

The 1934 Diary of Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman, Journey to Europe and the Land of Israel

Edited and Annotated by: **MOSHE SHERMAN**

During the summer of 1934, Rabbi Oscar Fasman embarked on a journey to Europe and the Land of Israel. He maintained a diary of his summer travel, the original copy of which was held for many years by Millicent Drebin, Rabbi Fasman's daughter. Written in longhand, she prepared a typed copy of the diary, which is now in the possession of her son, Shmuel Drebin.

In this edited and annotated diary of Rabbi Fasman's trip to Europe and the Land of Israel, I have removed references to matters of minimal substance. Restaurants where R. Fasman ate, hotels where he stayed, or names of friends that he coincidentally saw, have not been included in this printed text. In some instances, I have removed certain discussions that included a substantial amount of Hebrew or Yiddish. The diary often records places that he visited, with no elaboration or comment. I have maintained many, though not all of the items in these cursory lists, and used a semi colon to separate each item. The diary often, but not always includes dates and location. When necessary, I added the date, and placed in bold, dates and location to help the reader follow his daily routine. In addition, Rabbi Fasman did not give close attention to matters of grammar or punctuation. He was far more interested in recording the events of the day. I have chosen to retain his own wording, without changing the grammar or adding appropriate punctuation.

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Saw in New York on June 14 and 15, 1934¹

Dr. B. Revel and family,² Rabbi Wolf Gold³ and Herman Bernstein⁴

¹ Prior to departure, the diary of Rabbi Fasman's 1934 summer voyage references his meeting with three prominent individuals, Rabbi Dr. Dov Revel, Rabbi Zev Wolf Gold and Herman Bernstein. He set sail in mid-June from New York harbor on the Cunard Line's premier ship, Berengaria, bound for Cherbourg, France. Built for the Hamburg-Amerika line, and launched in May 1912, the Berengaria was initially called the Imperator. Following World War I, the vessel was transferred to the United Kingdom, and managed by the Cunard Line, when its name was changed to Berengaria. Until 1936, when the Queen Mary entered service, the Berengaria was the premier ship of the Cunard system. For photographs and a full description of the ship, see <<https://rmhh.co.uk/ships/pages/berengaria.html>>.

² Rabbi Dr. Bernard Dov Revel (1885-1940) was serving as President of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, during the summer of 1934. Born in a small town near Kovno, Lithuania, in 1885, Dov Revel had studied at the Telshe Yeshiva, before coming to America around 1906. He continued his Torah studies at the R. Isaac Elchanan yeshiva, while attending New York University. In 1911, he earned a Ph.D. degree from Dropsie College, in Philadelphia. Following marriage, he moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma to join his wife's family oil business. In 1915, he agreed to return to New York, to become the first President of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. For the next 25 years, Revel built a formidable institution, where students obtained both Torah scholarship and secular university degrees. Rabbi Dr. Revel was 55 years old, when he died in December 1940. For a brief biography and bibliography on Revel, see Moshe Sherman, *Orthodox Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport, CT, 1996), pp. 170-173; and more importantly, the revised edition of Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *Bernard Revel: Builder of American Jewish Orthodoxy* (New York, 2014).

³ Born in Szczecin, Poland, in 1889, Zev Wolf Gold studied at the Mir yeshiva with R. Eliyahu Baruch Kamei. After receiving *semicha*, he departed for America, and for many years served as rabbi in several cities, including Chicago, Scranton, Williamsburg and San Francisco. R. Gold's foremost concern, to which he dedicated much of his professional career, was the advancement of religious Zionism. A delegate to numerous World Zionist congresses, Gold traveled throughout Europe and the United States on behalf of Keren Kayemet (JNF), raising funds for the purchase and development of land, in what was then, British Mandate Palestine. In 1913, when R. Meir Berlin, secretary of World Mizrachi, came to New York to organize a branch of Mizrachi in the United States, a lifelong relationship was formed between R. Gold, R. Berlin and the Mizrachi movement. One of the most notable events of his life occurred on May 14, 1948, when R. Gold was included among the distinguished and exclusive group of 37 individuals, who signed Israel's Declaration of Independence. Rabbi Zev Wolf Gold died in Jerusalem in April 1956, and is buried at the Sanhedria Cemetery, near the grave of his lifelong

On Board

Mr. Herman Weingarten of Seattle, Washington. His report of Jews in Alaska where for ten years he was U.S. tax collector in the Yukon. The shul in Seattle that didn't admit him, a stranger, broke.

The evening for National Fund where Harry made an appeal and with the \$50.00 donation of Joseph Miller of South Africa, a total of \$100.00 was realized to inscribe the names of Berengaria Jewish passengers in Golden Book. In South Africa 100 Rand required for name in Golden Book.⁵

friend, Rabbi Meir Berlin. See D. Tidhar, *Entsiklopediab le-Halutse ha-Yishuv u-Bonav* (1950) vol. 4 p. 1873; Moshe Sherman, *Orthodox Judaism in America*, (1996), pp. 78-79.

⁴ Born in 1876, in a small town near, what was at that time, the Russian-German border, Herman Bernstein came to America with his family, in 1893. His first published poems and stories in 1899 began, what would be a distinguished career, as a poet, novelist, playwright, translator and journalist. In addition to his published writing, Bernstein was consistently engrossed in Jewish affairs. He travelled to Europe in 1915, to study the conditions of Jews during World War I, and worked with organizations such as ORT, Central Relief Committee, American Jewish Relief Committee, and the Joint Distribution Committee to improve conditions for Jews in Europe. He was founder and editor of *The Day* (1914-1916), editor of *The Jewish Tribune* (1924-1926), and the *Jewish Daily Bulletin* (1933-1934). In 1935, Bernstein published a major work exposing the fraud of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. He published interviews with leading Jewish figures, including Albert Einstein, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Max Nordau, Chaim Weizmann, and Israel Zangwill. Herman Bernstein died in August 1935, one year after R. Fasman met with him. There is considerable bibliography on the career and broad achievement of Herman Bernstein; with regard to his Jewish related accomplishment, see *Guide to the Papers of Herman Bernstein 1899-1935*, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Center for Jewish History, New York.

⁵ From the time of its founding in the early 1900s, the Jewish National Fund, Keren Kayemet le-Israel, promoted several Books of Honor, where donors who contributed to the Jewish National Fund, had not only their name recorded, but information regarding themselves and their family included in the honor books. The first Book of Honor, which became the most prestigious, was called the Golden Book, established by Theodor Herzl, to demonstrate esteem to the participants of the Fifth Zionist Congress, who had voted to establish the JNF. At present, there are hundreds of thousands of Jewish National Fund donor names, with aspects of their lives preserved in honor books. These honor books are now regarded as a valuable resource for genealogical study. For more on the Golden Book, see the specific page at the Jewish National Fund website: https://secure.jnf.org/site/SPageServer/%3Bjsessionid=E9B08FFAA3363E4654E72B80E2D976E1.app205a?pagename=PR_Books_of_Honor.

**Discussion of problems in Judaism on board Berengaria,
Wednesday night, June 20**

Rabbi Elkin told of an instance in Poland where an ignoramus took very important positions as Rabbi, and the publication of the facts against him by the leading *gaonim* of Poland did not deter communities from choosing him.⁶ Harry points out that, it is true this story indicates a similar '*hefkairus*' in the Polish rabbinate to the American, but there is an important distinction. When the *gaonim* in Europe became aware of the wrong, they did not hesitate to publish their opinion, while in this country the authorities are afraid to inform the public of the fakers who usurp major rabbinical offices.

Mr. Charney said he prefers being a Talmud Torah principal to being a rabbi, because the sincere rabbi must feel a heartache every time he has to consider the wishes of the "leading members" who eat *traifeh* and desecrate the Shabbos.

Harry told me of the "catechism" he has introduced in his Sunday school for the children to read in assembly. He admitted the difficulty of having teachers who violate some or almost all the principles taught by the catechism, such as Shabbos observance. Harry also commented on the fact that the Christians teach their children religion in the sense of its emotional appeal, while we teach our children to read, to translate, to know history, but not to feel profoundly the religious emotion. He bemoaned the fact that it is so difficult to introduce decorum into Orthodox services. There's nothing spiritually elevating in the mechanical way we daven in Orthodox shulen. He told of how, whenever he writes or speaks a criticism of some existing evil in the community, immediately the individuals affected, in person or through intermediaries, complain to him that instead of making friends, he hurts people. He replies, "It's my duty as a rabbi to cry out against injustice regardless of whose feelings I hurt." I pointed out to him that he must be careful not to let this

⁶ Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu Elkin was a rabbi in Chicago, at that time, where he came to know Rabbi Fasman. He was born in Zarasai, near Kovno, Lithuania, in 1875, and studied Talmud in Vilna and Telshe. He served, for a short while, as a communal rabbi, before pogroms in 1907 prompted him to leave for London. In London, he briefly functioned as a *dayyan*, before coming to the United States in 1910. Rabbi Elkin served as rabbi at several cities, including Baltimore, Syracuse and St. Louis. A volume of his sermons, *Divrei Shmuel*, was published by the St. Louis publisher, Moinester Press, in 1917. Rabbi Elkin spent his final years in Israel, until his death in 1961. See Yosef Goldman, *Hebrew Printing in America: A History and Annotated Bibliography* (New York, 2006) v. 2, pp. 696-97.

attitude carry him too far, because even if he personally is willing to lose positions on the basis of such prophetic sincerity, he cannot look at the matter as a purely personal equation. If he loses out, then the insincere fawning type of rabbi will rise to eminence and direct the future of Judaism.

Harry keeps emphasizing the need for an Orthodox rabbi to show himself as a highly cultured and intellectual person, so that the prejudice against orthodoxy as superstition and ignorance be shattered. He underestimates I believe, the need for social graces in the rabbi; without them he can hardly attract a following. They are the tools for intellectuality, the means by which it can impress itself on people.

Harry grew pessimistic. Even if we perfected all the things we desire such as complete unification and organization of orthodox forces, a thorough purging of the rabbinate, a really decorous service, etc., it would be almost impossible to overcome the economic, psychological, and irreligious factors mustered against Judaism in the present civilization; how much more helpless our cause, when we see the chaos, confusion, petty quarrels and personal strife that constitute modern orthodoxy.

Harry stated that there is more sincerity in the reform and conservative rabbinate than in the orthodox. I replied that there is hardly any sincerity in the reform group; possibly there is more in the conservative. Harry suggested we need a Pope in our ministry. I heartily assented. Most Protestant sects also suffer from evils in the ministry similar to ours.

In speaking of the grip *kaddish* and mourners services hold upon our people, Charney stated it was the result of superstitions, fear of death and all that went with it. I claimed it was tied up with *Kibud Av v'Aym*.

France—arrived Cherbourg, Friday, June 22 at 10:30 a.m.

First sight of land was at 1 a.m. the preceding evening when we sighted Land's End Beacon of England. The harbor at Cherbourg; The French Railroad; The beautiful countryside just outside of Cherbourg. Every foot of ground in France is intensively cultivated; The French dining car.

Arrived in Paris 6:30 p.m. Friday, June 22

Atlantic Hotel—Ringer Restaurant. German young men and women at the table. Mr. Schreiber, great grandchild of the *Chasam Sofer*.

Boulevards des Italiens and Haussmann; The Rothschild Synagogue; The gardens of Tuilleries; Arch of Napoleon; Bronze pillar of Napoleon; The obelisk; The Seine and the Eiffel Tower; French policemen; The subway.

Mr. Bernstein of the HIAS. His report on the refugee situation; The Jewish quarter known as the Platsel, Rue de Rosiers; The Bastille district;

The Zeire Mizrachi outing and the report about the French Talmud Torah system; The Jewish district in Belleville and the exterior of the synagogue there; The Light Opera—The King of Vys; The French *Batai Medrashim*.

Left Paris Monday night June 25, arrived in Frankfort Tuesday morning, June 26

En route saw Mainz and the Rhine River.

Went to visit Rabbiner Horowitz, the rav of the Religious Gesellschaft at Fichtesto 5.⁷ He gave us his views on *Rabbonus*. The rabbi must have independence, including a life job and no dependence upon *bala-batim*. The *mashgichim* of the *gemeinde* are merely to remind and keep alive the laws of *kashrus*, but not to guard, for a *bechsher* is given only to one who can be implicitly trusted in the first place; and secondly the German feeling for “*ehrblichkeit*” would not allow a man to charge more on the

⁷ Rabbiner Josef Jona Zwi Horowitz (1892-1970) was then serving as head rabbi of the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft (IRG). Josef Horowitz was born in Hundsdorf, Slovakia, where he attended the local yeshiva headed by his grandfather, R. Shmuel Rosenberg, communal Rav of Hundsdorf. R. Horowitz became a *maggid shiur* at the yeshiva, and following the death of his grandfather, in 1919, was appointed communal Rav of Hundsdorf, and head of the yeshiva. In 1929, R. Horowitz agreed to become head of the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft in Frankfurt, but the rabbinic position was not without controversy. Following the death of Rabbi Samson R. Hirsch in 1888, his son-in-law, R. Salomon Breuer held the IRG rabbinic post from 1890 to 1926. When Rabbi Breuer died in 1926, the search for a rabbinic successor split the community. One group supported the appointment of Rabbi Breuer's son, Raphael, then serving as rabbi in nearby Aschaffenburg. Another faction led by Jakob Rosenheim opposed the leadership of an ongoing Hirsch-Breuer dynasty. Despite the infighting, R. Josef Jona Horowitz, agreed to leave Hundsdorf, for the more prestigious position in Frankfurt. Much of his tenure at the IRG, however, coincided with the rise of the Nazi party. Following Kristallnacht in November 1938, and the burning of Frankfurt's largest synagogue, the 1600 seat K'hal Adath Jeshurun shul at Friedberger Anlage 5-6, Rabbi Horowitz was arrested by the police. As a Czech citizen, he was expelled rather than imprisoned, and made his way to England. In 1950, he left England for the United States, settling in Boro Park, N.Y., where he opened a small elementary yeshiva school, Be'er Shmuel. He remained in the United States until 1964, when he moved to Israel. Settling first in Haifa before moving to Bnei Brak, Rabbi Horowitz died in 1970, at the age of 78. See Matthias Morgenstern, *From Frankfurt to Jerusalem* (Brill, 2002), p. 228; obituary in *Hamodia* (March 29, 2017).

pretense that it is kosher. The salvation of Judaism will have to come from an inner awakening.

Visited Breuer's Yeshiva.⁸

Then saw the old Judengasse and the Rothschild Haus; Then visited with Rabbiner Hoffmann who discussed the topic of Aguda and Miz-rachi; the workings of the *Gemeinde*; his feeling that there no longer exists a reason for a separation of the *Religionengesellschaft*.⁹

⁸ The Breuer yeshiva, headed at the time by Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer, grandson of Rabbi Samson R. Hirsch, was commonly referred to as the Torah-Lehranstalt. Following Kristallnacht, the yeshiva closed, and the building later destroyed. Rabbi Breuer moved to Italy before coming to the United States, where he rebuilt the German *kehillah*, K'hal Adath Jeshurun, in the Washington Heights neighborhood, New York. For a picture of the Breuer's Yeshiva in Frankfurt, see <<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1097069>>; also Steven M. Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson: The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983, Its Structure and Culture*. (Detroit: Wayne State U. Press, 1989).

⁹ Rabbiner Hoffmann was the Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt's Israelitische Gemeinde (IG). Born in 1881 in Pápa, Hungary, Yaakov Yehuda Hoffmann studied at the Pressburg Yeshiva, where he received *semicha* from R. Simcha Bunem Sofer, who headed the yeshiva at the time. While in Pressburg, he completed, privately, the equivalent of a high school degree, which enabled him to attend the University of Vienna. From 1906-1908, Hoffmann served as rabbi of the Montefiore congregation in Vienna, and then became rabbi in Kostel, Moravia (today Podivín, Czech Republic). In 1912, he became community rabbi in the Bukovina town of Radautz, where he continued to serve, even after WWI, when Radautz became part of Romania. Hoffmann was a founding member of a Bukovina branch of the religious Zionist organization, Mizrachi, to which he remained devoted the rest of his life. He also succeeded in completing a Ph.D. degree at the University of Vienna, in 1919.

In 1923, R. Hoffman accepted, what would be his most prestigious and challenging appointment, as head rabbi of Frankfurt's Israelitische Gemeinde (IG). The Israelitische Gemeinde existed alongside another Orthodox network of institutions, the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft (IRG, aka *Adas Yeshurun*, commonly referred to as the *Austritts Gemeinde*.) R. Hoffman presided over a community with a vast array of services, including several synagogues, schools, *kasbrut*, *mikvaot*, etc. But the existence of two separate *kehillot*, each with its own schools, *kasbrut*, and other services, inevitably lead to rivalry and conflict. An additional source of tension was Rabbi Hoffman's commitment to religious Zionist activity, as he became the leading spokesman for Mizrachi in Germany.

R. Hoffmann maintained his position as Chief Rabbi of the Frankfurt am Main Gemeinde, until 1937, when he was arrested by the Gestapo. As a Hungarian national, he succeeded in negotiating a release from the Gestapo, on condition that he permanently leave Germany. In March 1937, he was deported to Aus-

Then visited the old cemetery behind the synagogue of Rabbiner Hoffmann, an expansive place where we saw the tombstones of the Pnai Yehoshua, *Haflaah*, Maharam Shiff, the Rothschilds, Schiffs, Speyers, R. Nasson Adler (*rebbe* of the Chasam Sofer) and stones as old as 700 years.

Back to the Yeshiva, where we talked with Dr. Joseph Breuer about his Yeshiva; its work, its hopes. After that listened to his shiur in *Baba Batra*. Then *mincha/maariv* in the Hirsch Shule.

In the morning we had also spoken with Dr. Elias, Director of the Realschule, about the schools and educational system of the Religious *Gesellschaft*.¹⁰

tria, and one year later moved to the United States, accepting a position in New York, as rabbi of Congregation Ohab Zedek. Adjustment to the United States was extremely difficult. Already in his late fifties, he had to cope with a new language and culture. In Frankfurt, he was ‘chief rabbi’ of the Gemeinde, whereas in New York, he was a synagogue rabbi, among many other rabbis. Nonetheless, he was active in rescue *batzalab* work, one of the founders of Manhattan Day School, and continued his work on behalf of the religious Zionist Mizrahi movement.

In 1954, R. Hoffman moved to Israel, where he died in Tel Aviv, two years later, in 1956. Tikvat Yaakov, a Bnei Akiva yeshiva in Israel, is named for him. See *Guide to the Jakob Hoffmann Collection, 1904-1985*, Leo Baeck Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York; Yaakov Zur, *Rabbi Dr. Jacob Hoffman: The Man and His Era* (Ramat Gan, 1999).

¹⁰ For decades, it was known as the Realschule der Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft, located at Tiergarten 8, Frankfurt-am-Main. In celebration of its 75th anniversary, in 1928, the school was renamed the Samson Raphael Hirsch-Schule, in honor of its founder. The school, at that time included a high school for girls, and a junior high school for boys, with almost 400 students. In 1928, a new director, Dr. Markus Elias was hired to serve as Director of the school. Born in 1886 in Vienna, Elias had to endure the persecution of the Nazis through the 1930s. Following Kristallnacht, in November 1938, Dr. Markus Elias was imprisoned in Buchenwald. His son, Joseph Elias, who was studying in England at the time, succeeded in gaining the assistance of a prominent British Jewish philanthropist to secure the release of his father. Markus Elias immigrated to the United States in 1939.

His son, Joseph Elias, though a student at Cambridge University, was sent by the British, as an alien refugee, to the Isle of Man, and then transported to Canada. After studying in Montreal for a couple of years, Joseph Elias immigrated to the United States, and became a highly regarded educator and author. See *The Samson Raphael Hirsch School in Frankfurt am Main. Documents—Memories—Analyses*, ed. by the Commission for the Study of the History of the Frankfurt Jews, ed. by Hans Thiel, Frankfurt am Main, 2001, “History of the Samson Raphael Hirsch School—1928-1939”. Unpublished manuscript without a statement by the author. (Jewish Museum Frankfurt am Main).

Arrived Berlin Wednesday morning, June 27

Bus to Jewish district of Artillerie, Rosenthaler, Grenadier streets.

Visited Hildesheimer Rabbiner Seminar and spoke there with Dr. Weinberg of the faculty and Dr. Klein, the Dayan of Adas Yisroel Gemeinde.¹¹ Visited the Adas Yisroel Schule under Dr. Schlesinger, Direc-

¹¹ Adass Jisroel: Israelitische Synagogen-Gemeinde Adass Jisroel zu Berlin, was a legally recognized religious corporation founded in Berlin in 1869. Under the leadership of Rabbi Dr. Esiel Hildesheimer, who became the community's first rabbinic leader, Adass Jisroel developed into a vibrant independent orthodox community, establishing elementary and yeshiva high schools, synagogues, *mivkehs*, community centers, a cemetery and other religious facilities. In 1873, R. Hildesheimer founded the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary, known as Rabbiner-Seminar zu Berlin; Beit ha-midrash le-Rabanim be-Berlin, which for more than 65 years, hosted an eminent faculty of Talmud scholars, and graduated numerous distinguished alumni. See Max M. Sinasohn ed., *Adass Jisroel Berlin: Entstehung, Entfaltung, Entwurzelung 1869–1939* (Jerusalem, 1966).

The life and career of Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg bridged two different worlds of Eastern and Western Europe. His life was marked by extensive intellectual achievement and considerable personal sadness and suffering. Born in Poland in 1884, Yaakov Y. Weinberg was a recognized Talmud genius, who studied at the Slobodka Yeshiva, exposed to the *musar* ideas and personality of the eminent Alter of Slobodka, R. Nossou Zvi Finkel. In 1903, he left for the Mir Yeshiva with the son of the Alter, R. Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, who later would become a *rosh yeshiva* at the Mir Yeshiva. Trapped in Germany during World War I, he began studying at the University of Berlin and later at the University of Giesen, where he received a Ph.D. degree. In 1924, he joined the faculty of R. Hildesheimer's Rabbinical Seminary, *Rabbiner-Seminar zu Berlin-Beit ha-midrash le-Rabanim*, and eventually became Rector head of the Seminary. R. Weinberg's extensive knowledge of Torah combined with widespread secular learning was relatively unique for a Polish born, Lithuanian trained rabbi. By the 1930s, many observant German Jews regarded him, as a leading *posek* in matters of Jewish law. It is interesting to note that Rabbi Fasman refers to such an outstanding Talmud scholar and halakhist as Doctor Weinberg.

Following Kristallnacht, he fled Berlin in 1939, settling in Warsaw, where he was later confined in the Warsaw Ghetto. Carrying Russian citizenship, he was imprisoned with other Russian prisoners of war, thus avoiding the concentration camps, and managing to survive the war. Following World War II, R. Weinberg established a small yeshiva in Montreux, Switzerland, where he died in 1966. Most of his manuscripts and writings were lost or destroyed but his most famous work, *Seridei Eish*, dealing with modern halachic issues was first published in four volumes by Mossad HaRav Kook, in Jerusalem (1961-1966). On Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg (1884-1966), see Marc B. Shapiro, *Between the Yeshiva World and Modern Orthodoxy: The Life and Works of Rabbi Jehiel Jacob*

tor with whom we had a long discussion on various aspects of Jewish education in Germany.¹² He had not even heard that Feuchtwanger had published a book *The Oppermans*.¹³

Walked about Unter den Linden; The Jewish Museum was closed; we saw the beautiful semi-reform synagogue next door (Oranienburg Street); to the office of the Joint where we had a brief discussion with the head accountant, Mr. Levy; went to meet Dr. Krensinger of the Zentral Aurschuss who talked to us about all the aspects of German relief work; Thence to Dr. Mittwoch, head of Berlin Joint and Professor of Oriental studies at the University of Berlin.¹⁴ Discussed the German

Weinberg, 1884-1966. (London: Littman Library, 1999). On Rabbiner Hermann Klein, see Max M. Sinasohn ed., *Ibid.* pp. 42-43.

¹² Born in Hamburg, in 1883, Nachman Schlesinger was, for several decades, closely affiliated with Adass Jisroel, the orthodox Israelitischen Synagogengemeinde in Berlin. During the 1930s, Nachman Schlesinger, was Principal of the gymnasium, high school. Following Kristallnacht, all remaining synagogues in Germany were closed, but the gymnasium was not destroyed. Schlesinger persuaded the gestapo to allow the boys to pray in one of the schoolrooms, since it was not a synagogue. During the latter months of 1942, Schlesinger became extremely ill. On December 9, 1942, while lying on a stretcher, he was deported to Auschwitz, where he was murdered. See Max Sinasohn ed., *Adass Jisroel, Berlin: Entstehung, Entfaltung, Entwurzelung, 1869-1939* (Jerusalem, 1966), 97-99.

¹³ In 1933, when no one could have known what would happen in Germany, Lion Feuchtwanger, a well-known German Jewish writer during the Weimar era, published a historical novel, *Der Oppermans*, which insightfully depicted the means in which Nazism was penetrating German society, and the various approaches of Jews to Nazism. When Germany invaded France, Feuchtwanger, who had earlier fled to France, was imprisoned in a make shift internment camp, but managed to escape France, fleeing to Spain and then Portugal. He was granted political asylum in the United States, and spent the rest of his life, in the Los Angeles area, where he died in 1958. See Hans Wagner, *Lion Feuchtwanger* (Berlin: 1996).

¹⁴ Rabbi Fasman is no doubt referring to Eugen Mittwoch. Mittwoch was born in the Prussian province of Posen (now Poland) in 1876. He studied at the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin, but pursued his interest in Near Eastern languages and culture. Completing a Ph.D. degree at the University of Berlin, he emerged as a leading expert in Oriental Studies. Following World War I, he became the Director of the Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen (Seminary for Oriental Languages), which at the time held a reputation similar to the prestigious School of Oriental Studies in London. In 1935, he was dismissed from his position by the Nazis, and began work for the Joint Distribution Committee in Berlin. In 1939, Mittwoch moved to England, where he died in 1942.

Jewish situation; also the problem of the Jew seeking education on aspiring to be a college professor.

Walked through the spacious grounds of the Tiergarten, already closed and saw the beautiful street that leads through Charlottenburg Tor.

Left Berlin Wednesday midnight June 27

Orthodox Jews in Germany answered to the question, “Did Hitler drive many back to Orthodoxy?” in the negative. There were some cases to be sure, but what happened in the main was a return to Jewish studies, a practically forced enrollment in Jewish schools etc. but no turn to observance, nor even a deep change of heart. This should indicate that antisemitism does not create Judaism, as is almost universally asserted; Judaism must be created from within.

Arrived Kovno, Thursday, June 28 at 1 p.m.

On train met Rabbi Hirshovitz of Jalak.¹⁵ He told us much about Judaism and Jewish life in Lithuania. The Zionists have captured the entire youth and led them away from orthodoxy. An attempt is underway to organize the youth now in orthodox clubs.

Capilevitch, head of Yavneh schools explained the nature of the schools and showed us through one of the buildings.¹⁶

Mittwoch left a considerable legacy of scholarly writing, and his personal papers can be found at the Wiener Holocaust Library, London. The Wiener Library collection includes his dismissal letter from the Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen. For a recent article on Mittwoch, see Maja Scrbacic, “Eugen Mittwoch gegen das Land Preußen. Die Entlassungsmaßnahmen in der Berliner Orientalistik, 1933–1938,” in Arndt Engelhardt, eds., *Ein Paradigma der Moderne. Jüdische Geschichte in Schlüsselbegriffen*, Göttingen/Bristol, CT (2016), 39–55.

¹⁵ Nachman Hirshovitz was born in Talshini, Lithuania in 1896. He served as rabbi of Ylakai, (Yelok in Yiddish) and later as *dayyan* in Utyan (Utena) Lithuania. He was killed by the Nazis in 1941. See <https://www.geni.com/profile/6000000004588138611/events/6000000004588138614>.

¹⁶ Founded in Vilna in 1902, the religious Zionist movement Mizrachi was not only active in promoting the development of *Eretz Israel* and immigration to Palestine, but also involved in setting up educational institutions across many regions of Eastern Europe. The Mizrachi network of schools was known as Yavneh. In Slobodka, on the Eastern side of the Neris River, near Kovno, an elementary school, a Hebrew gymnasium for girls, and a Hebrew gymnasium for boys was sponsored by the Yavneh network. See https://www.flickr.com/photos/center_for_jewish_history/3123282042/.

The Jewish streets, cobblestones, droshka ride to Slobodka; The view from the bridge; The beauty of the river; The Yeshiva, Slobodka; Slobodka Kollel; A visit to R. Isaac Sher.¹⁷

Slobodka again. Musar, Maariv, T'hillim.

Discussion at hotel with Victor Miller (of Baltimore), Capilevitch, and a rav, about Mizrachi and Agudah, and getting aid for Yavneh schools in America.

From Kovno to Telz accompanied by three students of Slobodka.

Telz, Friday afternoon, June 29

The friendliness of the students. The wedding of R. Haim Telzer's daughter in the Yeshiva. Friday night at the home of the bride's brother, R. Ezriel.¹⁸

R. Mordechai Velvel contrasts Rabbi Yablonsky and Rabbi Korb in way of learning.¹⁹

¹⁷ Born in 1875 in the Lithuanian town of Halusk, R. Yitzchak Isaac Sher married the daughter of Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel, a founder and charismatic leader of the Slobodka Yeshiva. In 1909, he joined the faculty of the yeshiva. In 1925, Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel departed Slobodka, with many of his students, to establish a branch of the yeshiva in Hebron. R. Sher remained as *Rosh Yeshiva* in Slobodka, until the onset of World War II. Remarkably, he managed to escape war torn Lithuania, and in 1941, made his way to Israel, where he established a branch of the Slobodka yeshiva in Bnei Brak.

¹⁸ A *maggid shiur* at the Telshe yeshiva, until his death in 1931, R. Chaim Shalom Tuvia Rabinowitz (1856–1931) was commonly referred to as R. Chaim Telzer. R. Chaim Rabinowitz's Torah thoughts survived in the lecture notes of students and friends, but to date no satisfactory biography has appeared of this illustrious Talmud scholar. Following his death in 1931, his son, Rabbi Azriel Rabinowitz (1905–1941), took his father's position as *maggid shiur*. Tragically, R. Azriel Rabinowitz and his entire family were killed by the Nazis in Telshe, in 1941. See Samuel K. Mirsky, ed., *Mosdot Torah be-Eropah be-vinyanam u've-hurbanam* (New York, 1956); Shaul Stampfer, *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012).

¹⁹ Rabbi Fasman and his close friend, Rabbi Uri Miller were both students of these two outstanding Torah scholars at Hebrew Theological College. Rabbi Nissan Jablonski (1876-1928) served as *Rosh Yeshiva* at Bais HaMidrash l'Torah in Chicago, upon his arrival in America in 1922. Following his death, six years later, at the age of 52, Rabbi Chaim Isaac Korb (1872-1957) was chosen to become *Rosh Yeshiva*. Rabbi Korb left the Chicago yeshiva in 1948, following the death of his wife, and moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, where he died in 1957. See Moshe Sherman, *Orthodox Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* pp. 107-109, 121-123.

Minyan in Telz Saturday morning; Kiddush at Reb Ezriel's. Discussion of Mizrachi-Aguda problem with Hungarian student Furth, and the question of introducing some general studies into the Yeshiva curriculum. The feeling in Lita seems to be that the study of general subjects always proves a *Yetzer Horah* that leads the students away from "learning." (The statement of R. Mordechai Velvel that nowadays the Yeshiva students are more practical and worldly than forty years ago.)

Talking in Torah at the Rav's. His observations on American Jewish life; The Chassan's Torah in Kodshim; Sholosh Seudos at R. Zalman Bloch's; ²⁰ German, Swiss, Hungarian students in Telz.

Sunday, July 1, Left Telz at 8:00 a.m.

Accompanied part way by Slobodka and Telzer students traveling home.

Latvia, Sunday evening, July 1

Droshka from station to 'datche' of Ragatchover Ilui.²¹ He spoke to us about two hours on various problems in Halacha in a never-ending stream of *B'kiyus*. Told us the only place in Shas for word "Tevah" is in Niddah 20/2 even the Chacham Tzvi writes in the name of another that it's a recent word.

He considers it against the din to teach general subjects as well as Torah in a Jewish school. The father is responsible to teach his son not only '*umonus*' but also *chochma*, according to the Rambam, but this applies only to the individual; the community must not, for its interest is Torah.

²⁰ R. Zalman Bloch was a son of R. Yoseph Leib Bloch (1860-1930). In 1910, R. Yoseph Yehuda Leib Bloch had succeeded his father-in-law, R. Eliezer Gordon, as *Rosh Yeshiva* at the Telshe Yeshiva. He also served as communal Rav at Telshe. R. Zalman Bloch (1886-1941) was faculty—*mashgiach ruchani* at the Telshe Yeshiva. Along with most of his family, he was murdered by the Nazis in 1941.

²¹ R. Yoseph Rosen was born in Rogachov, Belarus in 1858, to a family of Chabad hasidim. He studied under R. Yoseph Dov Soloveitchik and R. Yehoshua Leib Diskin, and in 1889, became the Rav of the hasidic community in Dvinsk, Latvia. He remained in Dvinsk for more than 45 years, alongside the great R. Meir Simcha, who served as Rav of the *mitnagid* community. Widely regarded as a genius in matters of Torah knowledge, R. Rosen was commonly known as the Rogachover Gaon. He died in Vienna in 1936. See the fascinating account of Rabbi Pinchas Teitz' recollection studying with the Rogachover Gaon three years earlier, in 1931, in Rivka Blau, *Love Torah, Live Torah: HaRav Mordechai Pinchas Teitz, the Quintessential Rabbi* (2001). See the website with the full unedited edition of the diary, for a larger Torah discussion between Rabbi Fasman and R. Rosen.

The individual can be and should be interested too, in means of earning and in matters of worldly interest.

Quoted that Rav studied about “*b’choros*” under “*Roai Bokor*” for 18 months to prove that for many things, knowledge is necessary. Thus too the *din* that a doctor who causes death while attempting to cure is “*potur*” if he was acting “*b’Reshus Bais Din*” proving that *Bais Din* had to know medicine, else how would know whom to license ?

Said we cannot accept the conclusion of chemistry about a ‘*kesem*’ because the *dinim* of the gemara were built on their investigation, and we must use their conclusion.

Beside the 39 major *melocho*s of Shabbos, there is a *lav* “*Lo saoseh kol melocho*” that applies to the creation of new things; on this basis alone can we understand the *issur* against sitting a hen on eggs Shabbos and Yom Tov.

In the *dinim* of Shabbos, *gemara* of *mechabe*h is *potur* for we see that in the case of fire, he may say ‘*kol ha-marbeh lo yaphsid*’ in no other case of monetary loss involving an *av melocho* – and through his words he is ‘*gorem kibui*.’

In connection with “*maavir*” we may consider the kindling of the fire or the destruction of the thing, as the aspect of the *issur*, and the opposite of these as the two possible aspects of ‘*issur mechabe*h.’

The Ragatchover wasn’t fasting because of illness (it was the 17th day of Tammuz) but when he heard I was fasting, he said it's about time to *daven maaviv*. Harry asked him what he means by the words ‘*ki’meat zeit*.’ He went into the question of *tosfos* to a fast, pointing out two kinds of *tosfos*—one where we add because we are not sure of the time eg. ‘*Bain ha-Shmashot*’ and the other actually adding ‘*min ha-chol al ha-kodesh*.’ There is a difference in *din* whether a boy who becomes bar mitzvah *Motzai Yom Kippur*. If the *tosfos* is due to ‘*safek*’ then there is no ‘*chiyov doriso*’ on him to fast, but if it’s a ‘*vadai hosofo*’ then he must fast that quarter hour or so ‘*me’doriso*.’

Harry brought up a discussion we had with the Telzer Rav where one of the boys mentioned a Ramban that ‘*sefiras haomer*’ isn’t ‘*mitzvat ase*h *she-hazeman gerama*’ He said he never saw such a Ramban but the Rambam decides women are ‘*potur*’ from counting Omer. In general people overlook the Ran, at the end of Sukkah, where he shows that *Sefiras Haomer* is one ‘*nekudah*’ not a ‘*shetach*.’ He mentioned the importance of the question of *zman* in *Shas*. In connection with *Omer*, if a *Ger* becomes converted in the days of *Sefira*, he wouldn’t count because he’d have only half of a single unit.

We had tea and cake with him. His appearance.

“I write to them all but I never saw them; I don’t know them. In Eretz Yisroel they don’t know anything.”

Vilno, Arrived Vilno Monday morning, July 2

The Tachkemoni Talmud Torah—guided through by Mr. Rudnetzky; The visit with Rabbi Yitzhak Rubinstein. His official busy office. He took us in a *drosbka* to show us through the two new buildings for education of boys and girls.²²

²² In 1934, Rabbi Yitzchak Rubinstein shared the position of Chief Rabbi of Vilna, together with R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinski. Born in 1880, Yitzchak Rubinstein studied at the Slobodka yeshiva before he was chosen as one of fourteen hand selected students known as the *Yad ha-Chazakah* (*yud daled* = 14) who transferred with R. Isser Zalman Meltzer to Slutsk, where a branch of the Slobodka yeshiva was established in 1897. An eloquent speaker with a charismatic personality, R. Rubinstein was 30 years old, when with close supervision of the Russian Czarist regime he was selected to become ‘Crown Rabbi’ of Vilna. Following the debacle with R. Shmuel b. Avigdor (d. 1793) the title *av beit din* was never granted to rabbis in Vilna. R. Rubinstein’s appointment as ‘Crown Rabbi’ had the support of the eminent R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, who continued to lead a large constituency of observant Vilna Jews. Through the 1920s and 1930s, R. Rubinstein emerged as a powerful voice for religious Zionism. He served as president of Mizrachi in Lithuania, and initiated the establishment of Tachkemoni schools, which functioned in the spirit of religious Zionism. During these two decades, Poland had been granted control of Lithuania, including Vilna. In 1928, the Polish government requested new elections for a Vilna Chief Rabbi, which initiated an unseemly conflict. R. Rubinstein was an ardent religious Zionist, while R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinski was closely aligned with Agudath Israel. While the two renowned *rabbonim* were on good terms, and worked closely with one another on many social, political and communal issues, supporters of Mizrachi and Agudath Israel in Vilna were at loggerheads with one another. In addition, the Vilna Kehillah, charged with administering the election was largely controlled by non-observant Jews. When Rabbi Yitzchak Rubinstein won the election as head rabbi, efforts were soon made to reach a compromise. In 1932, the Kehillah and government authorities agreed that both R. Rubinstein and R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinski could jointly serve as Vilna community rabbis.

In August 1939, R. Rubinstein travelled to Geneva to attend the World Zionist Congress. When war began in September 1939, he immediately returned to Vilna to assist in welfare and rescue activities. Since Vilna was not captured by the Nazis until the summer of 1941, R. Rubinstein managed to flee through Japan to the United States. Upon reaching the United States, he was appointed *maggid shiur* at Yeshiva University, where he remained until his death in 1945. See Gershon Bacon, “Warsaw, Radom, Vilna: Three Disputes over the Rabbinical Posts in Interwar Poland and Their Implications for the Change in Jew-

The visit to the Moshav Zekanim; The Alte Schul, the heavy gate, the beautiful *bimah*, the stone is to show no *rav* in Vilno; The Vilna Gaon's Kloiz; The place where he sat; The beggars; The visit with R. Haim Oser in Podbrodzie datshe.²³ His lovable personality. A little discussion in Halacha; mostly general conversation.

Davened Tuesday morning July 3 in Zaveler schul near hotel. Went to office of Vaad Hayeshivos where I met Benjamin Eisen, student of Mir who guided me.²⁴

The Jewish library;²⁵ The old cemetery with the graves of Vilna Gaon and his family; Grave of Be'er Hagolah; Chayai Odom, Ger Tzedek; Visit with Yosef Oyzder.

ish Public Discourse,” *Jewish History* 13.1 (1999): 103–126; Isaac Brojdes, *Vilna ha-tsiyonit ve-‘askaneha* (Tel Aviv, 1939); Asaf Kaniel, “Ha-Mizrahi be-Polin ben shete milhamot ha-‘olam” (Ph.D. diss., Bar Ilan University, 2004).

²³ R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinski (1863-1940) celebrated *Rav*, eminent *posek* and distinguished communal leader of Vilna, for more than 40 years. He first came to Vilna in the mid 1880s as a *Rav*, and shortly thereafter, as a *dayyan*, and remained active until his death in 1940. See the website for additional Torah discussion. See Yeheskel Abramsky ed., *Sefer Zikaron li-kevod R. Hayim Ozer* (London, 1942); Shelomoh Yosef Zevin, *Ishim ve-shitot* (Tel Aviv, 1952), pp. 167–202; Gershon C. Bacon, “Rubinstein vs. Grodzinski: The Dispute over the Vilnius Rabbinate and the Religious Realignment of Vilnius Jewry, 1928–1932,” in *The Gaon of Vilnius and the Annals of Jewish Culture* (Vilnius, 1998).

²⁴ The Vaad HaYeshivot was founded in 1924 at a rabbinical conference in Grodno, under the sponsorship of R. Israel Meir HaKohen Kagan, (Chofetz Chaim) and R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinski of Vilna. The purpose of the Vaad HaYeshivot was to provide financial assistance to a network of 70 *yeshivot* in the Eastern provinces of Poland, including Bialystok, Nowogrodek, Polesie, Vilna and Vohlynia. The Vaad sponsored the publication *Dos Vort*, which appeared weekly from 1924-1939. With the outbreak of World War II, the Vaad HaYeshivot ceased operation in 1940. See *Guide to the Records of the Vaad HaYeshivot (Council of Yeshivot) Vilna, Poland*, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Center for Jewish History, New York.

²⁵ While YIVO (Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, or Yiddish Scientific Institute) had been founded in Vilna in 1925, and would become a leading Vilna library and archive, Rabbi Fasman is almost assuredly referring to the Strashun Library. Mattityahu Strashun, had bequeathed his extensive personal library of almost 6000 volumes to the Vilna Jewish community, upon his death in 1885. By 1934, the Strashun Library was one of the most important Judaic libraries in Eastern Europe. When the Nazis occupied Vilna during the summer of 1941, they plundered the library, and shipped many of its books to Germany. See the recently published work, Dan Rabinowitz, *The Lost Library: The Legacy of Vilna's Strashun Library in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Waltham: Brandeis U. Press, 2018).

Left Vilna 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, July 4 on way to Mir

Only two candy stores in all Vilna, closed on Shabbos. One cannot trust a sign of Kosher in Vilna. Benjamin Eisen reveals that old leaders of Agudas Yisroel are opposed in heart to new Agudah Hachshara, only they could find no other way to keep Orthodox youth from Zionists.²⁶

The “Chor Schul” which is reform only in absence of central bimah. From outside it looks a lovely structure.²⁷

Visit in Mir, Wednesday, July 4, Baranowicz, The Yeshiva

Visit with Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman. Repeated the Chafetz Chaim that combination study is like two wives; one must be a ‘tzora’ to the other. If Torah is the only wife, even when you get a bit discouraged with it, you don’t go away, but if you have a second wife, the claim of Torah on you is weakened. He repeated another statement of the Chafetz Chaim about Lamport’s big contributions to N.Y. yeshiva. “*Min hat ine-ge-ret az dos iz a yeshiva un er git gelt.*” (trans. They persuaded him that it’s a yeshiva and he gives money, .ed.)²⁸

²⁶ There were Orthodox youth, who identified with either Mizrachi or Agudah, who went to Eretz Israel in the 1930s, on what was commonly called *bachshara*, to work on agricultural settlements

²⁷ Almost all pre-World War II synagogues in Vilna were either totally or partially destroyed. The Chor Schul or Choral synagogue survived both the Holocaust and subsequent control of the Soviet Union. Built in 1903 in a grand Romanesque-Moorish style, the synagogue remains in use until today. See *Guide to the Papers of Abraham Moshe Bernstein (1866-1932)*, YIVO Institute, New York. Abraham M. Bernstein was *chazan* at the Vilna Chor Shul for many years, until his death in 1932.

²⁸ R. Elchanan Bunem Wasserman (1874-1941), prominent *rav* and *rosh yeshiva* was one of R. Israel Meir ha-Cohen’s closest students. The reference to “Lamport” is no doubt Abraham Nechemia Lamport, born in Nowogrodek, Russian Poland, in 1854. Lamport came to the United States at the age of 23, in 1877, (In the U.S. he called himself Nathan Lamport) where he became a successful merchant and real estate owner. An outstanding philanthropist who supported numerous charities, his primary interest was support for the Yeshiva Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan, New York, where he served as President of the Board of Directors, for many years. On Nathan Lamport, see the revised edition of Aaron Rakefet Rothkoff, *Bernard Revel: Builder of American Jewish Orthodoxy* (2013). The quote from the Chafetz Chaim has an undertone of sarcasm or derision; as if to suggest, ‘they talked him into assuming that it was a yeshiva and he sent money.’ See the Hakirah website full edition of the diary, for the Yiddish comment of the Chofetz Chaim.

I asked him why European rabbis don't take a more sympathetic interest in American Jewry and attempt to help them. He replied, "We have plenty of America right here to contend with and to save." I asked him how the Yeshiva gets support. He said, 50 % we starve on our own, and the other 50% we use "*tzarat rabim chatzi nechama*." He said the Chofetz Chaim had a '*shita*' of finding an explanation for all things that happen in some passage of the Torah. So he, Rabbi Elchanan in asking himself why the Yeshivos have such a difficult time today explained it on the basis of the statement "*daf echad be-tza'ar u'meah be-lo tza'ar*," how if there are 10,000 blatt that Hashem expects of us, then 100 have to be *be-tza'ar*. The rule is "*al yechaser ha-mazag*," and what we don't get in quantity of learning since we don't learn enough - has to be made up in the greatness of '*tza'ar*' which characterizes the little we do learn.

On the train, Levy of N.Y. told of R. Yeruchim's constant plea to the students of Mir. "*ich bin nit in ka'as varvos ibr zeit nit frum, nor farvos ibr zeit azolkeh na-aronim un ibr farshteit nit*" {trans. I'm not angry with your not being frum; but because you're such fools and don't understand.²⁹

Warsaw, Thursday, July 5

Frequent warnings about the thieves and pickpockets of Warsaw. With aid of Mizrachi chalutz, on his way to argue again to obtain a certificate—we were told certificates are auctioned off to the highest bidders.

Visited several Mir students including Ginsburg of Chicago. One of them, Goldfeder took me to a bookseller where I spent some time in obtaining prices on volumes I wanted.

Harry arrived from Brisk at 12:30. Together we saw the Gerer Shteibel on Nalewki 19.

Friday morning, July 6

Visited Rabbi Cahana.³⁰ Told us Ezras Torah of America isn't function-

²⁹ The reference is to Rabbi Yeruchem Halevi Levovitz, born in Belarus, in 1873. R. Levovitz studied at the Slobodka and Kelm yeshivas, where he became a student disciple of Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel and Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv. R. Levovitz is best known as *mashgiach* at the Mir Yeshiva, where he served until his death in 1936. For an excellent treatise on the life and teaching of R. Yeruchem Levovitz, written by one of his students, see Shlomo Wolbe, *Kuntres Ha'Adam Biker* (Jerusalem, 1982).

³⁰ It is most likely that Rabbi Fasman met with Rabbi Shlomo David Kahana. Born near Kovno in 1869, R. Kahana studied at Volozhin and the Kovno Kollel, before receiving *semicha* from R. Isaac Elchanan Spektor. R. Kahana be-

ing. It never was efficient. The Central Relief used to function well, but it does very little now.

Visited office of Agudas Yisroel where General Secretary Freedman explained the various functions and branches of Agudas Yisroel work.³¹ Of special interest was the news of achievement in *Chinuch*. In Poland, 50,000 girls attend Beth Jacob schools. The teachers' school at Cracow for women graduates 100 girls every two years and so fast is the growth of the movement practically all find positions. In general, the Agudas Yisroel office is impressive in its size and systematic arrangement. Freedman said that only one conservative wing regards Hachshara as an offset to Zionist activities among youth, but the leaders in control place great importance upon orthodox colonization of Palestine.

Visited Mizrachi office. Met Rabbi Yitzhak Nisenbaum,³² Rabbi Neufeld, Dr. Cahana.³³

came a Rav in Warsaw succeeding his father-in-law, R. Shmuel Zanvil Klepfish. Following World War I, R. Kahana established a network of offices to collect information about missing husbands in order to address the urgent need of thousands of *agumot*. The information gathered made it possible for thousands of women to remarry. Following the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, R. Kahana remarkably, managed to escape, and relocate to Eretz Yisroel, where he became a Rav in the Old City of Jerusalem. R. Kahana died in 1953. See D. Plinker in *Arim ve-Imahot be-Yisrael* vol. 3 (Jerusalem, 1948).

³¹ Alexander Zusia Friedman was born in Sochaczew (Sochatchov), Poland, in 1897, and studied at various yeshiva schools operated by the Sochatchover Rebbe (aka the *Annei Nezer*). Following the First Knessia Gedola of the Agudath Israel, Friedman began a lifetime of service on behalf of the Agudath Israel movement. In 1925, he was appointed Secretary-General of Agudath Israel of Poland, a position he held until his death. He was editor of their Hebrew journal *Digleinu*, and became well known for a popular work, *Ma'ayanah shel Torah*. With the outbreak of World War II, he was trapped in the Warsaw ghetto. R. Friedman was murdered at the Rawniki death camp, near Lublin in 1943. See Hillel Seidman "Rabbi Alexander Zisha Friedman" in *The Warsaw Ghetto Diaries*, (Targum Press, 1997) pp. 336–346.

³² R. Yitzhak Nissenbaum (1868–1942) was a leader of Mizrachi in Poland. He participated in the founding conference of Mizrachi in 1902, and first visited Palestine in 1905. He attended the first convention of the Zionist Federation in Poland in 1916, and for decades encouraged the immigration of Jews to Israel. In 1919, he became an editor of the religious Zionist weekly publication, *Ha-Mizrabi*. Nissenbaum was tragically murdered in the Warsaw ghetto during World War II. R. Nissenbaum published many different types of work, but for his life story, see his autobiography *Ale Haldi* (Warsaw, 1929); his letters, Isaac Nissenbaum, *Igrot ha-Rav Nisenboim*, ed. Israel Shapiro (Jerusalem, 1956); and biography, Israel Shapiro, *Ha-Rav Yitzhak Nisenboim* (Jerusalem, 1951).

Back to Agudas Yisroel to meet Isaac Meir Levin, president, member of Polish Sejm.³⁴ He pointed out that basis of movement is consistency; that Orthodox Jews lack confidence in themselves; that only after we're strongly organized can we negotiate in common matters of interest with other parties.

Went to Rembertow to see a Mizrahi Hachshara kibbutz; The mud of Rembertow; Information about the kibbutz; Self-supporting.

Ate at Rabbi S.D. Cahana's Friday night. Discussion with Dr. Cahana head of Yavneh in Warsaw. Greenberg, Vice-President of Palestina (the Aliyah organization of all Zionist factions). They claim better to colonize Palestine with irreligious than not to colonize at all.

Saturday morning *davened* in Moriah, Nissenbaum's schul. It was packed with an overflow crowd, a large percentage of youth.

³³ Dr. Cahana is almost certainly Rabbi Dr. Shmuel Zanvil Kahana, son of R. Shlomo David Kahana. Shmuel Zanvil Kahana was born in 1905, in Warsaw, Poland. After many years of Torah learning, Shmuel Z. Kahana attended the University of Liege in Belgium, where he received a doctorate in Eastern Studies. Upon return to Warsaw, he became involved with the Mizrahi, Religious Zionist movement. With the outbreak of World War II, he made his way to Israel, together with his father, and again immersed himself in the work of Mizrahi. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, Rabbi Dr. Shmuel Z. Kahana became Director General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. See Doron Bar, "Re-creating Jewish Sanctity in Jerusalem: Mount Zion and David's Tomb, 1948-67," *Journal of Israeli History* (2004) 23 (2):260-278; Doron Bar, "Holocaust Commemoration in Israel during the 1950s: The Holocaust Cellar on Mount Zion," *Jewish Social Studies* (2005) 12:1.

³⁴ R. Yitzhak Meir Levin was born in Góra Kalwaria (in Yiddish, Ger or Gur) in 1893. His mother's father was the Gerer Rebbe, R. Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter, and he became the son in law of the Gerer Rebbe, when he married the daughter of R. Avraham Mordechai Alter, head of the Ger dynasty at that time. When R. Fasman met R. Levin in 1934, he had become an influential leader of Agudath Israel in Poland, and actively involved in the growth of the Beis Yaakov school system for girls. From 1937-1939, he was a member of the Sejm, the Polish parliament, representing Agudath Israel. When the Nazis invaded Poland, R. Levin succeeded in making his way to Palestine in 1940, where he resumed his responsibilities for Agudath Israel. When the State of Israel was declared in May 1948, R. Yitzhak M. Levin was one of 37 individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence. He joined the first provisional government led by David Ben-Gurion, and served as Minister of Welfare. He was elected to the first Knesset in 1949, as part of an alliance of four religious parties. He was reappointed to his ministerial role in the first and second Knesset governments. He remained a member of the Knesset until his death in 1971. See Isaac Lewin, "Rabbi Yitzhak Meir Levin: Spokesman for Three Generations," *Jewish Observer* 7:9 (October 1971).

Dinner at Rabbi Cahana's. Polish T'chant brought from baker's oven. Discussion with Dr. Cahana of how it might be possible to raise money for the Mizrachi-Yavneh Talmud Torah system in America. The fund that had to be created to enable teachers to get railroad fare to travel.

Saturday afternoon visited the Mesivta where 300 students receive a Yeshiva education. Ages from 14 years old and upwards. Two hours of general studies; not rigidly enforced. Class system. Chassidic students all Agudas Yisroel.

The closed stores everywhere in the Jewish section. In Gesia 1 a merchant is the first on the street to keep open Shabbos. The Jewish newspaper print a warning of the rabbinate to him to close on Shabbos or prepare to be excluded with his children from all rights in the Kehilla – including Jewish burial.

Rabbi Cahana told us about the kashrus system. The rabbinate, not individual butchers choose the *shochtim* who are paid from the communal budget. In Warsaw too is an instance where the rabbinate “assured” a place and one rabbi gave a *hechsber*. In general, where a sign says Kosher in Warsaw, it's reliable although there is no central *hashgacha* - as in Germany—over places selling food.

The meeting of Hechalutz Hamizrachi in their clubrooms; Their earnestness and enthusiasm—they want to join socialism with the Torah in Palestine.

A visit to the Bratzlaver Steibel. Rules about who may go to the *Amud*. The intimate contact with R. Nachman of Bratslow. Their constant studying. They daven “*mila b'mila*”.

The last part of Oneg Shabbos at the synagogue Moriah. The speaker talks of Bialik; assigns his death to his being heartbroken over the dissension in Israel and uses the verse ‘*mipnei ha-ra'ab ne'esaph tzaddik.*’ We feel Bialik is entitled to credit for his achievements but can hardly be called a *Tzaddik*.

I read the pamphlet of Isaac Meir Levin, *What I Saw in Palestine*.³⁵

Points of Interest:

- 1) Not enough credit is given to the old Yishuv in helping create modern Palestine.
- 2) The greatest development is due to individual initiative, compared to which the Zionist organization has done little. Credit for individual

³⁵ Several months prior to this summer visit, R. Isaac Meir Levin had returned from Eretz Israel, and published his thoughts in a Yiddish booklet titled אוואס איך האב געזען אין ארץ ישראל.

immigration should be given to great religious leaders also who visited Palestine and thus pointed a way to their followers.

- 3) The Histadrut, by hindering capitalist undertakings hindered the development of the country.
- 4) The Mizrachi schools have failed of their purpose in that few of its students remain religious after growing up.
- 5) The only constructive work of the Zionists has been to capture the youth education and make it irreligious or anti-religious.
- 6) When one compares what France does in Syria to develop it and what England does in Palestine, it is apparent that England fails in her duty to help colonize the land.
- 7) The Agudas Yisroel must get into the active work of pioneering, colonizing, developing Palestine.

The Polish Jewish garb; the poverty; the business rush. Polish police.

Left Warsaw Sunday morning July 8. Arrived Cracow 1 p.m. Sunday July 8

En route met Zrubovel, a leader of the left wing Poale Zion.³⁶ He told us there are two youth passions in Poland—one group for Poles, the other for Russia; only rarely can a Polish youth get to Russia.

The economic condition of Polish Jewry looks hopeless.

There are about 5 Jewish members in the Sejm, but they carry little weight; in fact the Sejm itself is politically unimportant. There is a dispute between Mizrachi and Zionists as to who should name the successor to the seat vacated by Gruenbaum; meanwhile it is empty.³⁷ And the Jews have fought so hard to get that place.

³⁶ Ya'akov (Vitkin) Zerubavel (1886-1967) one of the leaders of the *Poale Zion* movement. See *Poale Zion Collection 1884-1981*. YIVO Archives, Center for Jewish history, N.Y.; also S. Almog; Jehuda Reinhartz; Anita Shapira *Zionism and Religion* (1998).

³⁷ Yitzchak Gruenbaum was born in Warsaw, in 1879. In 1919, following World War I, he was elected to the Sejm (Polish parliament), where he participated in a bloc of various Jewish party factions, and emerged as a principal spokesman of Zionism. In 1933, upon election to the Jewish Agency Executive, Gruenbaum settled in the Land of Israel, where he became a prominent voice in the leadership of British mandate Palestine. During the Holocaust, he served on a rescue committee to maintain contact, and attempt to assist Polish Jewry. Following the creation of the State of Israel, Gruenbaum served as the first Minister of the Interior. In 1952, he was one of several candidates considered for the post of President, but was defeated by Yitzchak Ben Zvi. Gruenbaum died in 1970. See Rafael Medoff and Chaim I. Waxman, eds. *Historical*

In Cracow, there was visible from the beginning a concentrated orthodox life in the old ghetto section. It is a more pious town than Warsaw, primarily Chassidic. Dr. Thon was away on vacation.³⁸

The Schloss—oldest castle in Poland. The vast space it occupies. The traditions of ages are written all over. The youngest church tower is dated 1520. How donors for its keep are perpetuated in brick and stone. The beautiful view from a parapet; The campus of the University of Cracow.³⁹

The old cemetery where we saw the graves of the Ramah, the Bach, (the Meginai Shlomo) the Tosfos Yom Tov, the former rabbis of the city. The *Kvitlach* on the holy graves and in the niches of the 'matzavivos.' The type of *Obel*. The section partitioned off by a cement wall, where according to legend a wedding company that played instruments late Friday afternoon in spite of the Ramah's repeated admonitions about the coming of Shabbos was swallowed up.

The Old Schul. 800 years old. Was a library building originally, and there is one piece of wall to indicate clearly its original design - work was oriental. King Casimir had used it for a library, turned it over to the Jews. We had to go down into the schul. The 600 year old *bimah*; The chandeliers donated by a Polish prince, whose generosity was rewarded by permitting his head—contrary to Jewish law which forbids the carved

Dictionary of Zionism (Routledge, 2000) pp. 66–67. The files and papers of Yitzchak Gruenbaum can be found at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem.

³⁸ Rabbi Dr. Yehoshua (aka Osias) Thon was born in Lviv in 1870. From 1891–1895, Thon studied philosophy at the University of Berlin, where he earned his doctorate, and two years later, in 1897, he graduated from the Berlin rabbinical school, *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Institute for the Scientific Study of Judaism). While a student in Berlin, he became interested in Zionism, and assisted Theodor Herzl in preparations leading to the First Zionist Congress (1897), in Basel.

That same year, 1897, he was appointed rabbi of Krakow's progressive-neolog congregation, the Tempel synagogue, a position he held until his death. In 1919, Thon was one of the Jewish delegates to the Paris Peace Conference, and that same year, he was elected to the first Sejm, serving in the Polish parliament until 1935. Thon died in 1936, and is buried in Krakow's New Jewish Cemetery. See Michał Galas and Shoshana Ronen eds., *A Romantic Polish-Jew: Rabbi Ozjasz Thon from various perspectives* (Kraków: Jagiellonian U. Press, 2015).

³⁹ Rabbi Fasman is referring to Wawel Castle, consisting of several buildings, which for centuries was the residence of the kings of Poland. At present, the Wawel Castle is one of Poland's major art museums, and Krakow's major tourist attraction. Regarding R. Fasman's reference to the University of Cracow, the university is widely known as Jagiellonian University. Founded in the 1300s, it is one of the oldest surviving universities in Europe.

human form in a schul—to be carved into the chandeliers. Instead of ten commandments over *Aron Kodesh* is a carved crown of Casimir as a token of gratitude to his goodness in giving Jews right to settle in ghetto and to convert a library building into a schul. The seat where the Ramah and other famous Cracow rabbis sat is now nailed up; Nobody can sit there.

The iron bars where public stocks used to be for those who were punished Puritan style; The “Times Square” of Cracow where news is flashed in large electric signs; Helmets of a Cracow police squad; The stores that are open on the sly Sunday. When government needs money, it raids them and collects fines. The Polish Jew cannot yet live in the open because of unfair treatment by his government.

**Left Cracow Sunday night 9:30 for Prague.
Prague Monday, July 9 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.**

Saw the statue of Wilson opposite depot which is named for him.⁴⁰

From the outside saw the Museum of Bohemia which dominates the leading street. The occidental tone of civilization on the bustling thoroughfare. The statue of the patron saint.

The old cemetery—the graves of the Maharal, the Kli Yakar, the disputed ‘*matzava*’—whether it be 606 or 1606. The place of common interment with the explanatory sarcophagus above it.

The Jewish Museum—a volume of Maharal which was printed in his lifetime. The heavy bronze Chanuka lamps, etc.

The Alt-Neue Schul; The lower half was built before 600, the upper half in the 14th century.

A local man's description of Jewish conditions in Kehillah. Claims crisis didn't affect Prague so much, that it is still a wealthy city.

Prague among the hills. The mercenary tone of the old holy places because of entrance fees and mechanical guides.

The Gothic church-like architecture of Alt-Neue Schul is exceptional for a Jewish house of worship.

⁴⁰ Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States from 1913 to 1921, was instrumental in the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918. In recognition of his efforts, a bronze statue of Wilson had been erected in front of Prague's main railway station, and dedicated on July 4, 1928. The statue was destroyed by the Nazis on the 12th of December 1941, one day after Germany declared war on the United States. A replica of the original statue dedicated at the same location on October 5, 2011, can now be seen again.

**Left Prague 4:15 pm., arrived Vienna 10:15 p.m., Monday, July 9
Vienna, Tuesday morning July 10**

We passed a whole series of large apartment houses built by the socialist city of Vienna to house laborers. Beautifully constructed buildings. The marks of the February civil war could still be seen though patched over in most places.

By tramway to Franz Joseph Kai and by foot across the Danube Canal Bridge into II Bezirk, the Jewish section. Saw the Prater district (like Coney Island), the Imperial Palaces, the museums, the Parliament House, the statues of famous musicians, the Opera and Theater Houses, a church that stood in the time of Charlemagne, house where Strauss composed the Blue Danube. The colorful chariots and sleighs in the Chariot Museum. The one used at coronation; the one used for Napoleon at Italian coronation; the black and red funeral chariots. Through 45 rooms of the palace of the Hapsburgs at Schonbrunn. The Million Room, Chinese room, Napoleon's two rooms—the tapestries, the ceiling paintings, the wall paintings, the portraits, the banquet room, the gardens behind the palace the lamps, the portrait in perspective, the Florentine table of Elizabeth of Parma, the private room with a door in the floor that goes down and brings up a table. Young men beg in the streets, contrast with Hapsburg luxury.

**Left Vienna Tuesday, July 10 9:20 p.m. Arrived in Trieste,
Wednesday, July 11, 9:45 a.m.**

City on series of hillsides. Very picturesque. The beautiful exterior of the Palace of the Governor. Feeding pigeons in the square. The harbor and seven of the Italian battleships. Police in white linen suits. The heavy baggage bill. The sign in Hebrew *L'Eretz Yisroel*. The baggage document printed in Italian and Hebrew. Going aboard Italia, we found Italians were given first consideration in cabin space.

The uniformed *Mashgiach*. The crowd of *balebatim* from German *Hachshara* farms, most of the German born and bred; most of them orthodox. The zeal and eagerness for Palestine. The difference in room and board between 2nd class Berengaria and 3rd class Italia. The blue waters of the Adriatic.

The minyan of youth contrasted with Atlantic “International Minyan.” The meal tickets—either kosher kitchen or *trefah*. Only meat in kosher kitchen. The strict rules of Tel Aviv rabbinate supervision; The doorways marked in both Hebrew and Italian; The first day in sight of eastern Adriatic coast; the second day, western; i.e. Italy, with Apennines ever in background; Easy dress and manners of *Chalutzim*.

A visit to Bialik's 'oron'. The guard of honor.⁴¹

Met Chazan Seifert of Chicago.

The cinema—the mashgiach tried to protest—not, he said, because of 3 weeks but of Bialik.

The heavy-working youth that goes to colonize Palestine is a studious youth.

Thursday, July 12, at 10:30 a.m.

'Azkoro' for Bialik. The widow requested no speeches, so a few brief verses and the 'maleh' were said by Cantor Seifert. Even non-Jews and priests came to see and hear. A collection for National Fund then taken up in small sums.

Was told that 2nd class passengers can get off quickly at Jaffa, but 3rd class have difficulty, usually have to go on to Haifa. Also was advised to have some money to show on entrance.

There is a youth Aliya for those between 15 and 17; a *Tzerai* for those between 18-35.

The constant question—to what party do you belong? It seems every Jew in Europe is a member of a party into which he pours all his strength and loyalty. Ideology, principles—these they demand of you.

Harry suggests a new project—a magazine for Sunday school teachers from Orthodox point of view.

Entering the harbor at Brindisi, I was reminded not to use my camera as it is a fortress—not permissible to snap it. Row boats are rowed by pushing the oars, not pulling as with us. Harry said their advantage is they see where they are going. I observed we get more power; thus we are interested in going faster and getting the maximum physical result, regardless of where we're going. Here the emphasis is on goal rather than speed.

The beauty of the harbor; How fruit is sent up by baskets; The crowds at the wharf; the pillars left from Roman times; so frequent in Italy, I was told no use asking the average Italian just when they date from or represent.

Changed off a guard at Bialik's bier for 15 minutes. I thought the flowers on the casket out of place.

⁴¹ Chaim Nachman Bialik, eminent poet and pioneer writer in Hebrew, died in Vienna, Austria, on July 4, 1934, following a failed operation. Bialik was 61 years old, at the time of his unexpected death. Notably, Rabbi Fasman was on the ship returning Bialik's casket to the Land of Israel for burial.

Sat on deck with Harry between 10:30 and 11:30 p.m. beneath a perfect sky of bright stars, with many a shooting star, and talked. Harry observed: In Germany the scientists and professors have always been the tools of the government and of militarism. In any argument of religion vs. science, the answer should be given that 7000 preachers in Germany had the courage to defy Hitlerism, but no professors.

Harry again: Intellectually men differ, but emotionally we are all equipped alike; i.e. a street cleaner may be emotionally constituted like a scientist. Yet the unintellectual masses, instead of recognizing emotion, turn to glorification of reason.

Friday morning, July 13

In the Mediterranean, barren rocky cliff fronted coast of Greece to our left. No sign of a cottage or life of any kind along that coast.

Met Rabbis Kemerling of Hoboken and Kaplan of Pittsfield, Mass. Kaplan told of meeting Rose Rosenberg, McDonald's secretary for twenty years when his party (with Cherwood Eddy) recorded an interview with McDonald in London. Surprising how great men don't necessarily overawe and impress you at first sight, he said. True democracy is in England where right of heckling is sacred. Mosley's black shirts in bad odor since Olympia Hall meeting where they threw out and beat up those who tried to express a contrary view. Since the Hitler blood bath in Germany, black shirts are still worse off; the Rothmore papers no longer back them. (In Vienna too, I was told the reaction to recent German murders is a good thing for Austrian Jews.)

London, too, had its debate. The Whitechapel people carried on open demonstrations against Hitler, while the wealthy members of Deputies wanted a *sha-sha* policy. In Venice, continues Kaplan, the places of interest in Jewish ghetto were ruined by the constant begging. Little boys run after you crying "*Shema Yisroel*."

Saturday began with a large minyan. Islands visible every hour. The Oneg Shabbos begins at 5 p.m. conducted in German because most of the German *Chalutzim* can't get along in Hebrew. Partisan spirit appears as non-religious *chalutzim* protest that Mizrachi boys are turning meeting to propaganda purposes. Chairman forbids a non-religious from snapping pictures of meeting. Among radicals is Hellman of Boston, director of New England Arbeiter Verband; eats *traifab*, writes and smokes on Shabbos.

Americans on board disappointed in the carefree childishness of the *chalutzim* manners, their lack of respect for elders, their tendency to quarrel at every step. Mrs. Sara Greenberg, active in Jewish circles in

Philadelphia addressed the meeting, explained to the *chalutzim* what high regard they are held in America; what responsibilities they carry as a consequence, and not to disgrace the *galut* by improper conduct. A *chalutz* from Czechoslovakia explained how those on *bachsharah* in his country gave up prior claim to certificates that the German youth might be able to go first. Berlash of Jewish Agency advised discussion of problem whether to settle in village or city, since exodus from former to latter creates a serious danger.

Dr. Roth of Vienna spoke for an hour on the need for Hebrew culture, love for the language, etc. Insisted that Palestine will only be another Argentina unless we establish our own personality there. Was great.

Probable that some couples were on board only formally married, so that one certificate can bring in two, but meanwhile their moral relations cannot be vouched for. At least, thus felt Harry and Kaplan.

Read R. Breuer's pamphlet on the call to orthodox Jews to settle in Palestine and make it Torah-true.

Sunday, July 15

Chazan Seifert reports his astonishment that a '*Shegatz*' like Hellman earns a livelihood from Zionism; says he has lost some of his enthusiasm for the movement.

On guard at Bialik's bier, 9 to 10 a.m.

Cyprus: Went to the island Larnaca and back by motor boat; spent 1 1/2 hours there. Visited the Church of St. Lazarus, over 1,000 years old, in the interior of which were rich paintings in comparatively bright colors for church themes; Saw a church St. Helena 1,500 years old; John-bread growing in its natural state; our guide picked some for us. He also gave us some pleasant-smelling rosemary that he picked and a sprig of cypress tree containing a small green fruit which cannot be eaten.

Island has a population of 400,000. Only 400 Jews. Historical value of Larnaca is its identification with the '*Eretz Kitim*' of Bible.

Gambling goes on everywhere; Modern sports equipment.

At Cyprus a delegation from Palestine came on board for Bialik. We were introduced to Prof. Tulchiner, Job authority, former Bible professor at Wise's Institute.⁴² Listened in when a group of *chalutzim* was

⁴² R. Fasman is referring to Dr. Harry Torczyner, who was widely known as Naftali Herz Tur-Sinai. Born in Lwów, Poland (now Lviv, Ukraine) in 1886, he moved to Vienna, as a young child, in 1892. He studied at the University of Vienna (1905-1909) and at Vienna's Rabbinical Seminary. For several years, he

cross-questioned by Ben-Gurion. He said among other things that Agudah Olim make good workers in Palestine.⁴³

Discussed in English with an Arab journalist the Arab-Jewish problem. He refused to admit that Arabs derive any benefit from Jewish immigration. Arab laborers aren't employed by Jews to any extent; where they are, the Jews come down on the head of the employer. If wages went up, so did the cost of living. Whatever civilization the Jews brought, the English government would have had to give; for example, electricity was given to Syria by the French; if not for Jews, English would have had to do as much for Palestine and rates would have been less. Thus for our Arab who deceitfully claimed he's engaged in farming and only from others did we learn he's a journalist; The first fez's at Cyprus. The boat becomes more cosmopolitan with the addition of Oriental passengers.

Sunday night, Memorial Services for Bialik. Sh. Adler, head of Tel Aviv Gymnasium read the '*maleh*'. Rabbi Asaf (of Mizrachi) said a *kadish* (not right according to din, I believe).

lectured in Semitic languages at the University of Vienna, before moving to Berlin in 1919, to lecture at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (College for Jewish Studies). Tur Sinai earned a reputation as a highly regarded Bible scholar, and a noted linguist, instrumental in the revival of Hebrew as a modern, spoken language. Together with Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, they are widely considered Israel's two foremost philologists. In 1959, he completed a 17-volume Hebrew dictionary project begun by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda.

In 1929-30, Tur Sinai had come to New York for a year, or so, to teach at the Jewish Institute of Religion, established by Rabbi Stephen Wise. It is to this school that R. Fasman refers to as "Wise's Institute." In 1933, Tur Sinai moved to the Land of Israel, where he joined the faculty at Hebrew University, as a professor of Semitic languages, and occupant of the Chaim Nachman Bialik Chair at Hebrew University. From the diary, it is clear that Tur Sinai came to Cyprus from Palestine to accompany Bialik's body back to the Land of Israel for burial. Naftali Herz Tur Sinai died in 1973, during the October Yom Kippur War. See Yigal Yannai ed., *Tur-Sinai Memorium Volume Sefer Zikaron LN"H Tur* (Jerusalem, 1991).

⁴³ In 1934, David Ben-Gurion was the party leader of Mapai (*Mifleget Poalei Eretz Israel*) and had emerged as a powerful leader of the Jewish community in Palestine. One year later, in 1935, Ben-Gurion would become chairman of the executive committee of the Jewish Agency. It is notable that David Ben-Gurion was part of a delegation that travelled to Cyprus to accompany the body of Chaim Nachman Bialik back to Israel. There is a voluminous amount of literature on David Ben-Gurion; for the most recent, see Anita Shapira, *Father of Modern Israel* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 2014). Tom Segev, *A State at Any Cost: The Life of David Ben-Gurion* (New York, 2019).

Spoke with Ben-Gurion. He said the few American *chalutzim* are loyal to *chalutz* ideals; that in Palestine some are found who belong both to Mizrachi and Histadruth; 13 once came on one certificate from Yemen, husband, wives, children.

Monday, 5 a.m., July 16

Jaffa in sight. The Arabs and their crude medieval boats come for cargo. Barefooted; wide hanging trousers; fez's. The women with black veils over their faces who were on board. The Jewish police and officials. Four languages everywhere—Hebrew, Arabic, English, German; The red tape in getting through passport inspection; The poverty and rags and dirt of the Arabs; Waiting for passport, we heard of several cases in the past where rejection of immigration led to suicide.

We go ashore by motor boat. By bus from Jaffa to Tel Aviv. The sign that on Friday, buses quit at 6:27 and start again Sat. night at 7:25 under the supervision of the chief rabbinate—we were both thrilled.

The rushing, bustling, energetic living Tel Aviv. Crowded street traffic with police at intersections; high percentage of automobiles as compared to other European cities. The beautiful modernistic homes. But when we visited Charney at his home, we found that very few private people have telephones because of the antagonism of English government to rapid development. Also, no gas. Cooking done on kerosene stove, wood stove, or electric (in wealthy homes). The newness of the houses. Bicycles running everywhere.

In all the city mourning for Bialik.

We go to Hotel Carmel. Running water, bath, shower, conveniences not often found in Eastern Europe. The original proprietor, Rabbi Nissenson is now old; his sons are in charge.

At two o'clock we were already on Balfour Street waiting for the Bialik funeral procession. All business shut down at 2:00 p.m. by city proclamation. The guard who spoke Yiddish to prevent crowd from going through ropes was called down, "At least speak Hebrew when you hold us Back." The beautiful school buildings.

The Bialik funeral.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Bialik's body was taken to Tel Aviv city hall, where it lay in state surrounded by a guard of honor. From 9 a.m. until late in the afternoon, thousands of mourners filed past the bier, draped in blue and white. Bialik was buried in Tel Aviv's first cemetery, which in 1920, was named the Trumpeldor Cemetery. Many of Tel Aviv's early residents and city founders, including Chaim Arlosoroff, Meir Dizengoff, and Ahad Ha-Am are buried at the Trumpeldor Cemetery.

The big synagogue; Meet people from America everywhere. Hebrew not only language.

Tuesday, July 17

Visited 'Triyah;' Met Nathan Kaplan, president of Palestine Trust Company, Ben Manfield, Rabbis Teitelbaum, Berlin, Gold, Berman, all of Mizrahi;⁴⁵ How land values mounted in Palestine; The drinking problem; Project to introduce Coca Cola; Only one place to buy stamps.(found several other places later); Beggars at big synagogue minyan; Price of gas for auto 37¢ gallon.

In the evening, went to headquarters of Junior Mizrahi to hear Rabbi Meir Berlin lecture in Hebrew on Yeshivas. New idea: group of people learning side by side, as before Yeshivas meant each leads his own life and then out of individuals grows a community but Yeshiva reverses process: a certain method of thinking is breathed into the community and from the community later spring the individuals. Therefore, Reb Chaim Volozin made it a rule for all students to eat together at one table.

⁴⁵ This would be the first of R. Fasman's several encounters with R. Meir Berlin. For bibliography on R. Meir Berlin, there are numerous encyclopedic entries; and see Moshe Krone, *Ha-Rav Meir Bar Ilan* (Jerusalem, 1954).

An important leader and educator in the Mizrahi religious Zionist movement, particularly before the rise of the State of Israel, Yaakov Berman was born in Salant, Lithuania in 1878. After studying at the Telshe Yeshiva, he attended university at St. Petersburg. In 1902, under the leadership of R. Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, Berman served as a delegate to a conference that would establish the religious Zionist movement, Mizrahi. After serving as Rav in Odessa and Berditchev, he immigrated to the Land of Israel in 1921. For more than two decades, Berman served as head of Mizrahi religious education, and by 1948, the founding of the State of Israel, he was regarded as a leading authority in religious educational administration. Berman published several books on Jewish law, a biography of his cousin, R. Israel Salanter, and a memoir of recollections of Eastern European Jewish life during the early 1900s. In 1968, he was awarded an Israel Prize for Education. Yaakov Berman died in 1974 at the age of 96. For more on Berman, see the Jacob Berman Papers (MS 2014), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; also Yaakov Berman, *שיחות ופרקי זמנאות* (Jerusalem: 1976).

Wednesday, July 18

Saw Sephardic schul from outside; Drank orange juice from Palestine oranges; Visited the Arab “Maxwell Street” of Jaffa; Visited the store on Achad Haam Street that sells Bezalel articles.

A visit with Rabbi Aronson, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv.⁴⁶ His friendliness, readiness to discuss matters with me. Said Agudah proclamation against Egged no longer warranted, as the company accepted admonishment and is no longer “*mechalel Shabbos*.”

Lloyd Triestino boats with *bechsber* can be relied upon. 150 restaurants and feed places in Tel Aviv; 55 under *hashgacha*; 16 plain *trefah*; rest not too reliable.

Hebrew a necessary language. The Chassam Sofer writes about “*Im ha-Rav domeh le’Malach*,” that angels don’t understand Aramaic, only Hebrew. Hebrew, even if audience doesn’t understand, will accomplish more than any other language. The Shelah too, speaks of beauty of Hebrew.

Peace between Agudah and Mizrachi? In Tel Aviv there is unity but in Jerusalem—well we say “*ha-Pores sukkat shalom aleinu ve-al kol amo yisroel ve-al Yerushalayim*” apparently, even when peace can be everywhere else, a special prayer is required for Jerusalem. When there was a religion of Jewish reform, separatism was necessary to distinguish one from the other; but in Palestine there is no other religious cult except orthodoxy; hence, separatism has no ground. Trouble is Agudah, instead of making separatism a means to an end—in which case compromise might come - made it an end in itself.

Over 100 shulen in Tel Aviv; The unified, organized kehilla; The Chabad *nusach* is shorter and purer Hebrew, grammatically speaking. Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk although Ashkenaz, admitted to him once, that Chabad *nusach* is closest to origins of prayer and to Hebrew pure grammar.

The schools; Mizrachi does good work; Their Talmud Torahs not in the regular network; The Yeshivah, Herzeliyah self-supporting on tuition.

⁴⁶ During the summer of 1934, Rabbi Shlomo Aronson (1862–1935), was chief rabbi of Tel Aviv. As a young man, Aronson had become active in Hovovei Zion, and published his views in support of political Zionism following the First Zionist Congress in 1897. He joined the Mizrachi organization to which he remained committed throughout his life. From 1906–21, R. Aronson was chief rabbi of Kiev. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, he fled to Berlin in 1921, and served as rabbi for Russian Jews in Berlin for two years. He moved to Palestine in 1923, and subsequently was appointed Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv. Rabbi Aronson died in March 1935, at the age of 73. See *Encyklopedyah le-Ziyyonut*, 1 (1947), pp. 14–15.

Much irreligion in *Kevutzot* but not so much free, law disregarding morality because the individuals don't seek trouble with government. Weakness of orthodoxy is always coming late. Irreligious built Palestine first; developed press to shape public opinion, first. Then orthodoxy comes following.

Visited with Bin-Nun; Saw Tachkemoni building in Lilienblum Street and Teman Talmud Torah in Kineret Street. The Teman district of Tel Aviv and its noticeable poverty. Many people on Nachlat Bin-yamin at night.

Thursday, July 19

Visited Rishon Letzion (Yekev); Rechovot, saw German *Kevutzab* of Agudas Yisroel; Weizmann Botany station, Experimental Dairy; Yemenite quarter; Nes Ziona.

Friday, July 20

The trip to Jerusalem; Rochel's Tomb; The old city - the long narrow road to *Kotel Maaravi*; view from Nisan Beck Synagogue;⁴⁷ Churvah Synagogue; Kotel itself; Davened *Kabolas Shabbos* in "American" schul; Met Rabbi Asaf there.

Saturday, July 21

Davened in Chassidic Schul; Entered Y.M.C.A.; Afternoon with Rabbi Berlin; Evening Kinnoth at Synagogue of Zokhaim in Mea Shearim; Visit to Kotel.

⁴⁷ Nisan Beck (aka Nissan Bak 1815–1889) was born in Berdichev to a family of Sadigura Hasidim. His father immigrated to Palestine in 1831, where he established a printing press in Safed, and later a Hebrew press in Jerusalem. In 1843, Nissan Bak traveled to Sadigura to visit the Ruzhiner Rebbe, who encouraged him to build a shul near the *kotel ma'aravi*. In 1872, a beautiful three-story shul, Tiferet Yisrael was opened, and for more than seven decades served as a centre for the hasidic community in the Old City. A magnificent shul, with a dramatic view of the *Har ha-Bayit*, the synagogue was often referred to as the Nisan Beck shul. Tragically, the shul was destroyed by the Arab Legion during the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. See Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *A City Reflected in its Times: New Jerusalem—The Beginnings* (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1979; D. Tidhar, *Encyclopedia la-halutse ha-yishuv u-bonav* (1947) vol. 1, p. 59.

Sunday, July 22

Morning prayers and Kinnoth at Kotel; Afternoon with Rabbis Berlin and Gold. With Rabbi Gold on Har Hazasim; Trip back to Tel Aviv; Saw Habimah perform "The Golem."

Monday, July 23

Left Tel Aviv on tour to north. Went through factory and residence section Ramat Gan, past Montefiore quarter, then Bnei Brak through Petach Tikvah. Stopped at Tul Karm at a farm school for Arabs given by government.

A discussion of the growth of Arab nationalism which is strong in the Ephraim section where Jews cannot purchase land as yet.

Dothan; Beautiful panorama as we descend mountains into Emek; Stopped at Afuleh-beautiful schul there; Stop at Tel Adashim; The wheat harvest; the guard of the Emek; Two months in land with a little grain mill makes a living.

Gevat - a kvutzah of about 100. Modern farm equipment - wheat, poultry, sheep, dairy, etc. Waiting for water to raise grapefruit. Children have no religious training at all; conversation with one of them. Picture of Marx; books of Kropotkin. Arab grain separators at 50 piaster per day. Separate kosher kitchen for older people. Running now at a profit; must begin to pay off debt to Keren Hayesod in 1939; Land belongs to Keren Kayemet; Get fine wheat production per dunam; The scout camp for children still at school. Part of the day they help in Gevat farms. Gevat has money to build more modern buildings, only can't get the labor. Children raised from birth by community.

The Girls' Agricultural School at Nahalal - fine building - vegetarian kitchen. Two-year course or 2 1/2 years if girl has to learn Hebrew. All branches of farming. Made fine impression on all.

The Nesher Cement Factory seen as we went to Haifa. The first sight of the port. Beautiful Mount Carmel. We go to the top. Wonderful view. See the Technion.

Tuesday, July 24

Left Haifa, visited Kiryat Haim (named for Arlosoroff); Acco, the Bahai Temple there.

Meron, graves of Reb Shimon Bar Yochai and his son Eleazar; The poverty of people as seen in their homes; The ruins of the old synagogue in Meron, where Arabs still bring sacrifices; Distance was grave of Reb Yochanan Hasandlor.

Safed on two hills. Small but new homes. Visit schul of Ari. See Yeshivas Chassam Sofer—Ridvas. About the Bais Hatavshil; On top of Mount Cnaan—the view of Yam Kinneret with Tiberias in the distance. The first sight of Lake Hule; At Rosh Pinah—government customs station for those from Syria; The *kvutzah* Ayeles Hashachar; The project of drying up the marshes of Hule may help them develop; The old schochet who slaughters for them. But there has to be a separate kosher kitchen for the old.

Tel Chai: scene of Trumpeldor martyrdom in 1920. The sculptured monument in the house; the monument on the hill.

Kfar Gileadi, brief visit; Arrive Metulla, spend night there. Rabbi Salzman; The Schochet.

Wednesday, July 25

North to boundary of Syria, where we saw Mount Lebanon. Druses riding. Frequent stops for police inspection on return.

Tiberias: The Hot Springs; tomb of Rabbi Meir in possession of Sephardic institution; Or Torah high on the hill next to it; The tomb of Rabbi Akiva; The graveyard where lie Rabbi Ami, Assi, Yochanon Ben Zaccai (?) and Rambam; The place where floods brought ruin; The valley of ‘*Techias HaMasim*.’

Sejara: an old colony, many Russian converts to Judaism. The plain of Beth Shan; The Kadoorie School of agriculture; Back to Afulah (past the abandoned Machne Yisroel of the Agudah which is to be rebuilt).

Thence back to Tel Aviv. At night—an interpretation of ‘*Ashamnu mikol Am*.’

Thursday, July 26

Visit to Mikveh Yisroel; The museum; The synagogue; Kosher kitchen; Turkeys; Eucalyptus trees; Netter’s grave.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Charles Netter (1826-1882) was born in Strasbourg but spent much of his life in Paris. In response to several notorious anti-Semitic incidents, including the abduction of Edgardo Mortara and the Damascus affair, Netter was one of the six founders of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, in 1860. Following his first visit to Palestine in 1868, Netter encouraged the Alliance to sponsor an agricultural settlement, which resulted in the founding of a modern agricultural school, Mikveh Israel, in 1870. For the next twelve years, he worked to provide funding and support to Mikveh Israel. Netter died in Jaffa in 1882, and was buried on the grounds of Mikveh Israel. See Nachum Sokolow, *Hibbath Zion* (1935).

Afternoon by bus to Herzlia, mostly American settlers. Last year they used Arab labor for the first time, because of shortage. Trouble with Jewish labor is that it has become sort of independent, does less and less per day. If it keeps up, *pardes* owners can't be blamed for getting Arabs. Discussion with secretary of Raanana not a legal municipality yet, but it taxes its members to reach a budget of 3,000, out of which rabbi, shochet, teachers, town doctor, and clerks are paid. Once a year there is a general election of board of 17 which chooses a volunteer executive board. Orthodox Jews send children to Talmud Torah in the afternoon after regular schooling. Three schulen in Raanana. Also a doctor with private practice. We visit a labor kvutzah there. (we are told that they don't have any marriage ceremony; fellow and girl get room together, have children, although denied by Rabbis of Palestine. After day's work, usually dancing in the evening. Thursday evening we meet a number of the younger American set at home of Mayer Levin. Shapiro tells the sad story of how the high cost of living makes it very difficult for him.

Friday morning, July 27

We go to Petach Tikvah meeting with Shmuel Graf;⁴⁹ A visit to Kvutzat Radges, a Mizrachi group; The machine shop there; The schul; The two Rabbis who work by day; lead *sheurim* at night; All kinds of farming; Eight of German *chalutzim* we had met on Italia seem happily settled there.

Friday afternoon we visit Talpioth High School, public school, kindergarten all Mizrachi for girls. The difficulty in keeping girls religious after they leave public school at 14; Friday night—beautiful services in beautiful sephardic schul.

Saturday morning, July 28

Services at big synagogue. The overflow crowd that *davened* outdoors. The big attendance upstairs. The large percentage of young and middle-aged. The many signs announcing all kinds of lectures, sermons, study groups. Kiddush at Charney's. We learn more about Pardessim; In bed all Shabbos-sick.

⁴⁹ Shmuel Moshe Graf, born near Grodno in 1872, immigrated to Ottoman Palestine in 1903. Graf was one of the early settlers of Petach Tikva, and for the duration of his life was committed to developing religious institutions, supporting charitable efforts, and building what became the city of Petach Tikva. During the 1920s, he was involved in the building of Petach Tikva's lovely 'Central Synagogue.' Shmuel Graf died in Petach Tikva in 1948. See David Tishar, *Encyclopedia of the Founders and Builders of Israel*, vol. 8, p. 3177.

Sunday, July 29

By bus to Jerusalem; In afternoon to Dead Sea; we bathed in it; Yeshivas Hebron.

Monday, July 30

Trip to Hebron. *M'aras Hamachpelah, Kever Rochel*; Visit Shmarya Levin was sick.⁵⁰ Told us that *Eretz Yisroel*, it is as of the Torah “*im me-kayma me-oni sopho le'kaymo me-osher.*”

Tuesday, July 31

Visit Keren Kayemet; see Golden Books, Herzl Room. Discussion with Epstein, Secretary of Keren Kayemet; Visit Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod buildings; We went to visit Hadassah hospitals, the Hebrew University, Tomb of Kings of Judah.

Rabbi Elia Durchshnitzer, *mashgiach* in Petach Tikva Yeshiva ⁵¹ proves that Torah is “min ha-shamayim” else how could Chazal make

⁵⁰ Born in 1867, Shmaryahu Levin served as government rabbi in Grodno (1896-97) and Ekaterinoslav (Dnipropetrovsk) from 1898 to 1904. He left Russia for Germany and then moved to the United States. Following emigration to Israel, he served as a director of the Information Department of Keren Hayesod. Residing in Haifa, he was a vocal supporter of the formation of the Haifa Technion. Levin died in June 1935, and was buried at the Trumpeldor cemetery, Tel Aviv. See the Personal papers of Shmaryahu Levin. Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

⁵¹ A yeshiva in Petach Tikva was founded in 1925, a branch of the Lomza yeshiva in Poland. Rabbi Eliezer Benzion Shulewitz (1848-1931) had established a yeshiva in 1883, in Lomza, northeastern Poland, at the time, part of Russian controlled Congress Poland. R. Shulewitz, a follower of R. Israel Salanter, founded the school as a Lithuanian style *musar* yeshiva, where the study of ethical literature, and a regular *musar shmooze* would be a part of the yeshiva curriculum. At first, the yeshiva prospered, and in 1906, R. Shulewitz appointed his son in law, R. Yechiel Mordechai Gordon (1882-1964) to serve as maggid shiur. R. Gordon, at the time only 24 years old, dedicated the rest of his life to the yeshiva, taking responsibility not only for teaching but the arduous task of fund-raising. For decades, his business travel on behalf of the yeshiva took him to England, the United States, Canada and Mandate Palestine.

World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution and its aftermath had a severe impact on Jewish life. Poland became an independent nation and entered into years of militant struggle with its neighbors. By 1924, the Polish regime sought to draft all eligible yeshiva students to the Polish army. Unwilling to have the yeshiva students drafted and eager to look for an alternative solution, R. Eliezer Shulewitz began discussion to establish a Lomza yeshiva division in Petach

such a statement as ‘kol ma she-b’arez yesh ba-yam chutz me-chulda.’ Perhaps somewhere, sometime a ‘chuldah’ will be found? Yet so certain were they of such things, there are even ‘koolos’ built on them – for example, gemorroh in Chulin about square and round organs to indicate kashrus of animals where claws are missing.

Wednesday, August 1

Trip by car to Jerico; the Jordan River at Allenby Bridge-border between Palestine and Transjordan; Elisha’s Fountain; Plant life in Jericho; The excavations of the old city.

Visit Diskin Orphan Home; Visit with Rabbi Dvorat.

Thursday, August 2

Visit Mount of Olives; The Etz Haim in Machane Yehudah; The Moshav Zkainim; The Etz Haim in the Old City; The workroom of Rabbi Kasher.⁵² Old Sifra volume where is stated a ‘*miut*’ in order to show “*ein sbaliach le-chalitza*.”⁵³

Tikva. By 1926, a location had been found and students began learning at the Petach Tikva branch of the Lomza yeshiva. R. Yechiel Mordechai Gordon arrived in 1927 to assume the position of *rosh yeshiva*. See Asher Rand, *Toldoth Anshei Shem* (New York, 1950), pp. 15-16; Aaron Surasky, *Toldoth ha-Chinuch ha-Torani be-tekufah ha-Hadasa* (Bnei Brak, 1967), pp. 400-01; Shaul Stampfer, *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 2012).

52 Menachem Mendel Kasher was born in 1895 in Warsaw, at the time, part of the Russian Empire. His method of Talmud study was most influenced by R. Abraham Bornstein, (aka the *Annei Nezer*), founder and first Rebbe of the Sochatchov hasidic dynasty. R. Kasher received *semicha* from R. Meir Dan Plotzki in 1915. With the founding of the Agudath Israel movement, R. Kasher, at the young age of 19, was asked to become editor of the periodical, *Degel HaTorah*, sponsored by the Polish branch of Agudath Israel. In 1925, at the suggestion of the rebbe of Gur, R. Avraham Mordechai Alter, R. Kasher moved to Jerusalem, to establish a hasidei Gur yeshiva, in honor of the rebbe’s father, R. Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter. For two years, he served as *rosh yeshiva* of Sfas Emes yeshiva in Jerusalem. However, R. Kasher wanted to devote his energy to literary work, and began a project for which he would become best known, a multi-volume, encyclopedic work, *Torah Shleimah*, which was published over many decades. For this achievement, R. Kasher was awarded the Israel Prize in 1962.

With the outbreak of World War II, R. Kasher was instrumental in the rescue of the Gur rebbe, bringing him to Israel. In 1956, R. Kasher discovered an extensive collection of writings by R. Yoseph Rozin, author of *Zafnat Pa’ne’ah*. In order to edit and publish this material, he founded, together with Yeshiva Uni-

Friday, August 3

Bus to Afula through Nablus.

Saturday, August 4

In Afula. Afternoon discussion with Rav on religion in the Emek. Giving *Terumah* and *Terumas Maaser*. In year of *Shemittah*, the fields are sold. He has *hashgacha* over Tenuva, Pesach milk which is strictly guarded. If a colony disregards Pesach, the Rav withdraws *hechsber* on milk and Tenuva fears rabbinical edict against them especially in Jerusalem.

The girls' school near Afula very irreligious; The head of the school when asked why her girls drive past the schul on Shabbos answered the schul isn't located right.

Sunday, August 5

A dispute with a man who smokes on Shabbos. He says he's glad English, not Jews control the country, else it would be fanatic; Trip by train from Afula to Haifa through first Kfar Baruch, then Kfar Yehoshuah;

versity in New York, the Zafanat Pa'neah Institute, which by 1970 had issued 12 volumes. R. Kasher died in 1983, at the age of 88.

See the 40th volume of *Torah Shleimah* published posthumously, edited by his son in law, Rabbi Dr. Aaron Greenbaum, which includes an expanded biography and full list of his works. See also Aaron Greenbaum, "Architect and Builder: The Life of Harav Menachem M. Kasher," in Leo Jung, *Sages and Saints* (Hoboken, 1988).

⁵³ The reference to "*ein shaliach le-chalitzah*" pertains to a significant controversy that had emerged a few years prior to the summer of 1934. Around 1927, Rabbi Avraham Aaron Yudelovitz, an outstanding Talmud scholar, and rabbi of the Eldridge Street Synagogue, on the Lower East Side, published a highly controversial responsum in his book *Av be-Chochma*, permitting a woman whose brother-in law was obligated to perform levirate marriage to appoint an agent on her behalf to receive *chalitzah*. This *halachic* opinion was widely repudiated by almost all sages of the time. Yudelovitz published several articles in the rabbinic journal, *Degel Israel* further elaborating and defending his position. His reputation was badly tarnished as a result of this episode. When he died in 1930, many distinguished rabbis refused to attend his funeral. Regarding the Yudelovitz *halitzah* controversy, see in particular his exchange of letters with Rabbi Yoseph Dov Levin, in *Degel Israel* 2:10 (November 1929), pp. 10-12; 2:11 (December 1928), pp. 7-8; 3:1 (January 1929), pp. 8-11; 3:2 (February 1929), pp. 9-13; 3:4 (April 1929), pp. 9-11; 3:5 (May 1929), pp. 7-8. For a biography on Avraham A. Yudelovitz, see Moshe Sherman, *Orthodox Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook*, pp. 221-22.

The Haifa business district near the port; The offices of Poel Mizrachi.

Visit with Rabbi Kook on Mount Carmel. Also present Kantarowitz of Bialystok, in Palestine to sell letters of Chafetz Chaim Torah, a gentleman from London; the chacham of Tiberias and a Chacham of Haifa. Rav Kook says he's not responsible for Hadassah kashrus although they bring him 'shailos' from time to time. He isn't satisfied with them, is aware of unnecessary violation of Shabbos there. His Torah on '*ve-rapo ye-rapeh, mi-kan she-nitan reshut le-rofheh le-rapeh.*' He also told us to speak good of *Eretz Yisroel* wherever we go. He spoke of favors Maxim Gorky's wife, head of Russian Red Cross, has shown his requests in a number of cases.⁵⁴ His appearance. The appearance of the Tiberias Chacham.

The train ride from Haifa into the Sharon; Hedera; Lydda—big Arab town; The bus ride to Jerusalem and the arguments over class seats, an overcrowded bus.

Monday, August 6

Minyan in Zichron Moshe. The constant gathering of charity. The great number of *minyanim*.

I visited the Egyptian consul to apply for a visa. Slow service—about two hours of waiting.

Then went to home of Rabbi Shmuel Zavil, secretary of *chevra Kadisha*—takes 1½ hours to find where my mother's father lies buried on Mount of Olives. Incidentally, Reb Shmuel remembers my great-grandfather Asher Lurya and knows where he is buried. I visit the grave of my grandfather. A Mr. Aaronson of Tel Aviv, formerly of Warsaw goes to pick out graves for himself and his wife on Mount of Olives.

A visit to hall of R. Kook's Yeshiva—it is very small; found nobody there at 2:30 p.m.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The reference is to the wife of the social and political activist and highly regarded Russian novelist, widely known by his pen name, Maxim Gorky (1868–1936).

⁵⁵ Founded in 1924 by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, Chief Ashkenazi rabbi during the British Mandate, Yeshiva Merkaz haRav was a small and rather insignificant yeshiva, during the lifetime of Rav Kook, and remained so, even following his death in 1935, when the yeshiva was led by Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlap. It was only following the emergence of the State of Israel, and the rising prominence of R. Zvi Yehuda Kook, Rav Kook's son, that the Merkaz haRav Yeshiva emerged as a large and influential yeshiva. For a study of Merkaz haRav, see Yohai Rodik, *Hayim shel yetsirah: Yeshivat "Merkaz ha-Rav" le-doroteha: bagut, binukh u-ma'as* (Jerusalem, 1998).

With Sam Travis, I visited Hebron Yeshiva. Met Maron and Harold Gordon; both said that Hebron has a Yeshiva spirit absent from Merkas Harav—which has only about 35 students.

We met R. Chazkel, the present Rosh Yeshiva.⁵⁶ He tells us that Reb Meir Simcha said of the Ragatchover, “People say he has a wonderful memory, but it’s an error; he remembers things because he has just finished studying them.”

We visit Shaarai Zedek Hospital and meet Dr. Wallach.⁵⁷ The institution impresses with cleanliness and modernity. Dr. Wallach a fascinating personality.

The schul off Jaffa Road. The old Rav from Baranowicz complains that he hasn’t enough ‘*shailos*.’ In the evening, we go to Bnai Brith {street} to meet Reb Isar Zalman Meltzer.⁵⁸ He translates from Hagada:

⁵⁶ A disciple of R. Nosson Tzvi Finkel, (Alter of Slobodka), R. Yechezkel Sarna, (1890-1969) along with a large number of students of the Knesset Israel Yeshiva, Slobodka, near Kovno, left for British Mandate Palestine in 1924. R. Sarna took a leading role in choosing Hebron as the location for establishing a branch of the Yeshiva, and during the late 1920s, he gave gemara *shiurim* and *mussar* lectures, at the Hebron yeshiva. Following the massacre of 29 yeshiva students, in 1929, R. Sarna was instrumental in moving the yeshiva to Jerusalem. In memory of those who had been killed, he insisted that the yeshiva remain known as the Hebron Yeshiva. It was in 1934, the year that R. Fasman met R. Yechezkel Sarna, that he became *rosh yeshiva*, following the death of his father in law, R. Moshe Mordechai Epstein. R. Sarna led the Hebron Yeshiva for many decades, until his death in 1969. See I. Goldschmidt, *Sefer Zikaron Keneset Yehezkel: le-Rabenu Yehezkel Sarna* (1970).

⁵⁷ Moshe Wallach, founder and first director of Shaarei Zedek Hospital, was born in Cologne, Germany in 1866. After completing his medical degree in 1889, Wallach was asked by a Frankfurt based Jewish group, Conference for the Support of Jews in Palestine, to emigrate to Israel and develop a plan to establish and fund a modern Jewish hospital in Jerusalem. Wallach first opened a clinic and pharmacy in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City. For years, he worked to collect funds for the construction of a new hospital building, which he realized in early 1902, when Shaare Zedek Hospital opened its doors on Jaffa Road. The hospital insisted on maintaining strict standards of Jewish law, and Wallach served as the personal physician of many Torah scholars, at the time, including R. Chaim Hezekiah Medini (*Sdei Chemed*), R. Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, Rav of Jerusalem, and R. Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky. Dr. Moshe Wallach died in 1957 at the age of 90. He was buried in a small cemetery adjacent to the hospital, next to the grave of R. Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky. See Eliyahu Porush, *Zichronot Risbonim: Early Memories: Recollections Concerning the Old Yishuv in the Old City and its Environs During the Last Century* (1963).

⁵⁸ Isser Zalman Meltzer was born in Mir, in 1870. At the age of 14, he began studying at the Volozhin yeshiva under R. Naphtali Zvi Yehuda Berlin and

“*V’bi Sheomda.*” The separation is “Hi” such as laws about ‘*yayin nesech.*’ And if you try to assert that mingling with them would solve our troubles—*Tzai U’lmaad*—Yaakov actually married Laban's daughters. Even that didn't make a friend of Laban. Also, as there is ‘*Hachnosas Orchim*’ there is “*Hotzoas Orchim.*” In general, a magnetic personality. His *Gaonus* can be detected quickly. Also present was Ben Menachem, a rav of Petach Tikvah, a young man with a keen mind and a grasp of modern problems in Jewish life—at least he showed understanding of American young rabbinate.

Tuesday, August 7

We leave Jerusalem for Cairo—by bus to Lydda along Mediterranean coast through ancient Philistia—cities like Ashdod and Gaza—across the border. Desert everywhere. Arrival at Kantara.

The strict Egyptian customs inspection. A ferry across the Suez Canal. Train from Kantara to Cairo passes through several large towns. Near the Railway Station of Cairo at night. The big statue. People sleep in grass all around it.

Wednesday, August 8

Report to Health Department in Cairo, meanwhile running across several public buildings. The delicate detail work on buildings everywhere.

A visit to the Egyptian Museum. The beauty of the building itself. An Egyptologist's Paradise.

The treasures from Tutenkhamon Tomb. Alabaster statues. The painstaking finish of paintings and engravings in gold, wood, ivory, stone, etc.

R. Chaim Soloveitchik, where he remained until the yeshiva closed in 1892. During his years at Volozhin, R. Meltzer participated in the discussions of Nes Ziona Society, a branch of the Hovevei Zion movement. In 1894, he became a *maggid shiur* at the Slobodka Yeshiva, but left three years later, to lead another yeshiva in Slutsk. In 1903, R. Meltzer was asked to become the communal Rabbi of Slutsk. Following the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, R. Meltzer, eager to leave Russia, fled to Poland. In 1925, he made his way to Eretz Israel, where he served, for many years, as *rosh yeshiva* at the Etz Chaim Yeshiva, in Jerusalem. R. Meltzer died in 1953, at the age of 83, and is buried on Har ha-Menuchot. See Shlomo Zevin, *Ishim ve-Shitot* (1963); Dov Katz, *Tenu'at ha-Musar*, 3 (1957); Ronald L. Eisenberg, *Essential Figures in Jewish Scholarship* (2014).

The big Sephardic Schul in town—beautiful exterior and interior. The many Ner Tamids hanging near Aron Hakodesh.

We visit the home of the Rambam. People take off their shoes to enter. Sick people go there to sleep and get well. The *mikvah* of the Rambam. In the schul built over his residence, we were shown the *Sefer Torah* in which they read in his day—noticeably aged.

We visit the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo—oldest in Cairo. According to tradition, Ibn Ezra found documents to prove that Moshe came to this spot to pray. A synagogue was erected on the spot and was named for him. An alabaster altar bears inscription that here Moshe prayed.

Here Dr. Shechter found the genizah in a room next to the *Aron Hakodesh*. Now the sick come to sleep in that room, claiming Ben Ezra cures them. Some fragments of genizah kept in ark; we were shown parts of old Torah—no ‘*tagin*’ on the letters, proving them very very old. In ark, too, are some of the oldest *seforim* in the world. Interior of schul in dark wood. A beautiful place. I am hurt that the person in charge to show tourists the synagogue and the Torah is a young woman or girl; she handles the *seforim*.

Crossing the Blue Nile to the Pyramids. On close sight—we found the exterior of the Cheops Pyramid and the second pyramid very rough and irregular. On the top of the second, however, was still a smooth alabaster covering. The rest, we were told, had been removed about 75 years ago. We passed the tombs in the walls near the second pyramid and entered one of them, Campbell’s Tombs—deep excavations where a king, a queen and their slaves were buried—coffins of king and queen left in their respective places but mummies were removed.

The Sphinx. The temple of the Sphinx - large single rocks of granite. The interior of the Cheops Pyramid. The inner ascent to the King’s Chamber—a long climb. The chamber itself and the granite coffin. The queen’s chamber. The climb to the top of the Pyramid on the outside. Various views during the ascent—the final goal and its view into the distance. We see the Sahara, the pyramids of Memphis.

In the evening, American talkies *Night after Night* and *Cradle Song* in English speaking, French, Arabic, and Greek script. Showing a picture like *Washington Masquerade* abroad is treason to America; it gives foreign public an impression that American government is a farce—at least, thus we felt from the few selections previewed of the coming attraction.

Thursday, August 9

Visit to Mosque al Azhar, the Arabic University of 17,000 students. Weren't impressed. Saw about fifty men and boys scattered about reading and praying and sleeping—no more.

Walk among the bazaars. Cohen Bros. closed on Shabbos. Younger man studied in a Yeshiva.

Make purchases in store near Continental-Savoy Hotel.

Visit to citadel built by Saladin. First to Mosque. The carpeting with mosaic design. Mosaic in walls and ceiling. The first platform for reader of services in dark paneled wood. The second platform for sermons. The reading desk with ebony and ivory inlaid delicate designs. The two heavy brass chandeliers and the several hundred dainty lamps suspended from the ceiling.

The dark room where the coffin of the sultan's brother lies, the arched roof with gold inlays amid beautiful blue designs. The back wall of Mosque Sultan Hassan still bears the marks of ball from Napoleon's cannons. The wall of Joseph, named for Saladin.

The palace of Sultan Mohammed Ali—in ruins—but many of the paintings attractive. The alabaster bathroom. View of all Cairo from top floor of palace. Minarets of tombs of Mameluke Beys. Second oldest mosque in Cairo.

By night, train from Cairo to Alexandria (3rd class in Egypt).

Friday, August 10

See Pompey's Pillar. Descend into the Catacombs. The sculptured room. Streets of Alexandria. Boulevard around harbor.

Interior of new Eliahu Hanavi Synagogue, tablet explains that Bertinoro found schul ascribed to Eliyahu in that place when he reached Alexandria on the way to Eretz Yisroel.⁵⁹

Going through customs on way out of Egypt. Friday at 4:30 p.m. on board Aussonia.

⁵⁹ We have extant three letters that describe the two-year journey of R. Ovadiah of Bertinoro to Israel. The letters were written between 1488–1490, after he arrived in Israel. The longest letter and the one with the most substance was written to his father. There are four extant manuscripts of this letter. In addition, there are several translations of these letters in many languages. Most importantly, see the Hebrew critical edition and introduction published by the late Menahem Hartom and Abraham David, *From Italy to Jerusalem: The Letters of Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro from the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem: C.G. Foundation, 1997).

We had a minyan for Kabbolas Shabbos. Met Mrs. Lifshutz of St. Louis, Mr. Shapiro of Paris and Rishon Lezion. Mr. Shapiro said Palestine grain harvest this year was 60% of normal; reason people say it is good is last year's was only 40%. In a normal year, Palestine can raise enough grain to provide for its own population for five to six months. A great deal of Turkish seed for wheat is bought in Palestine. A gentleman, Schumacher from South Africa, now living in Haifa informed me that 90% of Jews in South Africa are from "Kovner Ge'borana."

Saturday, August 11

Minyan between 7:30-8:30; A charge that the Agudah leaders who now endorse orthodox colonization in Palestine do so not sincerely but because of propaganda and advertising advantages in such a program. In afternoon (as well as forenoon) Harry and I studied *Chayai Odom*; Leaving Alexandria harbor.

Sunday, August 12

Discussion of Palestine with Mr. Shapiro. He denounces Histadrut, claiming workers are "*paskudnakkes*;" denounces Zionist organization, says Jews ought to quit giving money; thinks Agudah has right idea in staying separate, only should have been more active. Denounces Anglo-Palestine Bank for making profits on the arrangement with Germany for transferring money of German Jews emigrating to Palestine.

Passed Crete, sailing along its gray, rocky, uninhabited, western shore; Study *Chayai Odom* with Harry; At night read *Titans of Literature*.

Monday, August 13

Study *Chayai Odom* and *Shev Shma'atza*; Arrival of boat in Brindisi; Mr. Shumacher thinks that Zionist Organization sends more conservative representatives to South Africa than to U.S.; Finish *Titans of Literature*.

Tuesday, August 14

Arrival in Venice, city of old churches and church spires. Down the wide water avenue the length of the city. Frequent church bells. A gondola ride from the pier to Hotel Terminus. The dexterity of the oarsman. Freight transfer on boat. Interpreter after 5 years of apprenticeship, during which he gets only room and board - no pay. Gets 500 lira (about \$45.00) a month; two years later he receives 2,000 lira a month.

By steamboat ("bus" service) to the square of San Marco. The stations along the Grand Canal; The pigeons in the square; We enter the

church; Dark religious paintings and mosaics; Heavy bronze and gold alters; The elaborate exterior.

A visit to the glass factory. Handwork on beads. Spun glass. Delicate pieces.

The Palace of Doges. Major item of interest—the paintings. The three large rooms and their ceilings. The gold framework around the paintings. The heavy gold framework in the ceilings. The “throne” rooms. Across the Bridge of Sighs. The prisons and dungeons. Decapitation chambers. The dungeons in the depths, where prisoners stood in water to ankles in winter weather. The chapel in the palace. Secret doors. The armor chambers. The decorated cannon.

We visit the Ghettoes—old and new and see the two synagogues. The second is claimed to be 400 years old, is beautiful inside, has women high upstairs, use an organ Shabbos and Yom Tov, but not Yom Kippur. The first is claimed to be 500 years old. Could not find a kosher place to eat, although we saw an advertisement of a pension, claiming to be kosher. Little children beg for money, cigarettes. Didn't see a single person who looked typically Jewish. Looked through window of Talmud Torah and saw a newly painted, neat corridor. Talmud Torah opens in October. Was told there is a *shochet* and kosher meat in Venice. One man claimed we could get kosher in Lido, a far-off section of the city.

Tuesday night leave for Paris

The long railroad, streetcar and onto pier through water to Venezia Mestre, putting us on continent, through Padua (what looked like a medieval tower to left) Vicenza, Verona (beautifully lighted up park and statuary with a regular canal just before stop in station).

Brescia (part of city on hill—Alps—and a series of uniform, monotonously, undecorative apartment buildings, high factory chimneys).

Milano—before arriving, could see a regularity and fertility of the fields. City itself a major railroad center, as proved by numerous tracks.

Wednesday, August 15

Beginning with Arona, villages that nestle in hills are visible in outline through the darkness and the track runs through rock channels in spots. In early morning, the white-capped peaks become visible, and we saw the justice of universal acclaim for Alpine beauty. The vision of the first waterfall. The perfect green of the lower hills outlined against the gray and white of the high mountains. Small neat Swiss homes. The beautiful Lake Geneva at Montreux. A medieval castle on its shore.

Lausanne. Vallorbe—border city into France. The long railroad tunnel immediately out of it—perhaps longest in world (?) Beautiful France. Train high above fields and villages in deep valley. Dijon.

Paris again. Visit with Rabbi Herzog. *Mobelim* offer free services when necessary, each being designated for one day in week. Problem of French Jewry is influx of impious and anarchist elements from Poland, Romania etc. Some of them don't even circumcise children already. Rabbis can't sue if man puts kosher sign up and isn't. Kashrus in hands of general kehilla which makes money out of it. It wants French *shochtim*; orthodox want Polish. Compromise, Polish *shochtim* but on week-to-week contract. Once every few years the Official Kehilla Rabbinate publishes in newspaper it's permissible to ride to schul on Shabbos. Rabbis themselves ride. When he asks for *Shomer Shabbos*, he asks, is it "*Ata u'bincha u'bitecha*."

Criticism, if mikvah vanishes in America, then what kind of Jewry can develop when all are "*bnai niddah*"? Room lined with pictures of all great *gaonim*, past and present.

At Ringer's restaurant, we met Rabbi Rubinstein of Vilna again.

Thursday, August 16

Morning at the Louvre. A sea of paintings.

Afternoon visit to Municipal Museums. Crossed Ponte Alexander, a beautiful decorative piece. To be remembered of Museum (once a palace) is the old book collection, containing volumes printed in the 15th century and early 16th. Copy of early music. Magnificent buildings. First edition of play by Racine. The Fables of Fontaine. Modern paintings of various schools. A Rodin statue among others; Walking around Invalides; Old cannons; Beautiful painted canvasses, unframed; Beneath the Eiffel Tower; Beautiful gardens all about.

Night Train for Dieppe, boat for New Haven, train to London

On boat met Mr. Golinsky and Mr. Lewin of London. Latter in tailoring business, told us American shirts are better than English and American suits are fitted better while English suits are cut better.

We inspected sleeping quarters and other benefits offered 1st and 2nd classes; Steamer creaks. British custom inspection at New Haven. Third class railroad English style.

Discussion with Lewin and Golinsky. Former tells of making kosher suits. He refused to work Shabbos although he works ordinarily on a suit ordered kosher by orthodox Jew. Golinsky in wholesale grocery

business, won't sell anything containing lard because it's 'issur bana'ab.' Tells of 'shailos' he asked Hillman.

Lewin showed us Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament, Thames River, 10 Downing Street, Trafalger Square, the Cenotaph, St. Paul's, National Gallery, Fleet Street, Bank of England, Lord Mayor's House, Buckingham Palace (in distance) with Queen Victoria monument before it. Took bus to Aldgate, davened in Duke Place synagogue. The flags of Jewish Battalion that fought in Palestine. The special pulpit for sermon. Schul is small. *Shames* neatly dressed.

Ate at Central Kosher Restaurant. Tower of London. At Bloody Tower, saw old Norman gate from time of William the Conqueror, First edition of Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, room where he was kept prisoner, room where princes were killed! The "trip" stairway. Around tower the picturesque guards and soldiers with their rigid discipline.

By subway (underground) to the British Museum. The room of illuminated manuscripts. The carved ivory tablet, Magna Carta, Rosetta Stone, Portland Vase, Codex Alexandricus and Sinaiticus, Gutenberg Bible. Figures from the Mausoleum (one of 7 wonders of world). Shalmanesse's Black Obelisk showing John doing homage, Old Hebrew Bible from about 11th century, Elgin Room with pieces from Parthenon of Athens. About Egyptian mummies.

The wooden carving of the crucifixion in minute form that was 80 years in the making.

The gifts of Baron Rothschild. Shell vases. Chinese pottery and ornate glazed ware. Dr. Johnson's teapot. Scott (South Pole discoverer) party tragic diaries.

Westminster Abbey—Statues everywhere. Impressive one of Disraeli. Graves in the floor. Immense height of structure. Walking down Cheapside.

The train to Southampton. English countryside. Winchester. Through Southampton by train. The dock. Aquitania. *Mashgiach* Rabbi Ehrblick.

Saturday, August 18

Albion coast. Gulls following boat. Kruif's Hunger Fighters.

Sunday, August 19

Sick seasickness. In bed or on couch all day reading to end of Hunger Fighters (Heroism of discoveries in medicine).

Monday, August 20

Still far from well. Rabbi and Mrs. Chany from Indianapolis, Rabbi Davidovitch of Buffalo.

An English movie. To bed reading Santayana's *Reason for Religion*.

Tuesday, August 21

Recovered. Easy sea and pleasant weather.

Wednesday August 22

Read first part of Mordechai Kaplan's *Judaism as a Civilization*. Another English movie. Moonlight on the Atlantic.

Thursday, August 23

Kaplan's *Judaism as a Civilization*. English movie.

Friday, August 24

Quarantine.

For Yizkor: Recollection of famous cemeteries in Europe.

For Rosh Hashana: "*Eretz asher Hashem doresh otah mi-resbit ha-shana ad acharit ha-shana*" Looking at life is like looking through portholes in a harbor. No two give the identical view and if people are on opposite sides of the ship, they don't even see similar things.

The explanation of Mendelsohn on "*Lo te-ametz le-vavcha*" explains that apparently by nature, man is good and wants to help others; he has to force his heart not to give.

In the *Chayai Odom* "*Magbia kolo kol kach ad sh-chavero yachol lishmoah azai ein tephilato nishma'at le-maala.*" Can be applied to the publicly religious who like to show off piety.

But contrast with *Medrash* when Avrohom said to Sara. ❧