakinor, Tushia Publication Co., Toldot Am Yisrael by Rabinovitz

Fifth
Fourth Year -

(For fourth year curriculum see page 85a)

Subjects

- HEBREW:** Reading of selections from the old and new Hebrew literature; selections from Mishnah and the Agadot of Talmud in the original

Fourth Year -

- Subjects; HEBREW - Reading on matters of science, history, geography from an anthology; continuation of discussion on scientific subjects; composition of stories, "Opisaniya" (Beschreibung); Answer to questions as per schedule; learning of poems and dramatic pieces; Grammar: a systematic course in grammar, Etymology and Syntax
- BIBLE - Deuteronomy with selections from Rashi; Ezekiel, Ezra and Nehemiah; Jeremiah, and Lamentations
- HISTORY - From the Gaonic period to the Expulsion from Spain
- GEOGRAPHY - Physical and Political geography, Palestinography
- EXPLANATION OF PRAYERS - The prayers of Sabbath and Festivals

Textbooks: Many are not available

Remark: Owing to the fact that good textbooks are not ~~xx~~ to be found, we thought it unnecessary to list the few that are available, because it is to be hoped that in time new and good texts will be published that will truly fit their function.

from "Ein Yaakov"; compositions and letter writing as per schedule; grammar; review according to L'Shon Eiver by Steinberg

HIBEE: Isaiah, Twelve Minor Prophets, The books of Ketubim, and the entire Tanach up to the end (omitting chapters hard to understand)

HISTORY: From Expulsion from Spain to the Zionist movement - Review

PRAYERS: Selected Piyutin

TEXTBOOKS: Many are not available as yet; Maarchei L'shon Eiver by Steinberg; Ein Yaakov, the Mishnah; the Prophets and the Ketubim according to Moriah 146)

A careful examination of these two programs brings to light a number of important facts:

1. That an attempt was being made to introduce into the school a program which would combine the elements of "Man" and "Jew" into one harmonious blending. In the Homel program there was provision for the study of Arithmetic; Geography, Nature study, all of these secular subjects to be taught through the medium of Hebrew, the latter two as an integral part of the course, entitled "Hebrew". It was more in line with the thinking of Mr. Glass 147) whose educational philosophy conceived of a "Bei Seifer L'umi" - National Hebrew School, where all subjects of relevance to the child would be taught in Hebrew, except the Russian language.

In the Warsaw program the same endeavor to achieve an ideal combination of "Secularism and Judaism" is to be noted. The inclusion of Geography (political and physical), discussions on scientific subjects and readings on

146) Abridged texts

147) see subsequent section

natural phenomena (see program for fourth year) is indicative of a widening outlook on Jewish education. In both programs mention is made of some phases of the humanitarian studies as an integral part of the study of Hebrew which point to a genuine attempt at the actual practice of Ahad Haam's teachings who maintained that nothing that is akin to man, is foreign to the Jew as a Jew. Knowledge of and about man, however, is to be given in the Hebrew national tongue or in the "national spirit".

The Warsaw program provides for additional secular studies in the Russian language for reasons of expediency. Since the instruction of Russian was permitted in Poland, disregarding the language as a means of teaching Mathematics or General History and Russian Literature would have resulted in a curtailed enrollment.

2. In both programs an attempt is made to adhere to the principle of "natural development of the child" (Pestalozzi) and the need for children's self-expression through play, song and games (Froebel). This, too, is a "modernism" in Jewish education in Eastern Europe, which is revolutionary in nature and which, as we shall see, stirred up great resentment and criticism. The direct method of teaching the language (Shita Tivit, more of which in a subsequent chapter); the stress on observation as against learning of words, the concessions to the child's interests by the provisions for group recitation, singing and socialized recitation, the emphasis on the principle "from the simple to the complex" in all learning - are the new measures in the Jewish school program. In the Homel program we find that provisions were made for some of these new approaches: observation lessons in the first year, all teaching of language to be related to the child's environment, the use of the phonetic method in learning reading,

the teaching of poems, short stories, and fables, the use of a map and the direct method of teaching the language. In the Warsaw program there is a variety of innovations; drama and music, declamation of poetry, visual aids in teaching, class discussions and games.

3. In both programs it is apparent that for the first two or three years there is a detailed outline for the work to be done, whereas for the last two years it is a mere indication of the subjects to be covered. This may be due to the fact that more textbooks and syllabi were available for the first two grades, and that more planning and thinking was given to the problems of the children from the ages of 6 - 9, because as was the case in all schools, there was a larger clientele for these primary grades. Thus we see a "scientific" approach in the curriculum for the beginners and a "traditional" approach for the more advanced students.

4. Despite the Pestalozzi influence we note that in both programs the maskilic reverence for grammar asserted itself. Grammar as a subject matter is taught to beginners, six years of age. Also the "systematic" course in history for very young children and the "writing as pere schedule and in answer to teacher questions" as well as the learning of "letter writing" is no doubt due to environmental pressure rather than to a lack of understanding of the "laws of natural development".

It is worth noting that the Warsaw program makes mention of classification of students.

While these two curricula were acceptable to the moderates, they were subject to criticism from that wing of educators who insisted on a complete

national Hebrew school, divorced from religion on the one hand, and ^{from} ~~to~~ the philosophy adjustment on the other. Mr. Glass worked out his own version of a six year "problematic" curriculum. We shall presently discuss here some of its highlights:

GLASS'S "PROBLEMATIC" CURRICULUM *

First Year (18 hours per week)

HEBREW: (Similar to the other programs)

DRAWING: Straight lines and crooked lines

ARITHMETIC: Numerisation of numbers and their addition and combination up to the limit of 100

SONGS: National songs and songs as aid in the teaching of Hebrew

GYMNASTICS: Children's games and gymnastics

ORAL PRAYERS: Modeh Ani, Torah Tzivah, Shma, Blessings (This is not compulsory)

Second Year (2 1/2 hours per week)

HEBREW: (Similar to the other programs)

BIBLE: The story of Joseph, The Birth of Moses, the Exodus, the Death of Moses, Joshua (selection), Judges

ARITHMETIC: All four fundamentals in the first tens

DRAWING: Geometric lines, drawing as per outlines and schedules; also penmanship

SONGS: Individually and in chorus

GYMNASTICS: Running and wrestling (Hitabkut)

* Hapodagog Vol. II, pp 116-19

Third Year (24 hours per week)

HEBREW: Reading with expression, comprehensive reading of historic material,
writing of stories and of poems

GRAMMAR: Similar to other programs for the same year, slightly modified

BIBLE: Samuel I and II (selections from)

ARITHMETIC: Problems in all four fundamentals

SELF-STUDY: Reading at home, not at school

Fourth Year

HEBREW: Reading of material that will give the knowledge of the basic
sciences: physics, physiology, hygiene, astronomy and selections
from literature

GRAMMAR: All of Hebrew grammar: etymology and syntax

HISTORY: From the birth of the nation to the destruction of the First
Commonwealth

GEOGRAPHY: Similar to the Warsaw program

MATHEMATICS: To the end of arithmetic

BIBLE: Kings I and II, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, Ruth and Lamentations

Fifth Year (30 hours per week)

HEBREW: Selections from modern Hebrew literature, compositions; examinations
and analysis of the artistic phase of Belles Lettres

HISTORY: Advanced

GRAMMAR: Advanced

ALGEBRA AND GEOMETRY

BIBLE: Major Prophets and Ketubim: A critical evaluation of

Sixth Year (36 hours per week)

HEBREW: Literature of various periods

BIBLE: Review: critical examination

HISTORY: A full course in general history

SCIENCE: Nature study - a full course

SOCIOLOGY: Fundamentals of

PHILOSOPHY: History of

The above "problematic" curriculum, all its shortcomings notwithstanding -? (teaching philosophy, sociology and all sciences to children of Junior High School age, providing no outline to speak of for the last two years, etc.), is an indication of an attempt on the part of an extremist to revolutionize all Jewish education. It is a stubborn determination to do away with that dualism of tradition and modernism and all those elements which are not reconcilable and are not related to "man" (in the educational terminology of the age) and to the "nationalist modern Jew" (not in the Ahad Haam sense of historic evolution, but in the maskilic Hebraist sense, which implies rebellion against conventional tradition). The exclusion of prayers (except the few for the first grade), major portions of the Pentateuch, mediaeval Piyyutim, Mishnah and Agadah, as well as the history of the Patriarchs, let alone the Bible stories up to Abraham - bespeaks not only a deep resentment against the status quo in the Jewish schools of the time, but points to a rebel's urge to reconstruct society through destruction of all convention, if necessary. The revival of the language is a must. Even though text materials for the teaching of algebra, geometry, physics and astronomy, general history and sociology are not available, with ^{out} which even Pestalozzi disciples could not hope to attain success. The extreme Hebraist nationalists would nonetheless establish the national Hebrew school where once and for all, education of man would be clothed in Hebrew. -!

It is important to note that in Mr. Glass's view, drawing and gymnastics, singing and playing is more important for the Jewish child than prayers and the story of Genesis.

In our examination of the literature on the Heder Metukan, we found that the Homel and Warsaw programs, with minor variations, were practised in most of the new schools. As already observed, these two programs came into being as a result of trial and error procedure. Teachers experimented, Zionist groups encouraged the introduction of the new elements in the curriculum and the idea that the major role of the school program is to Hebraize all education, primarily in the linguistic sense of the term, was clearly defined. We find that Mr. Zuta, too, although removed from Homel in time and space, came to the Homel-Warsaw conclusion even before the curricular problems were discussed and programs outlined at the teachers' conferences. In his Heder Metukan in Yekaterinoslav he introduced a program which was similar in nature to that of Homel. "When I summarized the attainments of the children at the end of their first year, he writes, I became convinced that we made considerable progress. The children spoke fluent (polished) Hebrew. They knew 200 words and they knew how to use them. They wrote fairly good small compositions and read in the books 'Safah Haya' and the 'L'fi Hataf'. They also knew arithmetic even above ten and could solve certain arithmetic problems". As to the work in the second grade, Mr. Zuta writes, "I devoted the time to Hebrew, Humash, Arithmetic, and to observation lessons as a study per se." 148).

The same enthusiasm for Hebrew prevailed in the Yekaterinoslav Heder Me-
148) Midarko shel Moreh, p. 89

tukan, the same program of observation lessons, arithmetic in Hebrew, Bible, emphasis on spoken Hebrew, reading of simple stories, writing of short compositions and the use of the same textbooks. In the third grade he taught Joshua with the aid of a map, and his students wrote compositions "according to the schedule by Zelinsky"; ¹⁴⁹⁾ and in the fourth year there was the study of Kings (with special wall-cards of the Kings of Israel and Judah), Isaiah and poems of J.L. Gordon. ¹⁵⁰⁾

As to the elements of aesthetics in education and the problem of joyous children's experiences, we find that music and drama were very popular in the new Hadarim and that hikes to the woods and to the fields on the outskirts of the town were greatly encouraged. In the Heder Metukan of Telepeshti "the children sang national songs and made gymnastics". ¹⁵¹⁾ In the Grodno school there was "drawing, singing and gymnastics, Hanukah and Purim affairs were held that heightened the spirits". ¹⁵²⁾ In the Homel school, it was reported at a teachers' conference "there are songs accompanied by music that stir up life, make children happy and endear the language to them. They have also a certain propaganda value outside the classroom. Children sing these songs in their homes and on the street and thus habituate others to hear the Hebrew notes and thus "Hebraize" the atmosphere". ¹⁵³⁾ In Yekaterinoslav the school children were taken on hikes in the country and during one summer a miniature country camp was organized, where children spent four full weeks. ¹⁵⁴⁾ In the Nikolayev Heder Metukan, on the other hand, great stress was laid on physical education. ¹⁵⁵⁾

¹⁴⁹⁾ Midarko shel Moreh, p. 99

¹⁵⁰⁾ Ibid, p. 111

¹⁵¹⁾ Budushnost, No. 32, 1902, p. 17, St. Petersburg

¹⁵²⁾ Avraham Yaffe in Heid Hahinuch, No. 6-7, 5706, Jerusalem

¹⁵³⁾ K.I. Silman in Hapedagog, Vol. 2, p. 32

¹⁵⁴⁾ I. Midarko shel Moreh, p. 98

¹⁵⁵⁾ Budushnost, No. 29, 1902

These were attempts to introduce children's activities into the school program in order to make education more meaningful to the children and in order to develop in them an appreciation of beauty and the habits of social solidarity and cooperation.

S U M M A R Y

Such was the curriculum of the Heder Metukan, which was the first flexible program in Jewish education in the Russia of the Czars and which was seeking a way for the "scientific" implementation of the goal of Man and Jew. That the new curriculum was a marked improvement upon the old Heder program, is by now generally recognized. The new approaches which were totally unknown in the old Heder, may be summarized as follows:

1. The Hebrew language as a subject matter was introduced and was taught as a living spoken language, including its grammar and current literature.
2. Bible occupied a place of distinction, especially the section of the Prophets.
3. Interpretation of prayers instead of merely reciting them mechanically.
4. Introduction of the teaching of geography and elements of the so-called exact sciences, taught mostly in the Hebrew language.
5. Introduction of the teaching of Jewish History (for the first time in the history of the Heder).

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

A. A Method Apotheosized

The most revolutionary feature of the Heder Metukan was the use of the natural method known as "Shitah Tiveit", in the teaching of all subjects. This method of instruction served both as a means and an end. As a means it provided adequate linguistic preparation to pursue a course of study of Hebrew text materials, both ancient and modern, and it followed the pattern of natural growth in terms of pupils readiness to comprehend new materials. As an end it created a Hebrew speaking atmosphere; it revived an old language, turning it from the domain of books into a vibrant, living tongue, spoken freely by teacher and students alike. It also became a very important tool for Zionist indoctrination. For the children were given to understand that just as a German child speaks German, Russian converses in Russian, so does a Jewish child speak his national tongue - Hebrew. There was great pride and joy in the use of this method.

It is very difficult to ascertain whether the use of the direct method with Hebrew originated in Palestine or in the Diaspora. ^{Mission} Behar 156) points out that in Constantinople, the school of the Alliance Israelite Universelle taught French, according to the "Froebel Method". Since the use of the method proved successful, he asked the Hebrew teacher to do the same in his Hebrew class. Then he asked Ben Yehuda to try this new method (when Behar later served as principal of a school in Jerusalem). Ben Yehuda devoted himself with great enthusiasm to this new method and subsequently published his famous essay in Hatzevi in which he advocated the idea of one language for all Jews. The new

156) L'toldot Nashita Nativait, in Hadoar, No.12, Shvat 5691

idea was picked up by Grafovsky, Yellin and Epstein,¹⁵⁷⁾ who expounded it, elaborated on it and pioneered its use in the Palestinian schools.

But simultaneously with the effort of 'naturalizing' the teaching of Hebrew in Palestine, a similar effort was made by the Hebrew teachers in Russia. Zuta had become dissatisfied with translations of the Hebrew text into Russian or Yiddish and arrived at the conclusion of Ivrit B'Ivrit in his own unique way, via trial and error. "One of the innovations of that year, he writes, was the reading of a chapter in Humash without any translation and without any commentary after a number of previous explanations of the text. In order that the translations should not impair the understanding of the original, we re-read the original text in Hebrew only. The pupils read the chapters that were known to them with proper intonation and emphasis, and in their minds they thus retained the original form of the Scripture and the translation of it remained in the subconscious. Soon after that we took onemore step: we did not translate simple sentences which the pupils could understand, but instead asked a few questions, to determine if they actually understood sufficiently what they learned. Those were the first steps in the beginning of teaching Ivrit B'Ivrit . . . During the winter, I began to speak Hebrew with a child of four . . . prepared a vocabulary which he was to acquire through easy conversations, and while taking a daily walk with the child, I presented to him the following phrases: about a dog that ran in the street, about the white snow, about the court-yard and the house . . . The results were marvellous, beyond my expectations. The child actually spoke in Hebrew and in full sentences and compelled his grandfather to speak Hebrew with him".¹⁵⁸⁾ Be that as it may

¹⁵⁷⁾ Famous modern educators in Palestine

¹⁵⁸⁾ Midarko shel Moreh, pp. 70-71

be, by 1900 this method was used not only by private teachers, but also in some of the modernized Talmud Torahs and in all of the existing Hadarim Metukanim.

Great impetus to this method of teaching or to this idea of spoken Hebrew, as though it was the mother tongue, was given by the appearance in 1890 of "Ivrit B'Ivrit" by I. Epstein ¹⁵⁹⁾ which consists of an essay entitled "Torat Hashitah Hativeit" and a syllabus for 100 lessons for beginners, entitled "Mishpat Hashitah Hativeit Breishit Lmud Hasafah". In the essay Mr. Epstein makes a passionate plea for the use of the natural method as the only effective way in the teaching of Hebrew. "It should not come up in one's mind to detest a good method just because the nationalists see in it a medium for the realization of their hope" ¹⁶⁰⁾. The method is good, irrespective of its helpfulness to Zionists. In a well-presented examination of the virtues of the method and its superior qualities, as compared with other methods, he lists the following twelve items by way of comparison and contrast. ¹⁶¹⁾

Natural Method

Translation Method

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will do the job through all the child's senses, and especially through those of sight and touch. Being a sense perception method, it will not tax the mental faculties of the child more than the child's mind is capable of, and memory will come in as an aid to the senses.2. We will therefore be able to teach children of four years old or less, as mothers teach their infants to speak when they are one year old and up.3. And when the child will become six years old and you will give him the book of Genesis, or a major portion of the Holy Scriptures, he will be "running" in them, and you will be able to turn his heart to | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will do its job only through the mental faculties of child and his memory. Being a method dealing with abstractions, it will tax the capacities of the child more than his mental powers can bear.2. Translation for a child younger than seven deadens his talents and dulls his heart.3. And even if the child will reach his sixth or seventh birthday, translation will still be hard for him and for many more years. Both pupil and teacher will have |
|--|--|

¹⁵⁹⁾ Ivrit B'Ivrit by I. Epstein, Ahiasaf Publishers, Warsaw 1899

¹⁶⁰⁾ Ibid, p.16

¹⁶¹⁾ The translation from the Hebrew was made by the writer of this manuscript.

Natural Method

3. the content, because the language will not weigh heavily upon the learner.
4. The direct method brings the child closer to nature and to the world of reality, and it at the beginning of the work does not need any books.
5. And when the method makes study an activity, a movement and a life-situation, it endears study to the child, who naturally loves action and movement, newness and changes, and study for him will be a pleasure instead of a burden, in any event, not a heavy burden.
6. It will open up the eyes of the child and habituate him to look at his surroundings, to view all that he can see, to examine the quality of things and to seek a meaning in the things and acts that are being done before him.
7. It will teach him not to speak a word before he will clarify the matter according to what he actually sees; it will habituate him to see first, then think and finally speak.
8. While it will be teaching the language, it will also make the children acquire indirectly and very naturally a great deal of useful knowledge from geography, botany, anatomy, etc.
9. Through it (the method) the child will digest all learning. Torah that is accompanied by action will be everlasting.

Translation Method

3. to give all their hearts to translation more than to the very subject studied.
4. The translation method depends entirely on books and has not relation to the world of reality.
5. And when it (the method) makes study a matter of Midrash only, when it gives the child the book at the very beginning of his schooling, when it removes him from the world of lively action, and substitutes instead dead words, it causes the subject matter and the language to be odious, and the study becomes a heavy burden and the school a jail.
6. It will imprison the child in one fourth of a cubit of a little book, and the paper of the book will be his world, and the lines - "all that is in it" (in the world), and he will get into the habit of shutting his eyes from seeing the world of reality.
7. It will habituate him to repeat words that frequently he may not understand, to dream while awake and to judge about things according to what he hears only; it will teach him to speak before he thinks and to think before he sees.
8. He is always sinking in words and their translation, and when the child will read about relevant and useful things, he will forget them the next day, because he saw ~~them~~ only words, and not the things themselves.
9. Through it, the child will repeat for years the words of the book, and because his learning is not accompanied by action, it will not become his possession.

Natural Method

10. Through this method, teacher and student will speak the language throughout the study-period, in reading and writing. And if two hours are allotted for Hebrew, all the available time will be utilized for it.
11. Through it the pupil will develop the habit of thinking in the language.
12. Through it all children in all lands will have one language. In it we will publish in all lands special Hebrew textbooks, and Hebrew teachers may be able to teach the language, although they may not know the vernacular of that given land.

Translation Method

10. Through this method one-half of the time will be given to another tongue.
11. Through it he will not learn to think in that language.
12. When it (the method) teaches Hebrew in other tongues, it will cause separation of brothers, and our sons will learn Hebrew-Yiddish, Hebrew-German, Hebrew-English, Hebrew-Arabic, etc. And the number of Jewish languages will be like the number of lands of our domicile, and a good teacher of Hebrew who may come to another land, will not be able to teach our language until he will get to know the vernacular. 162

In this presentation the influence of Pestalozzi and Froebel are evident; and while the arguments are pedagogically very sound, the approach to the question of method, at best a means of reaching a goal, has in it the fervor of Hassidism and can be explained only when one bears in mind the atmosphere of revitalization which tended to romanticize the language and also the best method of teaching it. As I. Ushpaz put it "In the discovery of this method they (the teachers) saw a great light, Israel's salvation, and his rebirth. Through this method they hoped to revive the senses of the children of Israel which became dull in Galut, to restore strength to the Jewish body and to uplift it. By proclaiming the value of this new method in the renewal of original Hebrew thought, in the rejuvenation of the Hebrew soul and the preparation of the youth for the New Zion, they also considered the Heder Metukan as the foundation of the nation and its teachers, the hope of the sons of prophets, burning with the fire of the religion of Hebrew". 163)

162) Ivrit B'Ivrit, pp.20-23

163) I. Ushpaz "On Yehiel Yehieli, Heid Mahinuch, Heshvan, 5698

Thus the spoken Hebrew and the "direct method" became a religion.

No wonder then that the characteristic feature of the new school was the natural method, which was followed with great devotion by all modern Hebrew teachers. The use of the direct method met with great opposition. Some of the outstanding writers voiced their dissatisfaction and resentment. They could not see the wisdom in making such a great ado about the entire issue of spoken Hebrew. M. I. Freid ¹⁶⁴⁾ writes that "it is important to note the fact that some of our famous Hebrew writers at that time, like Buki Ben Yagli, David Frishman, and even the genius of the generation, Bialik, do not maintain that the method Ivrit B'Ivrit is so important and minimize the value even of spoken Hebrew in day-by-day life. *at* one of the Hebrew meetings the following words leaped from the tongue of H. N. Bialik; "You will argue with me in vain that we have to bring up to the top of our cultural work the Hebrew speech. This is a matter of sport, sort of a game, and nothing more". Neither did the famous publicist and Zionist leader Sokolov attach much importance to the method of "Safa Berurah". ¹⁶⁵⁾ The philosopher-essayist Hillel Zeitlin was another great literary fit comments against the Ivrit B'Ivrit metho:

But the teachers themselves upheld the new method with great zeal and enthusiasm. Their great satisfaction with the Ivrit B'Ivrit method is best described by one of their group, Mr. K. I. Silman. He wrote, "And we reached the height of happiness when we succeeded in teaching the sons of Judah through the natural method such words as Sargeil (ruler) Deyo (ink) Hahberet (notebook)

164) Yamim V'shanim, p.163

165) Ibid, p. 163

166) Hillel Zeitlin, Der Moment, No.24, Warsaw, 1912

Kesset (inkwell); Learning through senses, in a Hebrew environment, employing Ivrit B'Ivrit, just like in Palestine, made us feel very happy. It seemed to us that at that hour (when we use Hebrew), we are once again one people, using one language, having one aspiration. And the (Jewish) sons of foreign lands are at one, fused together, with the sons of Israel in the land of Israel. . No, it is impossible to continue to employ the translation method in the teaching of Isaiah. It would lack harmony, wholesomeness and perfection.¹⁶⁷⁾

It is true that some teachers misused the direct method and carried it to absurdity. In the Odessa Heder Metukan, "the teacher made the direct method more crooked than direct, to the extent that it was even worse than translation into Yiddish or Russian. To explain "Bara" there came the aid of the 'direct method' and substituted the term "Yatzar", for "Breishit" there was "Bathilah" and for "Shamain" the direct help was "Raldia".¹⁶⁸⁾ In the Heder Metukan in Lodz, the young Maskil teacher who could not use the direct method effectively and who did not want to translate into Yiddish, employed Mendelson's German translation of the Bible.¹⁶⁹⁾ That in some schools the teacher was too incompetent to employ any method - let alone the direct method - is to be seen from Mr. Ratner's report. He found that "some melandim changed their Heder into a "Heder Metukan". These were the same melandim-ignoramuses, the same methods of teaching, but clothed in a new garment".¹⁷⁰⁾ (A more elaborate discussion of this problem in the subsequent section on Teachers)

It is also evident that in some of the new schools the old method of translation into Yiddish was not entirely uprooted. The same Mr. Ratner in

167) Miyamin Rishonim, Seifer ^{Hagovul} shel Histadrut Hamorin, Jerusalem, 5688, p. 254

168) Midarke shel Moreh, p. 105

169) A.K. Epstein in Shvilei Hahinuch, Teiveit 5703, p. 115

170) S.B. Ratner in Vestnik, No. 20, 1912

his survey of sixteen Hadarim Metukanim finds that only in twelve of them the direct method was employed. We already noted that in certain Lithuanian communities the Heder Metukan struggled for its existence. It is worth noting in this connection that one of the reasons for this hardship was the parents' negative attitude to Ivrit B'Ivrit, and consequently there was the continued use of the translation method even in some of the newly formed Hadarim Metukanim.¹⁷¹⁾ But notwithstanding these manifestations of either ineffective use of Ivrit B'Ivrit or its total absence from the program, the majority of Hadarim Metukanim were committed to the principle of natural method and employed it successfully.

2. THE PHONETIC METHOD IN THE TEACHING OF READING

Another innovation in the area of methodology was the abandonment in the Heder Metukan of the old method of teaching of reading. Heretofore the child was taught the name of the letter and the name of the vowel and then they were drilling with him the sound of a combined letter and vowel. The substitution instead of seeing the entire syllable, recognizing it and pronouncing it properly became the practice in the Heder Metukan. In certain schools this method implied recognition of an entire word, reading it from a card, or from the blackboard, and later dividing the word into its component syllables. This new device in teaching of reading, called the "Shitah Kolit" or phonetic method was accepted in most Hadarim Metukanim and practiced with considerable success.

One of the resourceful teachers of the time advocated the use of illuminated letters in order that the syllables and the words should not appear

¹⁷¹⁾ A. Slutok in Vestnik, No.20, February, 1913

as "dead bodies", but as "living things".¹⁷²⁾ The children will then learn the phonetics of the word with greater ease, in the form of a game, "they will recognize the words as they would old beloved friends" and consequently the entire procedure of learning Hebrew reading will be a joyous and interesting activity. Another teacher insists that the reading of whole words is the ideal method, instead of its aggregate syllables, "The child should do it (the combining of syllables) mentally and pronounce the whole word."¹⁷³⁾

This seeking to improve the method of teaching of reading by the teachers of the Hadarim Metukanim implied a certain amount of experimentation that was going on in the various schools with regard to reading. That the "Shitah Kolit" was the approved method is to be seen from all references to it in the curricula. It was at that time that the famous book for learning the rudiments of reading "Reshit Daat"¹⁷⁴⁾ which until this day is being used in many Jewish schools in America, was compiled by M. Krinsky.

The method of course, implies the learner's knowledge of the word before it is presented in printed or written form. A child in the first grade, before he learns to read phonetically or otherwise the word "book", knows about it from experience. The phonetic method is not a method of learning to read non-sensical syllables, but a procedure through which the correct way of reading the word is through its enunciation in single syllables, in order to give the right sound to each letter. The book Reishit Daat which consists of exercises in the phonetic reading of nonsense syllables, was not accepted by all Hadarim Metukanim¹⁷⁵⁾ and David Yellin's primer "L'fi Hataf", which is based on sense-making phonetics, was preferred.

172) Ben Moshe, Hapedagog, Vol. 1, p. 103

173) Ben Zev, Hapedagog, Vol. 1, p. 109

174) Reshit Daat, by M. Krinsky, Tushia Publishing Co. Warsaw, 5663

175) Hapedagog, Vol. 2, p. 92

3. THE OBSERVATION METHOD

Pestalozzi's theory of proceeding from the simple to the complex and his contention of object teaching for the purpose of giving children real knowledge of the real thing in the world about them, motivated the stress on Sheurei Histaklut (observation lessons) for the first two years. While it degenerated into learning from books only as soon as the child entered the third year, the element of descriptiveness of objects "Siputim Teixrin" were retained even in the higher grades. The object lesson became a watchword of a Heder Metukan. In Mogilev-Podolsk, the name of the school incorporated that watchword. It was known as "Heder Metukan and Sheurei Histaklut" ¹⁷⁶⁾ There were pictures to be found in all classrooms, and a variety of objects of interest to the child. In the Yekaterinoslav school the teachers actually established a little museum of all kinds of objects so that the children may learn to "see, think and speak". ¹⁷⁷⁾ "We upheld the principle of observation", writes Zuta, "as a basis for teaching of every subject. To this end in addition to the pictures, we had to organize a sort of museum in miniature in which we collected 'from the hyssop which is in the wall to the cedar which is in the Lebanon' - from black, red and white threads to woolens, silk and cotton, all kinds of coal, tools of carpentry, tailoring and shoemaking. We arranged all of these in special categories of which a list was made up and whenever we needed them, we used some or all of these objects."

The use of maps was another phase of the observation method. The first elements of geography were taught in the better type school through extensive

¹⁷⁶⁾ This information was given to me by the social worker Mr. Paul Veret of Omaha, Nebraska, a native of Mogilev-Podolsk, who attended in his childhood that Heder Metukan.

¹⁷⁷⁾ Midarko shel Moreh, p. 22

use of pictures and maps. Since this subject was introduced in the higher grades when the child's notions, sense of direction and location were already established through a knowledge of some parts of history, it was assumed that maps and pictures gave more reality, as it were, to their geographic ideas.

4. Discipline

As to the question of classroom discipline, it was already established at the Ursha Teachers' Conference ¹⁷⁸⁾ that the ideal situation would be the complete elimination of rewards and punishments. The consensus was that punishment is a very poor method of improving a situation and that the teacher "should better forget that he can punish". The only compromise agreed on was the method of punishment with words" and an occasional direction of the "sinners" to the corner, in order "to remove the bad from the good". That the practice of punishment, which was current in the old Hadarim, was almost non-existent in the new Hadarim, is to be seen from a suggestion in an editorial in Hatsefirah ¹⁷⁹⁾ to the effect that the "organization of additional model schools like the Hadarim Metukanim" will tend to eliminate the evil of physical punishment from the old Hadarim." This contention is based on the premise "that all that is good is destined to succeed." The old Hadarim, it was maintained, will eventually be forced to improve and do away with punishment.

These were the new methods in the new schools. They point ~~to~~ a more modern approach to education, laying due stress on the individuality of the child and giving ample attention to the school as "a social frontier", destined to regenerate the people and reconstruct their lives along the lines of Jewish nationalism and Hebrew culture.

178) Hapedagog, Vol. 2, p.33

179) Hatsefirah, No.27, 1902

J. THE PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS OF THE HEDER METUKAN

The physical equipment of the Heder Metukan was a marked improvement upon the old Heder, the one-room melamed school. It is common knowledge that the Heder Metukan was housed in a clean, nicely furnished house, adequately lit and ventilated with neat classrooms, class equipments and ample sanitary facilities. In terms of physical surroundings these new schools were as good or, in certain instances, even better than the buildings of the government schools. Even the foes of the Heder Metukan had to admit the superior qualities of the physical aspects of the new schools over the old Heder and Talmud Torah. An inspector of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment, who maintained an antagonistic attitude to the new school, admitted that they may have better buildings, better textbooks, but the spirit of Heder is the same."¹⁸⁰⁾

There is ample evidence to the effect that the housing facilities of the Improved School were excellent. The building of the school in Smolensk is described as a building having "spacious rooms, conducted according to health regulations, neatness and cleanliness reigning everywhere, beautiful furniture -
¹⁸¹⁾
a symbol of a school." The school in Nikolayev is referred to as "a model school not only in its programmatic aspects, but also in the careful attention given to the school plant, with so much air and light."¹⁸²⁾ In Pershteshpina ¹⁸³⁾ the school was housed in "a spacious house, full of air and light." In Kiev, in the midst of the section overcrowded with churches, where only Jewish artisans and craftsmen were permitted to live, a new school was established in a mansion acquired from one of the aristocratic landlords" for a large sum of money" and

¹⁸⁰⁾ A.L. Piatkin in Vestnik, No. 1, 1910

¹⁸¹⁾ Hapedagog, Vol 1, p. 432

¹⁸²⁾ Budutshnost, 1902, No.29

¹⁸³⁾ Shishim Shnot Hayim, p. 179

turned over into a modern Hebrew school to accommodate the children who reside in that section." 184) In Layev, "the Heder Metukan was designed after the pattern of the new schools that became famous at that time. The building stood upon a hill. As soon as we climbed up the hill we were in a new world, removed from the noise of the city. All was quiet and beautiful." 185) In Berditchev, "the school looked to me like a magic castle," writes Zevi Sharfstein, "Bewitched I walked in the large corridor and saw how each child put his books and lunch in his locker-drawer, upon whose door his name in Hebrew was imprinted." 186) Hillel's, too, in his survey of Jewish education in Bessarabia speaks of the splendid improvements in the physical aspects of the new Hadarim "in the buildings, the equipment and the orderliness". The Bialystok Heder Metukan was housed in a beautiful house and a special group of women-patrons "visit the school every day to look after its physical surroundings." 187)

K. HEDER METUKAN AUSPICES AND SCHOOL BOARDS

The Heder Metukan was, in some communities, a public institution while in others it was conducted as a private school. But even as a private institution it had the moral support of the parents and of some of the community leaders. The Zionist groups in particular were either conducting the school themselves or lent their support to the individual teacher entrepreneur. It is very difficult to determine where the private initiative gave way to public support and auspices and vice versa. Thus in Vilna, 188) the Heder Metukan

184) A Tkufah fun 60 Yor, pp. 17-18

185) D. Wertheim, in Shvilei Hahinuch, Tamuz 5703, p. 269

186) Zevi Sharfstein in Shvilei Hahinuch, Nisan, 5704, p. 167

187) Hapedagog, Vol. 1, p. 383

188) Vilna, by I. Cohen, p. 355

was founded by Jacob Heilpern in 1903 "with official permission from the government, and he maintained it as a private school to 1915". In Warsaw, on the other hand, the Heder Metukan was founded by the Zionist groups, but after one and a half years of school management under public auspices, it was turned over to two famous teachers: Kaplan and Fugatchov.¹⁸⁹⁾ The school in Berdichev was governed by a Board of Directors, which was vested with authority to appoint a principal and a 'committee on examination'.¹⁹⁰⁾ In Bobroysk, the Heder Metukan was a community sponsored school since its inception in 1897.¹⁹¹⁾ The Yekaterinoslav institution was seemingly sponsored and headed by the famous Zionist leader M. M. Usshishkin.¹⁹²⁾ In Kremenitz and in Zhitomir the two Hadarim Metukanim were sponsored by the local Zionist groups.¹⁹³⁾ The Bialystok school was a communal venture and its board organized an annual dues-paying membership campaign to cover the deficit. In other communities, however, according to the reports at the meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment, there were new schools that were called Hadarim Metukanim and were operated by private melamidim, with little or no community backing. It is very possible that the hardships entailed in obtaining a government charter for the operation of a newly organized publicly sponsored school,¹⁹⁴⁾ prompted the community leaders to concede to private ownership of a Heder Metukan. In the case of a private Heder, as already indicated, the officials were satisfied that the teacher obtain a license for three rubles and be free to operate a religious school. It seems that there were no uniform standards with regard to auspices. It was a problem which, in most cases, was

189) Historiah Shel Heder Metukan Ehad, in Darkeinu, Odessa, 1916

190) Changing Conceptions in Jewish Education, by E. Gamoran, pp. 198-199

191) P.L. Shapiro in Vestnik, 1912, No.20, p. 36

192) Midarko Shel Moreh, p. 99

193) Hapedagog, Vol.1, p. 141

194) It should be remembered that the government looked with great suspicion upon newly established educational institutions. They feared the spread of revolutionary propaganda among the youth of the country.

solved locally, in the light of prevailing local conditions.

It is interesting to note that lack of any community support and supervision meant that the school was in the hands of incompetent teachers. Since the Heder Metukan was in style, certain old-fashioned teachers followed the new style of Heder Metukan and in order to improve their business, shortened the caftans, cut the peiot (ear locks) shaved the beards, moved into a new home and advertised the existence of a Heder Metukan". 195) This situation, of course, was a threat to the movement and was fought bitterly by the lay and professional leadership of the Heder Metukan.

- In my own home-town, Vachnovkah, the Heder Metukan which I attended (1912-1913) was founded by a private Hebrew teacher with the help of a number of parents. In time a larger committee of parents was organized, another teacher was hired, and the school became a community institution. It had a Board of Education, a treasurer-secretary and a special committee to look after the school plant.

L. TUITION FEES AND SCHOOL FINANCES

The tuition fee in the new school was very high. No wonder that the Heder Metukan was considered by many of its supporters, let alone its antagonists, as a school for the rich. "Just as the Talmud Torah was founded for the children of the poor, writes a friend, "the Heder Metukan must have been intentionally designed for the children of the rich." 196) Indeed the relatively high tuition fee made it impossible for the children of parents of the low

195) S. B. Ratner in Vestnik No.20, 1912

196) Ch. A. Dubnikow, in Darkeinu, Hovevei Sfat Eiver, Odessa 1916, p.39

incomes to attend. In the Homel school the fee was a minimum of forty rubles a year.¹⁹⁷⁾ The high cost of instruction was due partially to the small number of children in the school. There were a total of 25 pupils in the second year of its existence. In Dwinsk with a school population of more than 40, the per capita tuition fee was almost 20 rubles a year.¹⁹⁸⁾ In the Zhitomir school there were students who paid as much as 50 rubles a year.¹⁹⁹⁾ In Bialystok, where the minimum tuition was only 6 rubles, the financial situation of the school was so bad that special measures had to be taken to keep the doors open.²⁰⁰⁾

While tuition fee was relatively high, the school had to have outside financial help in order to exist. Expenditures exceeded the income from tuition fees. Dr. Lander in his report on his visit to schools in the provinces of Kiev and Poltava remarked,²⁰¹⁾ "that it is essential to pay attention to the Hadarim Metukanim that are being founded in various places, and that the reason for their inability to grow is that of the financial difficulties that they experience in the early period of their existence. A temporary financial subsidy, even in the form of a loan by the society would be of help in the development of this happy phenomenon in our elementary schools." The above statement indicates that a need for money, at least in the early stages of the life of the new school, existed in those two regions. In other provinces the situation was not better. Special means had to be employed in order to balance the school budget. Zionist groups and school boards instituted special

197) Minutes of SPE for December 27, 1902, report of Katzenelson, Vestnik, 1902

198) Ibid, report of M. Kreinin

199) Hapedagog, Vol. 1, p. 142

200) Ibid, p. 383

201) Voshod, 1901, No. 21-22

affairs in the form of a festival celebration (on Hanukah and Purim) in order to augment the school income from the sale of tickets to these affairs. These festival celebrations or special dramatic performances were arranged in schools not only as an educational enterprise, but also as a public relations scheme and money-raising device. In addition, membership drives were conducted, enlisting the cooperation of the public and thus gaining both moral and financial support for the school. On the basis of the meager information which is available regarding school finances we may be in a position to reconstruct a school budget of an average Heder Metukan, which would be something like this:

I. INCOME

II. EXPENDITURES

- 1. Tuition Fees 1,400
(40 pupils paying
35 rubles per year)
- 2. Special Affairs 500
(2 affairs a year
at $\frac{1}{2}$ ruble admission
fee)
- 3. Subsidies and Mem-
bership Drives 300
(from Zionist groups
or individuals)

Total 2,200

- 1. Salaries of 2 Teachers 1,600
(on the basis of ^{asalary for} a modern
Hebrew teacher to be twice
that of a melamed, the average
salary of the latter being 397.²⁰²⁾
- 2. Rent ²⁰³⁾ for a House of 4 rooms 500
- 3. Miscellaneous Expenses 100

Total 2,200

As already intimated in our discussion of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment, certain schools received subventions from the organization

202) See Section on Teachers' Salaries, also Vestnik No.27, 1914

203) S. Pugatchov in Historiah Shel Heder Metukan Ehad in Darkeinu, Odessa 1916

after the eventful meeting of 1902. Lublin's Heder Metukan was a recipient of a subvention. ²⁰⁴⁾ The extent of the subsidy was about 500 rubles per year, ²⁰⁵⁾ There were of course other schools that received allocations from the Society. In 1902 alone, 61 schools were subsidized, among them a number of Hedarim Metukanim. ²⁰⁶⁾

M. TEACHERS, TEACHERS TRAINING AND TEACHERS ORGANIZATIONS

1. Types of Teachers

It was already observed that in the eighties and nineties there were groups of young idealists who made teaching their calling and who gave unstintingly of their time and energy to the cause of modernizing and Hebraizing Jewish education. These teachers stood at the cradle of the Heder Metukan, and worked with great zeal for its growth and development. Some of these men became known in other parts of the Jewish world, particularly in Palestine, as Jewish educators of note. They laid the foundation of the Heder Metukan, which was the first rung in the Zionist oriented educational ladder. They gained recognition not only in the Zionist and the Hebrew language-centered circles, but also among the non-Zionist elements as well. Their pedagogic skill, their devotion to the cause of Hebrew reborn was praised at meetings of the Society, ²⁰⁷⁾ and in the Hebrew press. But all evidence points to the fact that their number was rather small. For the same people who praise the work of these autodidact pedagogues, describe the other type of teacher who penetrated into the new school as incompetent, mediocre and unfit for the task. That the dearth of adequate and trained personnel

²⁰⁴⁾ Z. Verba, Shvilei Hahinuch, Sept. 1951, p. 196

²⁰⁵⁾ Hapedagog, Vol.1, p. 139

²⁰⁶⁾ Ibid, p. 94

²⁰⁷⁾ P.M. in Budushnost, No.21, 1902. Also Ratner in Vestnik, No.20, 1912, also Bat Ami in Budushnost No. 46, 1902, and also Dr. Landauer's in Voschod

for the Heder Metukan caused great misgivings to its friends is to be seen from the frequent reference to this problem in the Jewish press of the time. In Hatzefirah ²⁰⁸, a writer, B. Qlick, laments "that the teaching profession is still an occupation for those who come to teaching at the end of their search for all other possible vocations." I. Eiger, one of the real friends of a Hebrew-centered school among the Society's officials, deplored the situation time and again. ²⁰⁹) The Zionist leader and publicist, Shmarya Levin, discusses the need for good teachers in one of his essays. ²¹⁰) "Even in the Pale," said Dr. Levin, "the number of teachers in whose hands we can entrust our children is very small indeed. All those who established a Heder Metukan know how hard it is to find a good and competent teacher, who would be at home in the field of pedagogy and who would be fit to serve as the educator of our youth. It so happens that a great deal of the work to improve Jewish education is in vain, not because of lack of students or financial means, but because there are no qualified teachers. And it happens that seven schools hold on to one teacher, saying: Remove our shame." The seriousness of the situation is to be seen from a casual remark by a participant in a discussion on the question of teachers at the December 25, 1902 meeting of the Society. Mr. M. Kreinin of Moscow suggested that "it is a good idea to pay young people 12 rubles a month" and to send them to the better type of the Hadarim Metukanim for practice teaching and observation "so that in time there may be some good teachers." ²¹¹) The above points, on the one hand, to the great esteem in which some of the new school teachers were held, and on the other to the great problem of teacher shortage. Seemingly only few of the thousands of melamdin were capable of teaching in the Heder Metukan. The qualifications

208) ~~Russinet~~, No. 36, 1902

209) Vestnik, No. 1, 1910

210) B'Yemei Hamaabar, p. 180

211) See Report of Dec. 25-27, 1902 meeting, in Vestnik, No. 29

for a teacher in a Heder Metukan, governed by a School Board and dependent for its moral and financial support on a selected clientele of parents, were as follows:

1. A knowledge of the original sources of Hebrew literature: ancient, medieval and modern.
2. An ability to converse fluently in Hebrew.
3. A knowledge of secular subjects, including Russian. The equivalent of the 8 form course of a Gymnasium.
4. A competency in teaching according to the direct method.
5. A pleasant personality and a friend of children.
6. A modernist (in mannerism, attire, etc.)

There were approximately 2500 melamdin at the beginning of the century. This estimate is given in a number of publications by different people. M.G. Eisenstadt, in a discussion on the Heder at the December 25, 1902 meeting of the Society, speaks of 25000 melamdin, including the teachers in all types of new schools, and approximately half a million students in their care. In essays in Hapedagog ²¹²⁾ and in Hatzofeh, ²¹³⁾, dealing with the problems of teachers, there is reference to the same number. But only few of this multitude of teachers could claim the above qualifications. "Melamdut" was still synonymous with the concept of "good-for-nothing".

It stand to reason that there were in addition to the young intellectuals

212) Vol. 1, p. 263

213) No. 42, 1902

who worked in the modern Hebrew schools, other teachers who came into the ranks from either the world of melamdin, the Crown school, or from among the non-Hebrew reading Jewish intelligentsia. The educator H.A. Zuta mentions a Mr. Grossman ²¹⁴⁾ who did not know Hebrew, but who as a cultured person and a former teacher in the Crown school, became in time one of the leading pedagogues of the Heder Metukan in Yekaterinoslav. There were also a number of Hebraists from among the laity who became interested in teaching in order to help the new school get on its feet or in order to meet the demand for capable Hebrew speaking teachers.²¹⁵⁾ Then there were some of the Hebrew writers who joined the ranks of Hebrew teachers.

Most of the modern teachers had no formal training in education, nor in other liberal arts' courses. They were, as already observed, autodidacts, who engaged in systematic reading group discussion and constant evaluation of their scholastic achievements. They studied the books on education that they could find, mostly in Russian and in German. Their zeal for learning and their devotion to Hebrew culture strengthened their spirit to want to experiment and to seek^k ways for educational growth and development. Younger teachers would learn from their older colleagues, who were more experienced. If news about a successful school reached them, they would go there to observe and to learn. There is enough evidence pointing to frequent visits to "model" schools. The school in Homel where Adler, Silmand and Hazan were working, was visited by a group of twenty teachers, who came from different communities "to acquire knowledge and experience".²¹⁶⁾ The school in Lublin, where N. Fines and Z. Werba worked, was visited by many guests, both teachers and writers.²¹⁷⁾

214) Midarko Shel Moreh, p.91

215) Shishim Shnot Hayim, p. 193

216) Hapedagog, Vol. 2, p.25

217) Shvilei Hahinuch, Sept. 1951, p. 196

The Warsaw school, where Kaplan and Pugatchov served, was another local point for visiting teachers. ²¹⁸⁾ The Berditchev Heder Metukan, where Ch. P. Bergman, author of Sfat Yeladim, taught, was visited by Sharfstein, where he was greatly impressed with the program and the teachers' work. ²¹⁹⁾ There was the Grodno school "L'Terah V'Lateudeh", with a number of choice teachers, which served as a model school for the novice and later became an experimental station for the students of the Grodno Teachers' Institute. ²²⁰⁾

Many of these teachers had to depend on their intuitive powers which led them to discoveries and innovations in the field of pedagogy. Since training schools for teachers were not available, and since no continuous organized effort to conduct in-service courses in education was made, the better type of the Heder Metukan teacher had to engage in a great deal of trial-and-error procedure before he found a workable method for his school.

2. Teacher Training

The only Teachers' Training School in existence in Russia at the close of the century was the Teachers' Institute in Vilna. It had been founded for the purpose of training teachers for the Jewish Crown school. The following is an evaluation of this institution by one of its former students, Shmarya Levin: "This institute was founded when the Russian government closed its two Rabbinical Colleges of Zhitomir and Vilna. The Rabbinical Colleges had maintained a much higher standard of learning than the Teachers' Institute. But they had never been particularly popular in the Jewish world. The government had had but one object: the steady production of rabbis who would lead the

218) Der Moment, No. 24, 1912

219) Ibid, Nisan 5704, p. 169

220) Toldot Hahinuch, Vol. 1. p. 301

Jewish masses in the "right direction" - that is, according to the wishes of the government. There were to be more officials than rabbis. This was enough to create, on the part of the Jewish masses, a dislike of the colleges and of the rabbis that they produced. The new type of rabbi was regarded as an outsider, placed by the government at the head of Jewish communities. And the Jews distrusted the government: they knew that the government was following consistently one deep and unalterable plan: the destruction of everything that was Jewish. The destruction was planned even from within: these new-fangled governmental rabbis were another blow at the integrity of the Jewish people.

This suspicious attitude of the Jews afterwards transferred to the Teachers' Institute of Vilna. The new teachers were not as dangerous as the new rabbis, for the circle of their influence was smaller; but they were none the less instruments of the Russian government in its wide plan for the Russification of the Jewish people. The new teachers, as they graduated, were placed in the special schools known as "Jewish Government Schools," which were supported out of the tax on Kosher meat - that is, by the Jews themselves. But the control of the schools was in the hands of the government: the Jewish community - which raised the funds for these schools after the Jews had met all general taxes paid by everybody else - had no say in the conduct of them, as regards either curriculum or personnel. The place occupied by Jewish studies was, to the Jews who supported these schools, outrageously small: and the teachers had received no real training in Jewish studies." 221)

Dr. Nissan Touroff, another student of the school makes the following comment about the institution: "This school, which was financed by the govern-

221) Shmaryah Levin in "Youth in Revolt", p.85

ment with Jewish funds, and whose students were Jews only, was directed by a Gentile, a wicked person and an anti-Semite. Most of the teachers were antisemites. The discipline was strict and very annoying, as in the barracks. The students were divided into three categories: the majority of them were ordinary young men who looked for a career, they had no knowledge and no wisdom and not even an ideal; the minority were socialists, especially members of the Bund; and the even smaller minority were truly students, Hebraists and Zionists. There was an attitude of cynicism toward the Hebrew studies on the part of ~~the~~ both teachers and students". . 222) Only four Jews were on the faculty. Joshua Shteinberg and Asher Wohl taught Bible in the Russian translation, and Hebrew respectively. The other two were teachers of music.

We thus see that this Institute could not be considered a training school for Hebrew teachers, especially for those of the Heder Metukan.

The Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment organized in 1901 summer courses for Hebrew teachers in the city of Yekaterinoslav for which a special permit from the government was obtained. The nature of these courses can be seen from the following description: "An attorney was sent to Yekaterinoslav to organize these courses. A man who did not know Hebrew nor education. A Government Rabbi Epstein from Grodno, who came together with the attorney, was to serve as the director of the courses, with the aid of the regional inspector of the Russian elementary schools. All diploma-teachers of the city and the communities in the region were there, among them a Mr. Levner, author of "Yedideinu", a textbook which contains prayers translated into Russian

222) Pirkei Hayai, by Nissan Touroff, in Seifer Touroff, Boston 5698, p. 11-16

word for word. After consultation with Ussishkin, we too decided to participate, in order to show the superior qualities of the natural method; I called upon Yehieli to come with me, and the two of us planned to show all teachers a number of lessons in Ivrit B'Ivrit. As a diploma-teacher I undertook to give two lessons: a model lesson in Bible (in Russian) and a lecture on the natural method. I taught in Russian the third chapter of Samuel I, the "appearance" of G d before Samuel. This lesson pleased the teachers and the inspector. But during the lecture of Ivrit B'Ivrit, I stumbled. In my anxiety to attack the mechanistic approach to education inherent in the translation method, since each word is being translated in isolation from the other, with no relationship between the individual words, I said: Can such a translation of prayer bring the prayee to devotion; Is it not sheer boredom, with no feeling nor enthusiasm? I pointed out the organic relationship which exists between the individual who recites the prayer and the meaningful words of the text. So far my words were understood even by the inspector, the Goy. But I continued and said: While ~~it~~ is true that we cannot develop the knowledge of our national language as is the case in other lands and with other peoples, and while it is true that under present-day conditions in Russia a Heder education must suffice, but if we were given a real emancipation in education and the possibility to broaden the Hadarim and make them nationalistic . . . No sooner did I finish the sentence, when the inspector got on his feet and said: "Again nationalism . . . I forbid you to attend these courses" . . . I did not refuse and left . . . to the disgrace of my colleagues, even the nationalists among them, who did not protest nor did anyone leave with me" 223).

From the above description we learn of two important facts: 1. The con-

223) Midarko Shel Moreh, pl 100

tinued resistance to the new educational philosophy as promulgated by the Hebrew culturists and nationalists and as expounded by Ahad Haam in his address at the meeting of the Odessa branch of the Society (see Section on Ahad Haam) and the low level of Hebraic knowledge of the diploma-teachers, who served in the Crown schools, in some Talmud Torahs and old Hadarim, who were in need of special instruction in Sammel.

Another summer session took place in Beylaya Tzerkov, in 1903 ²²⁴⁾. But these courses as well were not designed for the better type of teachers of the Heder Metukan, whose scholastic attainments were high. This was a seminar but for the average run of melamed and "modern" teacher whose educational skills and general knowledge was wanting.

Another attempt at teachers-training or preparation of young people for teaching was made by the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment by instituting special fellowships to deserving candidates. At the beginning of the century five women who attended the schools for higher learning in St. Petersburg were given special stipends on condition that upon graduation they devote a number of years to work in the Jewish girls' schools. ²²⁵⁾ In Riga, Grodno, Vilna, the Society gave special grants of money to promising Yeshivah students to prepare themselves for teachers' examination, then become teachers in the Society-supported schools.

Finally, in 1907, the "Pedagogic Courses" in Grodno were organized by the Society which had all the characteristics of a modern Hebrew Teachers' Training School. The director of the new Seminary was Aharon Kahnshtam,

²²⁴⁾ Hapedagog, Vol.2, p. 237

²²⁵⁾ Ibid, p.94

formerly the principal of the Lodz Talmud Torah, and later the head of the Society's school in St. Petersburg. The new institution attracted scholarly young people who came to Grodno from all parts of the country. The curriculum consisted of Hebrew and secular advanced studies. All instruction was given in Hebrew. There were courses in Bible, Modern Hebrew Literature, Medieval Jewish Philosophy, Jewish History and Talmud. The secular studies were: one foreign language, General History, Advanced Mathematics and Natural Sciences.^x In addition there were courses in Psychology, pedagogy and supervised practice teaching. Kahnshtam himself, although a lawyer by profession, specialized in education in Germany and in England and developed great insight into this new field of endeavor. He was later joined by Dr. Sh. Tcherna, a cultured man, a competent teacher, and a great Hebrew scholar. The "courses" were at first for a two year duration and then for three years. The actual work per week was forty hours, a very intensive course. In addition to the formal study there were a number of extra-curricular activities, the most important of which was physical education. "The students used to engage in games and in sport in the outskirts of the city, together with Kahnshtam. In pairs, they competed in races, and in boxing, and the leader of all these games was Kahnshtam himself.²²⁶⁾ The student body, as already intimated, consisted of a select group of people "who absorbed a great deal of Hebrew culture from the original sources, who lived the life of simple folk, who aspired to great national efforts and who saw in the education of the generation the goal of their lives. Among them were men who became famous in Hebrew letters and in Jewish education (the writers Fichman, Lerner, Kaback, Auvsey, Spivak, Beigil and others).²²⁷⁾

²²⁶⁾ Tarbut, No. 1, Heshvan, 5682, Warsaw, p. 40

²²⁷⁾ Toldot Hahinuch B'Yisrael, Vol. 1, 392

^x See a. Korn, Hakursim Hapedagogim Hadonim B'Grodna, in Barchonim, Tel Aviv, 1988

But prior to the establishment of this institution whose branches were later to be found in Kharkov and in Kiev, no school for teachers existed. In the "hey-days" of the Heder Metukan (1890-1905) the cry was: "We need a Teachers Seminary, and let the cost of each and every teacher be what it may, because from one good teacher five others will learn. And until we will have well-prepared teachers there will be no salvation." 228)

3. Teachers Organizations

Thus, it was not until 1910 that we find larger groups of qualified Hebrew teachers, most of whom were to be found in the Hadarim Metukanim. The graduates of the Grodno Seminary, the disciples of the senior Hebrew teachers who pioneered in the founding of the Heder Metukan, the university students from abroad, who returned to Russian unable to complete their studies, -- all these elements already constituted a larger group of professional Hebrew teachers. In 1908 the first Hebrew Teachers' Federation was founded with the view to aid the professional and economic welfare of the Hebrew teacher. The first founders' meeting took place in a small community in Brailov (Podolia) where the leading figures in Jewish education set up a platform with provisions for a Board of Review, a Placement Committee, a Textbook-Evaluation Committee and a Board of Examiners for the granting of licenses to new teachers. There was also a provision for the organization of a credit and loan committee and it was decided to issue an organ to be called "Kol Hamoreh" 229). The very same year the new "Histadrut Hamorim Haivri'im B'Russia", secured a charter from the government and set up in Kiev an office with members of the Central Committee coming there four times a year for its regular meetings. This new de-

228) Hapedagog, Vol.1, p. 270

229) Hashiloah, Vol. 18, p. 470

230) Z. Fisher in A tkufah fun 60 Yor, pp. 33-36

velopment did much to improve the situation in the field of professionalization. Regional meetings took place in Lida, Belaya Tzervkov and Kiev, where discussions on educational topics were held and where the work of the committees on examinations of teachers, on textbooks and on placement were conducted.²³¹⁾ This teachers' organization was also responsible for a real sifting in the teachers' population, for the encouragement of the promising people to continue to study, and eliminating the incompetent. And, what is more important, the publication "Kol Hamoreh" in Kiev became the rightful heir of the Warsaw pedagogic quarterly "Hapedagog" which was discontinued in 1904. Thus we see that by 1910 there were not only more and better teachers available for the Hadarim Metukanim, (among them 50 graduates from the Grodno Seminary), but a climate of opinion was created which gave due recognition to the new teacher, who was trained and who was kept abreast of developments in the field. The graduates of the Grodno Seminary especially received wide acclaim, and "in all width of Russia there was a great demand for them".

But in spite of all these accomplishments in the field of teacher training in a comparatively short period, and notwithstanding the efforts of the idealists to engage in study and discussion, there seems to have been a shortage of adequate and competent personnel to staff the new Hadarim. In small communities these new schools had to admit unqualified teachers. Even in Yekaterinoslav, under the leadership of Ussishkin, the lay leader, and Zuta, the head teacher, two non-qualified instructors were added to the staff. Numerous schools were invaded, as it were, by ignorant "teachers", as we shall see in a subsequent discussion on the "Critique of the Heder Metukan".

231) Z. Fisher, in A Tkufeh fun 60 Yor, pp.37

N. TEXTBOOKS AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

1. Textbooks

Prior to the rise of the Heder Metukan, there were, as we have seen, different types of Jewish schools other than the old Heder, which were sufficiently modernized and where text material other than the prayer book, the Hebrew Bible and Gemara were used. In the schools supported by the Society, in some of the Russo-Jewish private schools and in the Crown schools where little stress was laid on the teaching of traditional Jewish subjects, new textbooks were introduced for the teaching of Hebrew translated into Russian, and for the Russian translation of the Pentateuch. A Vilna Institute graduate, M. Walper wrote a textbooks, "Mesilah Hadasha", which was designed for the Jewish Crown schools and for the teachers of religion in some of the other schools. The Hebrew writer I. H. Tevirov wrote three textbooks for the three age groups in the elementary schools. These books were formalistic and unspirited. The lessons consisted of words and their translation, short sentences and a great deal of grammar. ²³²⁾ With the rise of the nationalistic movements, which coincided with the spread of Hebrew in some of the old Talmud Torah schools and the newly formed Heder Metukan, new textbooks appeared. Unlike the books by Walper and Tevirov, which were a poor imitation of Russian and German textbooks, the new materials were genuinely Jewish in content, Zionist oriented and with special references to Palestine. The two popular textbooks which gained wide acclaim were Z. Yabetz's texts "Tal Yaldut" for beginners, "Hamoriah" for intermediates, and Toldot Yisrael for the more advanced students, and Yehudah Grazovsky's "Beit Seifer Ivri", Vol. 1, 2, and 3 for all grades. ²³³⁾ In our

²³²⁾ Sifrei Limud U'Zeramin Hevratim, Seifer Hashanah, 5699, pp.266-7

²³³⁾ Hatenuah Ha'Ivrit, Bagolah, p. 270

discussion on curriculum we took note of the above books that were used alongside two new books especially designed for the new method of Ivrit B'Ivrit. These two new textbooks for beginners, as we have seen, were I. Epstein's "Ivrit B'Ivrit" and David Yellin's "L'fi Hataf". Both authors prepared their manuscripts in Palestine and emphasized the importance of the direct method in the teaching of Hebrew. Epstein's book was more of a syllabus for the teacher than a textbook for the student. In it he discussed the entire issue of the "Shita Tiveit" and included 100 lessons, which would be used by the teacher in habituating the child to speak Hebrew. Yellin's book was an attempt at teaching reading from the simple to the complex, and was based on the phonetic method. This book, too, was divided into two parts: One for the teachers and the other for the pupils.

There was another text for beginners: the first portable Aleph Beit (Alpha Beita Metultelet). This innovation of teaching reading through play gained great acclaim among the modernists. Other texts for beginners were Krinsky's "Reishit Daat", a reading primer, and "Beit Haseifer", a book for calligraphy. "Reshit Daat", was criticized at the time, because it dealt primarily with nonsense syllables ²³⁴⁾, while the five pamphlets in calligraphy were praised. In the years that followed, there appeared numerous other textbooks, mostly for the lower grades. "Sfat Yeladin" by Bergman, "Ben Ami" by Sh. Ben Zion ²³⁵⁾ and the grammar texts by Kantorowich and Rabinowitz. All these new books which "captured the Nadarim Metukanim", were published by the companies Tushia and Moriah, whose concern it was to prepare good material for children and youth.

²³⁴⁾ Hapedagog, Vol. 2. p. 92

²³⁵⁾ Moriah, Publishing Co. Odessa, 5663

But the so-called good textbooks were outnumbered by poor textbooks, authored by mediocre teachers, who had little or no knowledge of pedagogy and who were not endowed with the gift of writing children's materials. Ch. I. Katzenelson ²³⁶⁾ describes in Hashiloach this situation as follows: "At times you get a Hebrew book, which is written beautifully, and it has a certain amount of good taste, if and when you read it as a Hebrew book. But the author for some reason considers himself an "expert" in pedagogy and gives us this book as a textbook for children, while truly there is nothing in it that even resembles children's reading matter. Or at times, you will find a "monograph" with commentaries, maxims of wisdom, philosophy, natural sciences, etc, and you are just about ready to give praise to the author who succeeded to include an entire encyclopedia into his "monograph" - when suddenly your eyes behold the author's announcement in the introduction, that this "encyclopedia" is not an encyclopedia, but a new and easy method in teaching children Ivrit-B'Ivrit. Or at times you see a collection of speeches for Bar-Mitzvah presented as a "Christomatia" which is to be taught after the learning of the Aleph Beth. Sometimes you find a book which contains a number of essays on morality with two or three faded illustrations and it is presented as a manual for the method of object-lesson teaching; or a collection of translations from a certain foreign book with a number of phrases "in the spirit of nationalism" and behold it is the last word in pedagogic literature. - - These are some of the books one can find on the market . . . For it is now a custom, that every Hebrew teacher is duty bound to compile a textbook and to bring to light his own new theory. And since almost all of the Hebrew teachers have something to do with beginners, their "creativity" consequently is of the same

236) Hashiloach, Vol. 19, No.1, July 1908, p. 82

kind, and for the same goal: for the elementary stage of elementary education, as though they would want to turn all of learning to a course of studies for the school and the house which is to follow the study of Aleph Beit.

David Frishman, too, ridicules the works of some of these textbook writers. In evaluating a textbook "seider Halimud Hamlameid L'Yaldei Bnai Yeshurun" by M. O. Haber, Vilna, 5646, in which there are many indirect references to sex life, he writes by way of summary: ²³⁷⁾ "After reading all of the above it occurred to me that the distinguished author did not prepare this book for the children of Bnai Yeshurun, but for those lawless, violent adults of our generation, and that the title on the front page ("Hamlameid L'Yaldei, etc.," is a mistake, as are the many other errors in print and in text."

Fortunately only the better type textbooks were used in the Hadarim Metukanim. In so far as the lower grades ~~are~~ ^{were} concerned, there were, it seems, a sufficient number of good books. But as already mentioned in our presentation of the Heder Metukan ⁱⁿ ~~curricula~~, there were few, if any, good textbooks for the more advanced grades. Grazovsky's "Beit Seifer Ivri, Vol. III and Ben Zion's "Bilson Ami" Part II, seemed to have been satisfactory for the third year. For the higher grades, however, the "Torat Hasafrut" by Sh. L. Gordon was practically the only textbook which was used alongside with some of the Tushia publications designed for home reading. Gordon's "Torat Hasafrut" was an attempt to present to the student an elementary knowledge of the development of literature (poetry, fiction, essay, drama, etc.) with selected illustrations from Jewish classics and world literature, prefaced by a discussion

237) Kol Kivei David Frishman Warsaw-New York 5692, Vol. 89 pp.152-154

of each topic in simple Hebrew style. This book, of course, could not have been used successfully by non-competent teachers.

In the area of teachers' manuals the book "Sichot L'Haunot, by I.I. Glass, S.P.E. publication, was very popular. The three parts of the book parallel in their content the three series of pictures: 1. Weinhold's illustrations of nature, village and city, 2. Lehman-Leitman's pictures of animals and 3. Schreiber's of artisans and craftsmen. There is a detailed text for class discussions or "conversation" (Sichah) related to each and every one of these pictures. "Glass's book is not only the first, but the only one by now in the pedagogic literature dealing with this field,"²³⁸⁾ was the critic's comment.

In certain schools the first rendition of Bialik-Ravnitzki illustrated "Bible Stories" (Sipurei Hamikrah).

When one bears in mind that the use of a new text in the Jewish school was a non-orthodox approach, since for long centuries there seemed to have been no need for new textbooks, the attainments in this field, no matter how meager, were of great significance. For we can readily see that the new educational concepts of "child readiness" and "child interest" have already become the concern of the Jewish educator, and that all opposition notwithstanding, an attempt was made to make education more meaningful to the child. These new textbooks, no matter how inadequate, point to a revolutionary procedure in Jewish education; to place the child on a par with the subject matter.

2. Children's Literature

Prior to 1893, few indeed were the Hebrew books that were suitable for

238) Hashiloach, July 1908, p. 85

children and youth. When the first modern Hebrew publishing company, Ahiasaf, was established, one of whose editors was Ahad Haam, the only booklet which was used by teachers as suitable for children was Zev Yabetz's "Shot Mini Kedem", a collection of stories (Solomon and Ashmedai, Nahum Ish Gamzu, Honi Hamaagal), published in Warsaw in 5647. The famous critic, David Frishman,²³⁹⁾ praised the book as particularly suitable for youth. With the founding of Ahiasaf, a number of translations from world classics designed primarily for youth were published. Among them Elliot's "Daniel Deronda", Shumacher's "Birinika", and a new adaptation of Rakanderf's "Zichronot L'Beit David". It was not until the founding in 1896 of the publishing company "Tushia", whose editor was Ben Avigdor, a capable and talented person, that we find an organized attempt made to issue special children's literature.²⁴⁰⁾ In the eight years of Tushia's existence many a book was published for the young reader. The following are some of the notable books which were used extensively in public and school libraries: Y. Z. Levin's "Lemech V'Lemech", a mythical story of the life of the descendants of Adam; I. B. Levner's "Kol Agadot Yisrael Le'Yaldim"²⁴¹⁾, a collection of legends, taken from Biblical, Talmudic and Midrashic sources, adapted for children and youth and written in Biblical idiom with vocalization and translation of hard words; Shlomo Berman's "Migiborei Haumah", a collection of biographies of the lives of great thinkers and heroes in Israel, which was highly recommended for use in the Hadarim Metukanim;²⁴²⁾ and the entire series of "Biblioteka Ketanah", in which masterpieces of modern literature were rewritten and adapted for children and youth, such as A. Mapu's "Ashmat Shomron, Mr. Lehman's Rabbi Gershon Meor Ha-

239) Kol Kitvei David Frishman, Warsaw-New York, 5692, Vol. 8, p. 137-149

240) For details see Hatenuah Ha'Ivrit Bagolah, p. 201

241) See Sharfstein's "Yotzrei Safrut Hayeladim Shelanu, in Seifer Hashanah, New York 5701, p. 240-42

242) Glass in Hap. Vol. 1, p. 280

golah"; L. Levandah's famous story "Avraham Ben Yosef"; M. A. Ginzburg's collection of stories and ethical discourses, and the selected stories by Bershadsky, Ash, Peretz, Bialik, Broner, and others. The outstanding achievement of Tushia was the publication of a children's weekly "Olam Katan", edited by Ben Avigdor and Sh. L. Gordon, which according to the contemporary critics "surpassed in its content, form and circulation all other children's literature that appeared in the Diaspora". ²⁴³⁾ Some of the most talented writers have contributed to this weekly, among them Yehudah Steinberg, H. N. Bialik, David Frishman, and many others. This weekly served as actual classroom reading text in the Hadarim Metukanim (see Home1 curriculum).

In 1911 two new publishing houses were established. Merkaz with branches in Warsaw, Vilna, Odessah, New York and Tel Aviv and Moriah in Odessah. The former issued the special children's publications, "Perachim" (a series of 25 small units) "Nitzanim" (a series of 100 units) and "Bikurim" designed for young adults ²⁴⁴⁾ (270 units). These small ten-page booklets had a very wide circulation throughout the Jewish world. New writers for children and youth appeared on the scene whose stories, poems and dramatic skits were of great merit. Moriah, edited by the four writers Bialik, Ravnitzkin, Ben Zion, Levinsky, published a number of textbooks (Sipurei Hamikrah, Seifer Haagadah, etc.) and the collection of the original works of the great writers (Berkovitz, Ash, Yakov Shteinberg, Sholom Aleichem, Mendeli, Tchernichovsky and Bialik) some of which were read by the students of the higher grades. They also translated a number of world classics into Hebrew, thus opening a door to world literature for the Hebrew reading youth. It is important to note that most of the children's literature appeared on the scene at the twilight period in the life of

²⁴³⁾ Hatenuah HaYivrit Bagolah, p. 201

²⁴⁴⁾ Ibid, pp. 201-202

the Heder Metukan, 1910-1915. The schools used the new reading material for a short period only. With the outbreak of the war, the Heder Metukan gradually disappeared and its heir became the all-day Tarbut school. ✓

O. CRITIQUE OF THE HEDER METUKAN

Foes and friends alike leveled criticism at the door of the Heder Metukan. Some of it was in the nature of self-criticism which was voiced by the very founders of the new school and the protagonists of its ideology. Much more articulate was the critique of the opponents from among the orthodox leadership and from those who were to be found in the camp of the non-Hebraists: the Yiddishists, the convinced assimilationists and the old me-lamdim, whose vested interests prompted them to oppose the new school. The criticism of the friends, which summed up, may be classified in two categories: 1) the school's disregard of Tahlit or the practical goals in education, i.e. preparation for life and 2) the lack of competent trained teachers to implement the Heder Metukan program, no matter how inadequate in terms of real Tahlit.

"The fourth year gave us great worry", writes H. A. Zuta ²⁴⁵⁾ We became convinced that the problem of goal (Tahlit) is our greatest trouble, and that we cannot depend on the parents, nor on the good Zionists, who promised to send their children for a minimum of five years. The first grade is always filled to capacity. The second grade too has a good attendance. But from the third and on, the children begin to leave. They left also this year for private schools to seek "Tahlit", where they were promised to be prepared for admission to a Gymnasium. In the fourth year we have only five or six students left. We understood that our dream to found a "Heder" which would become a real folk-school with a program for eight years was sheer utopia and cannot be realized." Elsewhere he writes, "the Heder Metukan, ²⁴⁵⁾ Midarko Shel Moreh, p. 109

after it brings its students to a certain age, will have to transfer them to a general school, because of the precarious nature of our national life. In that other school the vernacular will become the moving factor in the education of those who were students of the Heder Metukan." 246)

We see from the above statements that the Heder Metukan could not retain its students more than three or four years and that because of the very nature of its programmatic and organizational structure, the new school could not prepare them for life. Since only few secular subjects were taught in the new Heder, and in most cases they were taught in Hebrew, the parents as well as the general public, all idealistic tendencies and beliefs notwithstanding, had to seek for the children another school whose program would be more practical and more functional. There is also an echo of an inner doubt in Zuta's remarks as to the future of the new school student, who had had only three or four years of study and before he could become rooted in Hebrew culture, would no longer be exposed to the stimuli of Hebrew nationalism but instead to the culture of the Russians. Years later, a colleague of Zuta points to the same difficulty.

H. A. Dubnikoff writes in 1916 247) "The outstanding shortcoming of the Heder Metukan at this time is its ultimate lack of the prospective for the future (Tahlit). The Heder is detached from actual life. The pedagogic and hygienic improvements in themselves did not suffice. The school did not meet the needs of the new times. For in the final analysis both the old and the new Heder dealt in the main with "heavenly matters" (spiritual values). Neither the praiseworthy new form of education nor the beautiful mannerisms of the

246) Midarko shel Moreh, p. 165

247) Techno U'Part. ufo shel Beit Sifreinu Haamami, in Darkeinu, Odessa, 1916 pp. 59-63

teachers are of great importance to the average man in Israel. Hence, only very few were the people whose definite nationalistic and pedagogic goals prompted them to send their children to the Heder Metukan only. Both the old and the new Heder did not merit the name of a folk-school, because they disregarded the important "earthly" (Artzi) element in life, the element of "weekday" as against "Sabbath" life. They disregarded all that which is not related to religion or nationalism."

It seems that Mr. Dubnikoff, too, can see the wide gulf that existed between actual life and the program of the new school. It is to be inferred from his last remark that the Heder Metukan did not and could not have served the masses either in terms of its Judaic content (for the scholastic achievements in traditional studies were meager) nor in terms of its responsibility for preparation for life. He saw it as a school uprooted from real life, having no concern for earthly matters, a valid criticism indeed.

Even Mr. A. M. Lifshitz,²⁴⁸⁾ the devoted friend of the Heder Metukan, whose complimentary attitude is well known, has this critical comment to make: "The Heder Metukan has become a school for the teaching of language (Beit Seifer L'Safah), which is both unnatural and undesirable from the point of view of the child's educational development." The official of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment, Dr. I. Eiger,²⁴⁹⁾ who was friendly to the movement and saw in it the beginnings of a real Hebrew national school, had to concede "that the great deterring factor, that of the need to send children who attend this Jewish school for special instruction in other institutions, tends to create two environments for the child, one so greatly different from the other".

²⁴⁸⁾ Haheder, in Hatekufa, Vol.7, Warsaw, Nisan-Sivan, 5680

²⁴⁹⁾ Vestnik, No.1, 1910

It is apparent that due to the school's inability to include in its program all the general subjects and particularly the Russian language and literature, although it offered some of these secular subjects either in Hebrew or in Russian, did not fulfill its task of giving its students a complete, well rounded education. Thus the element of 'Tahlit' was really wanting.

As to the second category of critical comments by friends of the Heder Metukan, that of the lack of trained personnel, the following are some interesting statements on the subject. The pioneers of the new school came to the conclusion that "the most important obstruction in the development of the new Improved Heder is the lack of a real folk-teacher (Moreh Amami), without whom there can be no school.²⁵⁰⁾ They argued that the Zionists must see to it "that the Heder Metukan students are trained by enlightened new human forces, men of a well-rounded education, with a broad world outlook, men who are trained and who are idealists, who will be able to place the new folk-school, the Heder Metukan, on a high plane." They also maintained that the old-fashioned teacher, even if he were to undergo change, cannot serve the purpose. Can these old melandim improve their work through a number of courses in education? We have, therefore, the young to deal with. But they, too, should be classified in two categories: The new teachers and the new fakers. The truly new teachers are the idealists, the writers, the men who strive toward a definite goal. But the new fakers are the same old melandim, who only yesterday were ordinary melandim, translating into Yiddish word for word "Isha an isha, kee tazria as zee vet mazria zein" - and behold

250) Midarke Shel Moreh, p. 165-66

over night they became teachers of Ivrit B'Ivrit, because they smelled the fats of a livelihood, and they advertised their skills in the name of Zionism, and national consciousness. These "new" melamdin brought into one Heder Metukan all the dirt and mire of the old melamdut, they brought in to our new school the most arrogant kind of charlatanism; they destroy with their Ivrit B'Ivrit all that is good in our education, and it is because of them that the orthodox oppose the true improved education . . . We are thus left with the truly new teachers, but how many do we have of them? Are they not lonely and isolated sheaves? And is it possible to improve education, an enterprise which demands thousands of dilligent hands, with a handful of good men?" 251)

It was already indicated in the discussion on teachers and teacher training that the shortage of competent teachers became a real critical problem. The above quotations point to the gravity of the situation. This problem constituted another criticism which was leveled against the Heder Metukan by its own workers and friends. 252)

In the opponents' camp, the criticism was much more articulate. The anti-Zionists criticized the school on the grounds that it lacked uniformity and that it gave no central place to religious studies. Mr. F. M. wrote in Budushnost 253) a series of articles in which he suggested certain improvements in the old Heder and made the following criticism of the new Heder: "We must hope, he wrote, that in all Hadarim Metukanim there will be a unified and purposeful regime, which would not have to depend on the subjective views and

251) I. Glass in Hapedagog, Vol. I, p. 263-267

252) The shortage of qualified teachers became a threat to the very existence of the new school. Since it seemingly enjoyed a good reputation and new units were being established in ever-increasing numbers, the old-fashioned melamdin took advantage of the situation and penetrated into some of these new schools. Externally they looked like moderns, a change which was relatively easy to effect, but they could not attain the scholastic background the pedagogic qualifications and Hebrew-cultural idealism overnight, as it were. The true idealists exposed them to the public as fakers.

253) Nos. 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, St. Petersburg, 1902

personal tastes of the different types of pedagogue - reformer^s, so that they should not organize elementary schools with Hebrew or Yiddish as the language of instruction, which will never be able to take the place of a general elementary school and which cannot meet the needs of the general public. These schools (Hadarim Metukanim) should rather be religious schools, where exclusively (isklutchitelno) subjects of faith and law are taught: Hebrew, Bible, Shulkhan Aruch, Prayers, the Biblical and post-Biblical history, and if possible, the beginnings of Gemara and those subjects to be taught preferably in the tongue of the fatherland (Otetchestvenoy Yazik). And finally that these schools should be staffed by competent teachers. Only such model schools can meet the spiritual needs of modern Jewry. Only such schools have a raison d'etre and only such schools should receive encouragement and support. But these Hadarim Metukanim which were brought forth by the modern nationalist movement, and have as yet not taken deep roots in the life of the Jewish masses, - these schools can take the place of the old Heder in rare cases only." The above is, of course, a critical comment by an anti-nationalist Russian Jew, who was interested in providing the children of the masses with a sound religious education, with no relationship to Zionism and Hebrew. To the group represented by Mr. F.M. The Heder Metukan constituted a dangerous power, which could bring great misfortune upon the Jewish community, i.e. it might rekindle the dormant will for autonomous national life. Hence it is important to remove this threat by making this school a purely religious institution.

On the other hand, there were true traditionalists who were dissatisfied with the new Improved Heder. We read in Budushmost ²⁵⁴⁾ that in the town of Telepeshte, (near Orgayev) the orthodox elements were very much against the

Heder Metukan, especially against the special shirts that all students were wearing.²⁵⁵⁾ In the small Lithuanian communities they were against the modern methods of instruction and especially the spoken Hebrew, which no longer was a holy tongue. It was to be expected to find opponents from among the extreme orthodox leadership. For they feared lest the Heder Metukan would overemphasize the element of nationalism, and indirectly bring about the waning of religious authority in the life of the young generation.

At the meeting in Vilna, religious Zionists, including orthodox rabbis, discussed modern Zionism and pointed to four reasons for its lack of appeal to the religious masses. One of the reasons was "the new improved education, conducted in the spirit of the new literature, and which makes knowledge of the Hebrew language and history the essential activity, and the study of Torah a triviality, and which devotes all the time to new methods of teaching, leaving neither place nor time and desire for the study of the written Law. (Torah Sh'Biktav) let alone, the Oral Law (Torah Sh'Balpeh); and that this education endeavors to imbue the children with outside ways and methods that are defended by the protagonists of the new culture."²⁵⁶⁾ In the city of Lida, at a meeting of the newly established Mizrachi, Rabbi Reines, the son of the Rabbi of Lida, during a discussion on the place of religion in Zionism, remarked that it is the duty of Mizrachi "to become interested in Hebrew education and to defend with all might the old Heder, the institution in which the chosen of our people have studied and which gave the Hebrew nation the strength with which to exist."²⁵⁷⁾

We thus see that the non-Zionists from among the so-called assimilationists,

²⁵⁵⁾ The question of special uniforms for the students of the Heder Metukan was discussed by the School Board in Yekaterinoslav and it was decided not to institute it.

²⁵⁶⁾ Hameilitz, No. 75, 1901, also Hatzefirah, No. 76, 1901

²⁵⁷⁾ Hashiloah, Vol. 9, No. 53, p. 640

opposing the nationalistic tendencies and eager to foster general Russian culture among the children would limit the program of Jewish education to instruction of religious subjects only, while the Mizrahi elements have arrived at the same conclusion from the opposite point of view, i. e. their concern for religion in the school program, as the most important factor that makes for Jewish survival. Both groups, however, were dissatisfied with the Heder Metukan.

Another voice of criticism was heard from the Jewish socialist groups who were identified with the movement of Yiddishism. With the organization of the Bund (Algemeiner Yidisher Arbeiter Bund) in 1897, the Yiddish language began to serve as a medium for the purpose of carrying on Socialist propaganda among the masses of workers, petty traders and artisans. This strategic use of Yiddish as an educational means coincided with the growth and development of Yiddish literature which by 1905 already produced literary talents of note. In addition to the Bund and some prominent Yiddish literati, other Jewish Socialist groups who adopted a favorable stand toward the idea of Galut Nationalism²⁵⁸⁾ and the Yiddish language - the Poale Zion²⁵⁹⁾ (organized in 1905) and the Sejmists²⁶⁰⁾ (organized in 1908) - joined the ranks of the advocates of the

258) Galut Nationalism involved the recognition by the state of the rights of the Jewish minority to self-government. "Jews everywhere should be considered not a percentage of the general population, but as all 100 percent of themselves, a separate Jewish national unit," was the platform of the supporters of the idea of Jewish autonomy in the Diaspora.

259) Poale Zion started as a Jewish Socialist workers' party with a program synthesizing Socialism and Zionism. By virtue of its Marxian analysis of the social and economic foundations of Jewish conditions, Poale Zion built up a comprehensive synthesis of national and social emancipation, concentration of Jewish working masses in one country, which is Palestine, and the Socialist renovation of society. They had a very favorable attitude toward Yiddish.

260) The Sejmists (derived from the term Sejm, meaning in Polish diet of parliament) were so called because of the emphasis they laid upon a Jewish diet. The Sejmists were organized in 1907, by those who abandoned the Poale Zion party. They believed "in the change of all multiple nationality states into federations of free nations to be ruled by a parliament composed of the representatives of the different component nationalities. Each nationality would

advancement of Yiddish culture. These Yiddish Culturists, headed by Ch. Zhitlovsky 261) and I. L. Peretz 262), developed the concept of Yiddishism, i.e. "that the Jewish people must be considered as an autonomous national-cultural collective group and that the Yiddish language must be considered as its national tongue." 263) These developments led to an intensified campaign for the inclusion of Yiddish in the program of the schools conducted by the Society. 264) In the polemics that developed in the press with regards to the problem of the place of Yiddish and Hebrew in the program of the modern school, the Heder Metukan became subject to criticism leveled against it by the Yiddishists. Their syllogistic argument of the Yiddishists was that since "the language of the people is its very soul and since every human being has only one soul, consequently every nation or people has only one national language, i.e. Yiddish." 265) The Heder Metukan, which perpetuates Hebrew, a literary, but not a spoken language, tends to undermine the very foundations of the national folk-school, in which all instruction must be conducted in the mother tongue, namely the Yiddish language.

The most vehement criticism came from the ranks of melandim, whose vested

- (260 - cont'd) have its own sejm with the rights of legislation and taxation. The Jewish parliament, the Sejmists contended, would be the representative of the Jewish people. It would eventually, they said, not only normalize Jewish life, but also obtain a territorial center for the Jewish people. The Sejmists were ardent Yiddishists, and were engaged in revolutionary propaganda and in class struggle.
- 261) Dr. Chaim Zhitlovsky, in 1897, advanced the theory of nationality rights as a synthesis of Jewish organic life and Socialism, with Yiddish as the basic language.
- 262) At the Cheronitz Conference of the Yiddishists in 1907, J. L. Peretz, the eminent Yiddish writer, discussed the need for Yiddish schools. He said, "there is one Jewish people and its language is Yiddish."
- 263) Yiden, Vol.3, p.384
- 264) In 1911, the Society decided to include Yiddish as well as Hebrew in its schools and in 1913, with a majority of 20 for and 19 against - it was decided to introduce Yiddish as a language of instruction. (See Shpisman in Yiden, Vol.3, p.430).
- 265) Ivrit V'Zargon, by Dr. I. L. Katzenelson; address at meeting in St. Petersburg. March 30, 1905, in Halahon V'Hahinuch, Kracow 5667, p. 1322

interests prompted them to wage a war against the new school. They spread rumors that the school was a place of heresy and that the teachers were heretics. They not only criticized the schools among the parents, but also resorted to the role of "informers", denouncing the new school before government officials as a threat to "political security".²⁶⁶⁾ What took place in Vilna is characteristic of the antagonism of the melamidim and the means they employed in order to do away with the new school. "It (the Heder Me-tukan) aroused opposition among the melamidim, who feared that their own little schools would be deserted. Not only did these reactionary teachers send in 44 letters of denunciation to the local authorities, but by collecting one kopek a week from each of their pupils, they gave 100 rubles to the "informer" of the community, who undertook to secure the closing of all the schools of the new type, of which there were 32 in the Vilna district. A meeting of the local government inspectors decided to suppress the schools. . . Thanks to the intervention of Baron Ginsburg through the minister of education, the schools were reopened."²⁶⁷⁾

The struggle between the old and new school was echoed in the realm of belles lettres. A very interesting story entitled "Neue Daygos"²⁶⁸⁾ by K. Eisenstadt, depicts the tragic plight of an old-fashioned melamed who cannot compete with the modernism of the new school, and who becomes so depressed that he no longer can find joy in life.

There was also a lonely voice of objective and unbiased criticism. It was heard from the capital city where members of the Jewish intelligentsia, though unaffiliated with any of the political groups, became concerned with

266) Hapedagog, Vol.2, p. 266

267) Vilna, By I. Cohen, p. 355

268) Budushnost, No.25, 26, 1902

the problem of Jewish education. Some of them joined the ranks of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment and published a short-lived educational monthly in the Russian language. In the first editorial they had this to say,²⁶⁹⁾ "Because of our tendency of doctrinairism, there entered into our discussion on education a great deal of stormy polemics of a political and subjective nature. We seemed to disregard the fact that the school's goal is only one, and that is education. And it cannot and need not have any other functions that have no direct relationship to education. To turn the school into a means to achieve other goals, no matter how important and precious they may be to us, would be tantamount to undermining the very principles of education . . . The school must always give all of its attention to matters of education only, i.e. the development of the mental and ethical faculties of the student. Any deviation from this goal would mean to abandon the life-line position of the school, which exists solely for the realization of purely educational objectives."

Twenty-four years later, an American educator of the Yiddish school system, in appraising the role of the Heder Metukan in laying the foundation for the modern Jewish school in the Diaspora, made a critical statement, which is akin in spirit to the editorial in the *Evereyskaya Shkola*. He said, "The Heder Metukan did not seek to create a movement for a school, but a school for a movement. It, therefore, brought no school-mission in the Jewish world, notwithstanding its reforms and newness. It did not develop an educational consciousness even among its own workers, both the lay and professional. Nationalism - the main moving force of the Heder Metukan - cannot point a way in the realm of educational processes, because this term (nationalism) stems from

²⁶⁹⁾ *Evereyskaya Shkola*, Vol.1, No.1, Jan.1903, St. Petersburg

another source of human idealism and leads to other directions. Such a motto (nationalism) in a school movement cannot create a deep awareness and a better evaluation of the educational processes, and must therefore be harmful to the school, even though its lay leaders and teachers are imbued with the nationalistic spirit and ideals." 270)

Thus we see that the opposition to the Heder Metukan was strong and wide-spread. But irrespective of the merits or the demerits of the opposition's critique, the fact that it was heard from practically all segments of the Jewish community, is indicative of the place of distinction that the Heder Metukan occupied in the life of the Jewish community and its contributions to the modernization of the Jewish school system.

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

In order to see the validity of the critique, as presented in the previous chapter, we shall now summarize and evaluate on the basis of the evidence assembled, the achievements and failures of the new school.

We shall first list the achievements:

1. The Heder Metukan amancipated Jewish education. Heretofore Jewish education was enslaved to tradition; it dared not deviate from the age-long accepted norms. The Improved Heder challenged tradition, broke the chains of convention and introduced drastic changes, whose impact on the future of Jewish education in the Jewish world was very significant. What were some of the changes which revolutionized Jewish education?

270) Die Moderne Yidische Shul, by L. Lehrer, New York 1927, p. 23-24.

- a. New Methods of Instruction: The natural method in teaching Hebrew, the Observation Lessons, the Phonetic Method in Teaching.
- b. New Textbooks for practically all subjects
- c. Teachers' Manuals
- d. Visual Aids
- e. Children's literature for enjoyable Reading
- f. Classification of Students
- g. Recesses and Extra-curricular activities (physical education, play, music, drama, outings, festival celebrations, etc.)
- h. History as an important subject
- i. Some general subjects taught in Hebrew (Arithmetic and Nature Study)

This unorthodox approach to education was, as we have seen, subject to criticism. And yet it constituted a pattern for all types of schools that arose in the post-war period, a pattern which was followed by educational leaders throughout the Jewish world. Even the ultra-orthodox schools of post-war Poland, Galicia, Bessarabia, and the United States adopted either all or some of the above innovations in Jewish education. If one were to examine the curriculum of the American Talmud Torah in its hey-days in the twenties with the curriculum of the Heder Metukan in the nineties, he would find not only great similarity, but what is equally important, an element of continuity, as though the Talmud Torah of the U.S.A. were one of the heirs of the European Heder Metukan. (see Appendix)

2. The Heder Metukan brought to education a modern teacher and modernized the teaching profession. The new school not only set up high standards for teachers, but attracted the best qualified personnel. By providing the highest possible salaries for qualified teachers, by giving the teacher good class equipment, a decent school plant and, above all, social recognition, the Heder Metukan attracted capable, intelligent, scholarly and idealistic personnel. It also became an experimental station both for the younger people who made teaching their calling and for some of the old Heder melandim, who were willing to learn and experiment in order to best fit the new school. The teachers of the Improved Heder laid the foundation of the early professional organizations, which years later became the medium for professional growth both educationally and economically.

3. The Heder Metukan fostered the creation of children's as well as pedagogic literature. For the first time in the history of Jewish education, special magazines, text materials and books were published for children by the teachers themselves. Equally important is the fact that these teachers through the new schools created a demand for children's reading matter. Then, too, for the first time there appeared a pedagogic journal, its editors and writers being Heder Metukan educators. This journal afforded an opportunity for critical evaluation of curricular and organizational practices, made possible the representation of new educational ideas current in the non-Jewish world, and constituted a tribunal for the Hebrew educational leadership to speak their mind freely on all major issues in Jewish education.

4. The Heder Metukan established the right of girls to Jewish education, equal with that of boys. This is another "first" in Jewish education that came into being due to the efforts of the new school. The importance of girls' edu-

cation was recognized and the Heder Metukan made provisions for it, either through the organization of special classes for girls, or through introduction of a co-educational system in the existing classes.

5. The Heder Metukan introduced for the first time the study of Hebrew as a special subject and as a living language. It has already been intimated that this innovation was motivated by the spread of Jewish nationalism and by the awareness that spoken Hebrew may not only be an educational means but also an end in itself, a partial, but concrete form of Zionist realization. But in connection with our analysis of the achievements of the new school, it is important to point out the nature of this "newness". The old Heder did not teach Hebrew as a language. Knowledge of the language was more of an indirect result of long and arduous study of all Heder subjects (Bible, Talmud, etc) Consequently, only those students who reached the advanced stages of Heder or Yeshivah study, would get to know the Hebrew language. In the Heder Metukan, to quote from Mr. Lifshitz's famous essay "HaHeder", the study of Hebrew "was not a sum total or a by-product of all other studies, but a beginning and preparation for it." This fundamental principle became the cornerstone of all activity and made possible the revival of the language as a spoken language - for in literature the language had never died.

6. The Heder Metukan recognized the need of secular culture for the Jewish child. While the new school curriculum emphasized the stimulation of a positive attitude toward Jewish nationalism, it nonetheless recognized the importance of secular studies and endeavored, though unsuccessfully, to introduce as much of it as possible into its program. This first attempt to combine Judaic and secular culture in one harmonious program and in a nation-

alistic, Hebrew-spoken form served as a pattern for the Hebrew school in Palestine and for the all-day Tarbut schools in Europe. Even in this unexplored field, and though on the debit side of the Heder Metukan, it pioneered a new era in Jewish education.

7. The Heder Metukan exerted a very positive influence on the Talmud Torah. The Talmud Torah as a public institution could not escape the influences of modernism in education which were to be found in the Heder Metukan. Some of the modern teachers found positions in the Talmud Torah and gradually introduced there new methods and new approaches. The Hebrew language began to occupy a place of distinction in some Talmud Torahs. The new textbooks found a place there and in certain schools even the natural method was introduced.

What were then the failures? Some of them were already recorded by the critics of the new school and presented in the previous chapter. A restatement of that part of the criticism which is validated by our study as well as the presentation of one other area of failure is now in place.

Failures of the Heder Metukan

1. It made few provisions, if any, for a complete education. As already noted, the new school did not give its students a well-balanced education of Jewish and secular subjects to prepare them for life in a society which is undergoing change even in Czarist Russia. The creation of a synthesis of Jew and Man, as promulgated by the pioneers of the school, remained an objective yet to be attained. The school laid stress on "Jew" and was not able to take care of the needs of "Man". Its graduates had to acquire the knowledge and

skills of a practical "Man" outside of the Heder, in order to be able to make adjustments to life in, and especially outside the Jewish community. Hence instead of a complete education the new school offered an important fragment of it.

2. The Heder Metukan failed to become fully integrated into the community. By serving only certain segments of the Jewish community (the wealthy who could afford to pay a relatively high tuition fee or the Zionist oriented parents, whose idealism prompted them to support the school at all costs), by having as its sponsors the lovers of Hebrew culture and the Zionists only, it failed to become a real community school. The Heder Metukan had little contact with the masses of people on the one hand, and kept aloof of orthodox leadership on the other. Moreover, it seems that there was little relationship with the communal agencies or with the home. As though the school constituted a separate autonomous unit, operating in an atmosphere of romanticism and unrelated to actual life, with all its turmoil, disappointments and struggles.

3. The Heder Metukan failed to create that type of a following which would become concerned with the child per se. The followers of the new schools were people who viewed the school as a means to foster Zionism and Hebrew. This objective preoccupied the minds of intelligent parents and school lay workers alike. They did not give due consideration to the growth problems of the child who lived in a world hostile to the Jew, and in a Jewish community, which was struggling for its existence. We find no evidence that would indicate that discussions on problems of child welfare were held, and that questions with regard to procedures and methods, children's activities, relationships with teachers, cooperation with the home, were taken up. We find no evidence of parents' meetings where the school program would be interpreted with the purpose of helping the individual child. With all good intentions to relate

study to child's interests and to create conditions in the school which would make for pleasurable experience, the Heder Metukan gave no guidance to its students in helping them find their place in the world about them. This was especially true in the area of vocational guidance which would help the young people to understand the economic problems of the Jewish group and be prepared vocationally to take their place in society.

The above three failings point to the fact that the school was a transition school, which operated during a transition period in Jewish life in Russia, which in itself was undergoing rapid change.

CONCLUSION

The life of the Jews of Russia during the period under consideration (1880-1910) was bad in every respect, and bad of course, also in the field of education. The intelligent Jew could no longer depend solely on Divine aid and guidance and was therefore determined to become the master of his own destiny. Hence the phenomenal growth of the movement of Jewish nationalism, with its subsequent by-products of political and cultural Zionism. But the realization of the Zionist ideal was very slow and the conviction that the future of Jewish life in Russia was hopeless became much stronger. The man-made Messiah did not and could not bring salvation overnight, as it were. Yet the need for a partial solution was imperative, even if that solution be in the form of a symbol embodying the seeds of the salvation to come. This symbol would endow the people with courage to face a hostile world and restore to them the sense of self-worth. For the younger, intelligent Jew the need

for this was irresistible. On the long road to freedom, full of stumbling blocks and disappointments, one had to find a temporary shelter (Sukat Arai) which would have some of the attributes of the sought-for permanent shelter (Sukat Keva), and which would make the journey endurable. This "shelter" would provide even in the Diaspora a partial realization of the Zionist dream. This symbol was the Hebrew language. Speaking Hebrew in the Diaspora meant partaking of Geulah (Redemption). The moment a Jew spoke Hebrew, he was at least spiritually, no longer in Galut (Exile). Through Hebrew he felt as though he were already in the national home. Spoken Hebrew conquered time and space and brought the future into the present. It became the symbol of a liberated Jew. Through the revival of Hebrew one identified himself with the ideal of a revived people, and life became much more meaningful.

The Heder Metukan has thus become the educational agency for the promotion of the concept of this immediate spiritual liberation and the vehicle for its communication with the multitudes of people. As such the Heder Metukan performed a very important function, not only in the rebirth of Hebrew as a living language, but in providing the young Jew with one of the two concrete attributes of nationhood, a national language, leaving the other, that of national home, to the political Zionist organizations.

Viewed in this light we can readily understand the new school's great emphasis on the Hebrew language, as though it were 'be all and end all'. The school filled a void in Jewish life; it filled that void with the type of romanticism which became a palpable reality and thus meaningful and uplifting. Were the Heder Metukan a language school only, its contribution to Jewish

life in the area of cultural enrichment and Zionist self-realization might still be considered, from an historic perspective, to have been of vital importance. But in addition to its role as the servant of Hebrew Reborn, the Heder Metukan motivated a modern orientation with regard to Jewish education, and paved the way for the formation of the modern Hebrew school in Palestine and in the Diaspora. As such the Heder Metukan will go down in history as the transition school which bridged the gap between the old Heder, which has now practically disappeared, and the new school - regardless of its specific philosophy - which is progressing everywhere in the Jewish world, seeking new ways for better serving the cause of Jewish cultural and ethnic survival.

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