

THE JEWS IN CANADA (IN NORTH AMERICA)

by Y.E. Bernstein

*Translated from the Hebrew
by Ira Robinson*



**AN EASTERN EUROPEAN VIEW OF
THE MONTREAL JEWISH COMMUNITY IN 1884**

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Introduction

Prior to 1897, when the *Canadian Jewish Times*¹ was established in Montreal, our knowledge of that city's Jewish community is largely dependent upon scattered notices and articles printed in various newspapers. Many of these, particularly in the general press, suffer from the fact that the reporters were almost invariably outsiders to the Jewish community and did not have the background necessary to intelligently contextualize events they were reporting. It is for this reason that the article discussed and translated here, for the first time, is of notable importance. It was published in 1884 in the Russian Hebrew periodical, *ha-Melitz*.² Its author, Yosef Eliyahu Bernstein, was a relative newcomer to Montreal, one of the vanguard of the eastern European Jewish emigration that would fundamentally change the nature of Montreal's Jewish community.³ However, he was, as we shall see, a keen observer of his community with considerable knowledge of current trends in the Jewish world.⁴

We know relatively little about Bernstein, beyond a statement in the article in which he identifies himself as "a native of Poland." The only other detail we know concerning him is that he was apparently a founder and the first secretary of the proto-Zionist Choveve Zion Society, founded in Montreal on January 16, 1887.⁵ His article is also relatively obscure, though it has come to the notice of scholars, and was utilized by Michael Brown⁶ and David Rome⁷ in their studies of Canadian Jewry. Those scholars utilized the article to illustrate specific points they wished to make on such topics as anti-Semitism and language. There has not been, however, an attempt to understand the article as a whole.

We know considerably more about the periodical in which Bernstein published his article. *Ha-Melitz*, founded in Odessa in 1860, was the first of several Hebrew-language periodicals established in the Russian Empire in the

nineteenth century. These periodicals were generally addressed to Russian Jewry's intellectual elite, which is why they appeared in Hebrew rather than Yiddish, the language of the vast majority of Russian Jews. *Ha-Melitz* generally stood for the promotion of *haskala* (literally, "enlightenment"), a program of modernization and Europeanization of the Jews, though, in the absence of an Orthodox press in Russia, it was also read by traditionalist elements within Russian Jewry.⁸ At the time that the Bernstein article appeared, *ha-Melitz* was published semi-weekly in St. Petersburg, the capital city. It presented its readers with a mixture of news and literature, featuring the writings of many prominent Hebrew writers of that era.⁹ Bernstein's Hebrew is very much in the grandiloquent style of the contemporary *haskala*, and, as such, was perfectly at home in a journal like *ha-Melitz*.

Bernstein's article gives the historian much food for thought. Most prominent is his sense of the resurgence of European anti-Semitism in the 1880s, which had engendered a fixation by many on America as a refuge for persecuted Jews. For him, the hope that America would be different than Germany, Romania, or Russia was not borne out by the facts. The theme that America was not, in fact, immune to the perils of anti-Semitism, pervades his article. If it appeared that Jews were not persecuted at present, it was only because there were still relatively few Jews to be found in the New World. The only answer to the Jewish problem, as Bernstein saw it, was renewed Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel.¹⁰

In his observations on the Jewish community of Montreal, Bernstein reports most accurately on the Ashkenazic congregation, Shaar Hashomayim, which he is most likely to have attended, and least accurately on the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, Shearith Israel, which he seemingly knew only through hearsay. Thus, he stated that the Ashkenazic congregation was the older one, though in fact it broke off from Shearith Israel in the

1840s. This statement, as well as his fanciful account of the Portuguese congregation's origins, may be ascribed to his puzzlement that a congregation praying according to the Portuguese liturgy existed, in which nearly all of the congregants were not only of Spanish and Portuguese origins, but were, in fact, as he stated, "born in our country."

His evaluation of the three main Montreal congregations of his day tells us much about Bernstein's concept of contemporary Judaism. In a comment on the Orthodoxy of the members of the Ashkenazic congregation, Bernstein ironically states that they were steadfast in their observance of Judaic customs — even those that were antiquated — except that they did not cease work on the Sabbath. The ministers of the two Orthodox congregations were approvingly described as preaching and acting "in the spirit of the times." Thus, a flexible and not a rigid Orthodoxy seems to get Bernstein's approval. The article's reporting on the origins of Reform Temple Emanu-El, which broke away from the Ashkenazic congregation a mere two years before the article was written, seems generally evenhanded. However, Bernstein reveals some disapproval in his final comment on the Jews who came to the Temple "to pour forth their prayer before God, or, [perhaps]¹¹ better, to enjoy the pleasant music of the gentile woman who plays the organ." He is similarly critical in his evaluation of the state of Jewish education — or lack thereof — among the congregants of Temple Emanu-El.

Finally, Bernstein reports on the very recent inauguration of a Russian immigrant congregation. This congregation, called *Gemilut Hasadim shel Anshe Russia*, did not apparently last long, and this may well be its only mention in print.¹² The account is noteworthy for several reasons. First of all, it is interesting that the minister of Temple Emanu-El, Dr. Marks, had apparently been given a prominent role in the Russian immigrant synagogue's inauguration. Secondly, it is important to discern the note of Russian

patriotism that Bernstein places in the mouths of the congregants replying to Marks' denigration of their homeland's treatment of the Jews. Finally, the congregation's hasidic proclivities, which aroused Bernstein's ire, is itself of great significance in understanding the religious makeup of Montreal's eastern European immigrant Jewish community at that time. It may well be that opposition to *hasidut* (Hasidism) was a factor in the congregation's demise.¹³

Ira Robinson

THE JEWS IN CANADA (IN NORTH AMERICA)

AN EASTERN EUROPEAN VIEW OF THE MONTREAL JEWISH COMMUNITY, 1884*

During my residence in this country, I have attempted to thoroughly investigate the characteristics and the practices of the children of Israel who live here, whether in holy or profane [matters]; to seek knowledge of their material, moral and political condition. I have succeeded in fulfilling this desire. However, I would never have thought to enter into the gates of a newspaper and publish all that befalls our brethren here were it not for the fact that the honourable editor of the newspaper, *ha-Melitz*,¹⁴ demonstrated his good will toward me and encouraged me to reveal all that is [happening] with us in this land. I therefore acceded to his request of my own free will [in order] to requite the editor's love of his people and religion, it pleasing him to hear of all that befalls them in all the places of their dispersion. It also did not escape me that the honourable readers of *ha-Melitz* would greatly desire to know the ways of the children of Israel throughout the world, and their manner of life among the peoples with whom they dwell. [This is] especially so in recent times, when the wave of emigration has begun to increase among our brethren in Europe, whose eyes are fixed upon far-off lands. [They think that] perhaps they will succeed in finding a resting place, even if it be at the ends of the earth. They will thus hasten to a refuge and retreat from the pressure of anti-Semitism, which has begun to spread in European countries in the past three years. However, where should our unfortunate brethren turn? Where will they find the tranquility that has escaped them for some [time]? Do not imagine to yourselves: we will go to America. We will hasten to the New World to find a refuge for ourselves. There will be our refuge. There we will enjoy peace and tranquility, for there is no difference [there] between the children of Japhet¹⁵ and the children of Shem.¹⁶ In that land, the wolf dwells with the lamb and the leopard crouches together with the

kid.¹⁷ No! No! O my brethren, children of my nation: set your minds to investigate and to thoroughly know the condition of your brethren in the lands of America, as well as in the rest of the world before you set out on your journey. You will see and understand that you have erred. Come to the New World and you will rapidly understand that it is for us [like] the support of a broken reed.¹⁸ Here, also, we are considered to be strangers and foreigners [in] a land that is not our own. Here also we will meet Haman-like¹⁹ people, such as Stöcker²⁰ and Istóczy,²¹ and others who impatiently await the day when they can demonstrate their anger against the children of Shem, for their anger against the Jews is great. Has not Dr. Goldwin²² Smith, the greatest of the anti-Semites, come out in the journal, *The Nineteenth Century*, to criticize and mock the hosts of the children of Israel in this country, to discredit us in people's eyes, and to turn backward the hearts of the inhabitants of the land [so that they] hate the Jews who live in their midst?²³ Praise be to the Most High God, this enemy quickly realized that his words did not penetrate the hearts of the inhabitants of [this] country and he had none who heeded him because the number of Jews in this land is quite small, and they can find no excuse to attack them as [occurs] in other lands. Because of this, the hope of this anti-Semite was dashed, and just as it came, so it went away. Who among us, however, can guarantee that [the anti-Semite's] dashed hope will remain so, even after the number of Jews in the land multiplies? We, the inhabitants of the lands of America, cannot lie to ourselves and assert that we have established a covenant with the gentiles; that the rod of punishment will not reach us when it passes. For who would have believed ten years ago that in Russia and Germany the demon of anti-Semitism would rise from the earth to renew the Crusade in the lands of Europe, and to revive the Inquisition in the nineteenth century, a time when civilization has achieved great heights? Who could have told us that the infectious leprosy²⁴ of anti-Semitism, which had [apparently] already passed from the earth, should once again move the hearts of the nations to attack us? What is its strength now in this country as

we begin [to settle]? Is the New World not similar to Russia? Is not the rest of the world like Germany? Both here and there we dwell among scorpions. Both here and there is religious bigotry, hatred of the [Jewish] nation, and ancient ideas that oppose us to our destruction. Let all those who criticize the holy and exalted idea of [Jewish] settlement in the Land of Israel come here. Let them recognize that as long as we do not have in our possession the land that bears our name — the Land of Israel — we will not survive among the nations in whose midst we dwell. Any stratagem to remove the yoke of anti-Semitism from us will fail. Only [the Land of Israel] has the power to take us from darkness to light, and from servitude to eternal redemption. All these [considerations] aroused me and gave me strength to appear in the newspaper, *ha-Melitz*, in order to bring before the public the condition of our people in Canada in general, and in my own city of Montreal specifically.

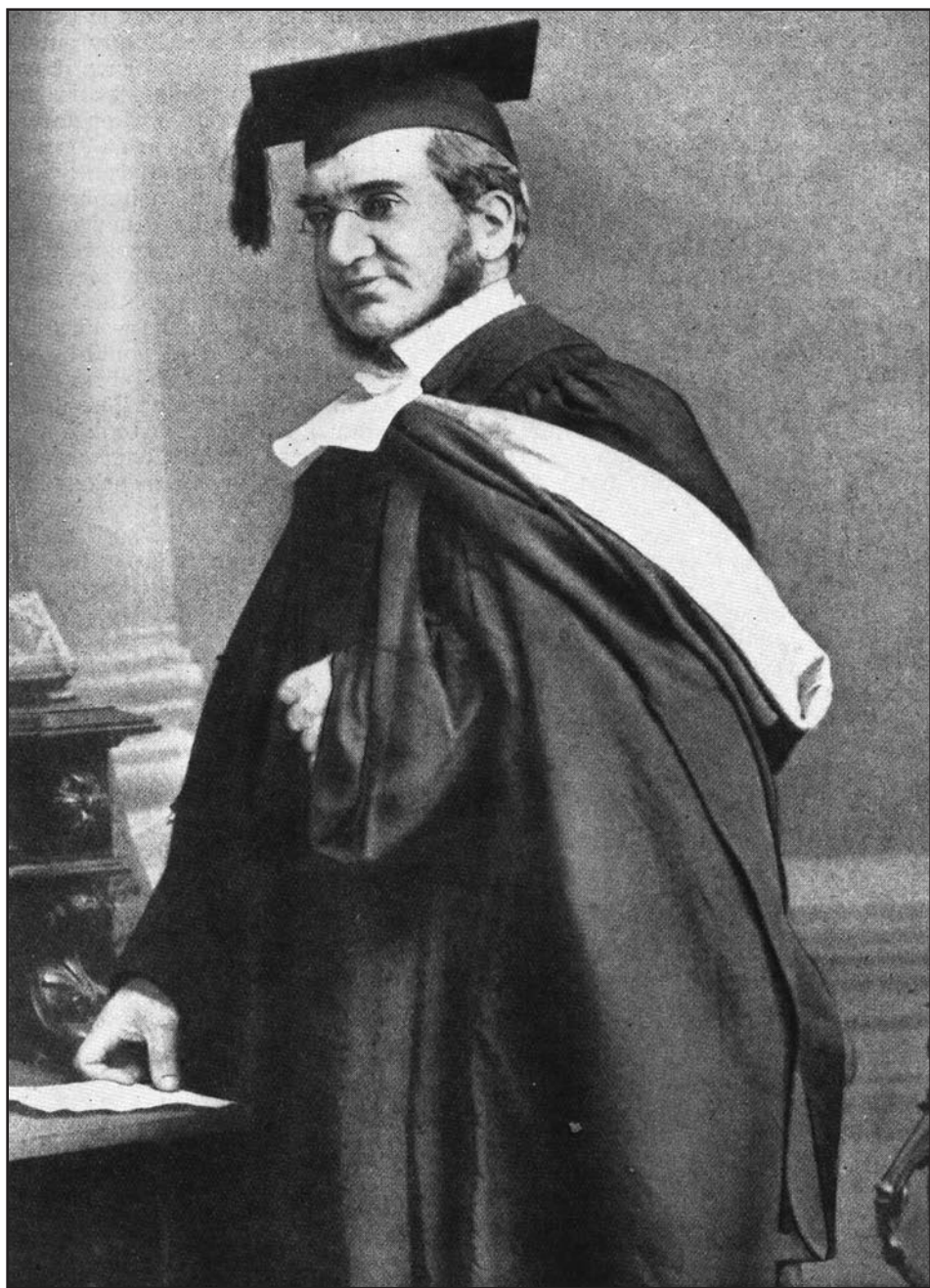
Even two years ago, the number of our brethren who have established themselves in this country was very small.²⁵ Adding to them about four hundred families of refugees from Russia and a considerable number of our brethren who came to settle here from the United States, the number [of Jews] comes to one thousand families. In general, our brethren are dispersed throughout the country. Many of them have journeyed to Manitoba — the new, recently settled land. However, there is one city whose Jewish community is the largest in the country. It is the city of Montreal, which lies on the shore of the St. Lawrence River. Its population numbers 150,000,²⁶ which includes five hundred families of the children of Israel.²⁷ In this city, one finds synagogues, charitable societies, places for public meeting, *hazananim* (cantors) and preachers, ritual slaughterers and circumcisors. It has three synagogues for its [three] communities, which differ from one another in their customs and ways.

The Jewish community of this city is divided into two parties: Orthodox and

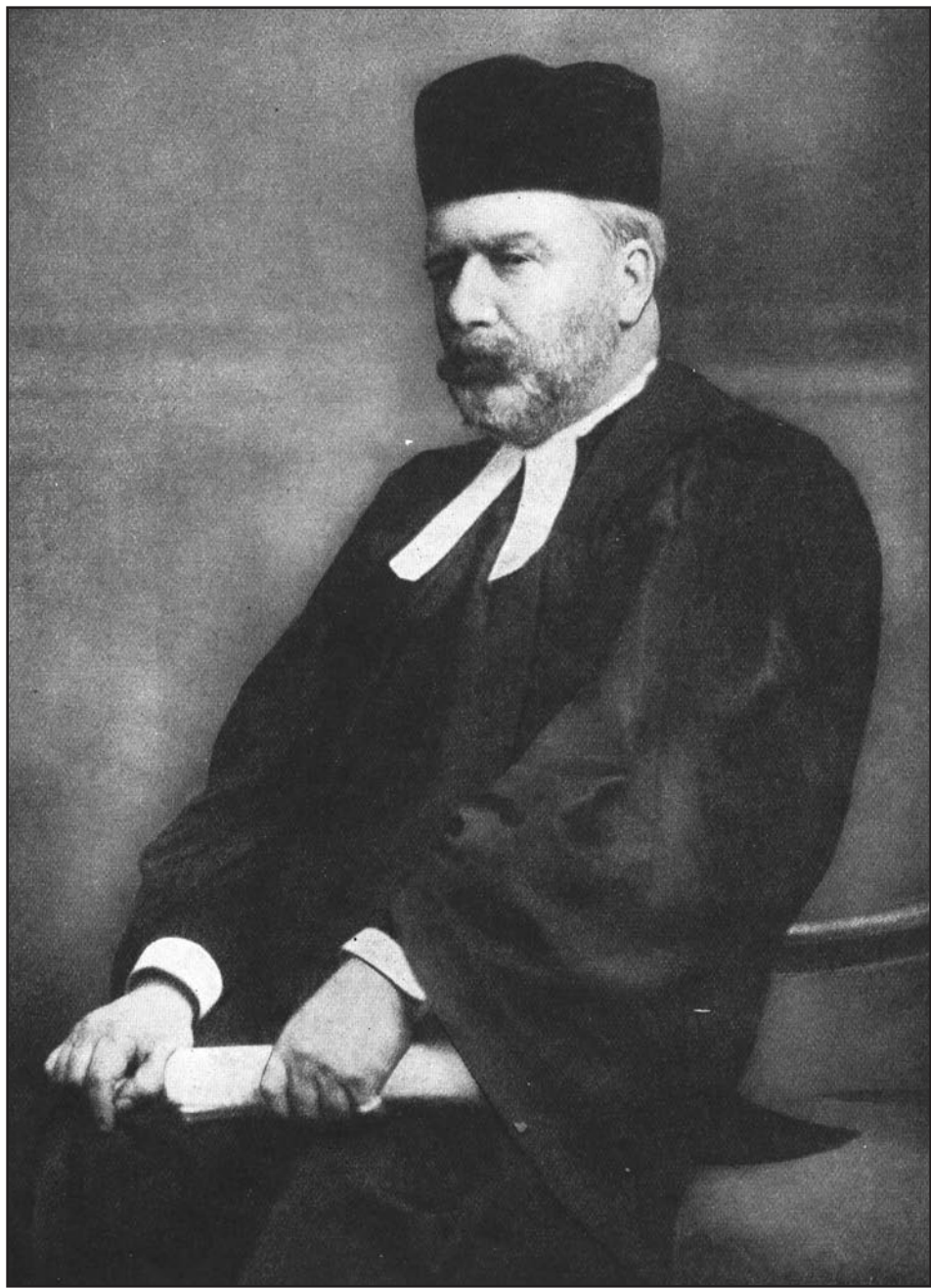
Reform. However, the two are really three, for the [Orthodox] are divided into two communities: Ashkenazim and Portuguese. The greatest and oldest [of these communities] is that of the Ashkenazim. It possesses a magnificent building, in which they gather on all Sabbaths and holidays to pour forth their prayer before God with the feeling of honour, as befits a “minor sanctuary.”²⁸ The people of this community were almost all born in our country. They are very much devoted to the religion, which they inherited from their ancestors, as they were wont to do in their country of origin. They have not abandoned all the [Judaic] regulations and religious customs in their family life and in their house of worship. They will not even transgress an antiquated custom whose time has passed, though most of them do not rest on the Sabbath day because of [the rabbinic maxim]: “Make your Sabbath like a weekday, and do not depend [for sustenance] on other people.”²⁹ They conduct all the matters of their community in good order and governance, and they live in unity and peace. Also, in their house of worship, quiet and peace [prevail]. They never hear of quarrels over aliyas — whether fat or thin³⁰ — nor about places on the eastern wall. Not long ago, they decided to build a synagogue larger than [their] first one, since it was too small to contain all its members, as well as many non-members who gather in the city once a year to fulfill their [religious] obligations in this house [of worship] during the Days of Awe. They have never had any teachers or rabbis. The *hazan* they have chosen fulfills two tasks. He descends to the reader’s stand on Sabbaths and festivals to chant *mussaf* without [the accompaniment of] choir or instruments. He also preaches to them on every Sabbath in the language of the country. For about a year, H. Friedlaender³¹ has presided over this community. He is most honoured in the eyes of the people of this community, for he serves faithfully. Though he is a true Orthodox person, he knows how to proceed according to the spirit of the times and the place, and in this he satisfies the congregation. They have a special slaughterer who, besides his holy occupation, has yet another task placed upon his shoulders — to lead *shaharit* (morning service) on Rosh

ha-Shana and Yom Kippur, for on all the Sabbaths and festivals of the year, they pray *shaharit* in their homes individually, and after they eat, they go to the synagogue to hear the reading of the Torah and to pray *mussaf* from the tenth hour to noon.³² Under the synagogue, they have a kosher *mikveh* equipped with all necessary articles.

The second congregation is the Portuguese Congregation,³³ even if not one person born in Portugal is among its members. They call it the Portuguese Congregation in honour of its founder, who was a scion of the land of Portugal. This man was childless all his life. When he was about to die, he left an amount [of money] in his wife's hands, sufficient to build a house of worship and to establish in it a congregation to be named after the land of his birth. [He] also [stipulated] that so long as the building and the congregation remain in existence, they will adopt the customs of the Portuguese [Jews]. The wife fulfilled her deceased husband's will and gave the money to ten men who were born in our country. They established this house [of worship] and congregation. However, since the customs of the Portuguese and the order of the Sephardic [service] were strange to them, and they knew nothing of them, they turned to the righteous noble, M[oses] Montefiore³⁴ — may God lengthen his days — and they beseeched him to be so good as to send them a Portuguese *hazan* to lead them and to teach them the customs of the Sephardim. The noble man fulfilled their request and sent them a man who had served as *hazan* and preacher in the Portuguese Congregation of London for many years. His name was Dr. [Abraham] De Sola.³⁵ This man read and studied broadly, and also possessed great knowledge in the sciences and languages. As well, he knew how to proceed in the spirit of the times and the place. Because of this, he found favour in the eyes of his congregation, and was also greatly honoured and given recognition by Christian notables. He especially acquired a good name in his disputations with the gentile priests regarding matters of religion, which appeared in the newspapers of this



DR. ABRAHAM DE SOLA



THE REV. MELDOLA DE SOLA

שומק כי יעבור עריו לא יגיע. כי מי האמן לפני עשר שנים גם ברוסא וגרמניה כי יעלה באוב מאריך עד האנטיסמיטיזם לחיטת את מסע הצלב בארצות אירופא ולקדו לחיבה במאה הש"א את האנטיסמיטיזם, בעת הא ברוסא ארצות הברית הגיעה עד מרום קצה, ובי מלל לנו כי צרעת סמארת האנטיסמיטיזם אשר כבר עברה חילוף מעל פני האדמה, (למלאית העין) הקה עור הפסח את רב העסס להנפול עליו. וקעה מה בה בארץ הוא כי נחלה? הלא ברוסא ארצות הברית ונערמית ארצות יתר חלקי ההבד; גם מה גם שם בן עקריבם אנתו יושבין; גם מה גם שם קנאת הרה, שנאת האומה ודעות קדומות עמוקות עלט לאלותו. ויבאו נא הולם כל אלה אשר יתנו דפי ברעיון הקדוש ותעלה, וישן ארץ ישראל, ויחביו בעצמם לדעה, כי כל נון אשר אין לו אלוות ארץ אשר שטנו נקרא עליה—ארץ ישראל—הקמה לא הרה לו בין הנשים אשר אנתו יושבים ויחביו וכל עצה וחשיבה לפרק מעליה את על האנטיסמיטיזם נרה פמנו, ויחביו כחם בזה חובית להוציאנו באהלת לאורה ומשעברו תנאולת עולם. כל זה עור את לבבי ונתן לי עז ותענוגות לאב בלע, "הפילין" להרעיו בקל את מצע עמט בקאנארא בכלל ואת מצעו בעיר מנרו מאנפנאקל בפרס.

מספר ארצות אשר נאחזו בספריה וזה ער לפני נתינים וימי אף מה בעש, ובאשר נוספו על מספרם בארצות שספחתו מנלו רוסא, וער ררבה בארצות אשר יבאו מארצות הברית להאריו בה, יעלה כיום מספרם לאלף מספחתה.

בכלל מספרים אנתו ומספרים ער פני המדינה, והרבה מהם נסעו מה אל פאנזאבא ברת ארץ החתים אשר נתישבה זה ספריו, כל קצות ההודים כוללת בחובת ער אתת הודו נגולה בספריה, ער מאנפנאקל העומדת ער חק הודו של לארצות ובאשר יושבתה ערה לאמה וחחשים וביננים בחסות פאות שספחתה ער ישראל. חנוע אנתו יתחבשו בחי נשחת ליהודים, ררבה צוקה, בחי מנעו יחיו, ערעו ומספס, שורשים וסחלם. בחי כנסיותיה—שלשה, לפי מספר קהילותיה, השונות אשר מפרצות בממלכת וכל הליכותיה.

ערת היתורים בעיר הואת החלק לשתי פסלות: אחריותם ורעאצאם, אבל שנים שחן שאלת העין כי גם הראשונים נחלקים לשתי קהלות: קהלת אשורשניטום—הקהלה היותר נגולה ותעוקה הוא ערד אשכנזים, לידת הוא בוח ער הארצות, ובו יתאספו בכל שבתות ומועדי השנה לשפוך שמים לפני ה' ברשע בבוד ארצות לבית קרשעט. אנתו ערדה הואת ררובם ככולל חלף ארצות הסה ויבאו בקרשעט הם ברת סררס אבותיהם כאשר הודולו בארץ כסיתם, רסה אל בני אורם מכל הקנות ונכתי הרת בו בחי מספחתה בארץ כסיתם ולא יעברו אף על מנעו יחיו ערש אשר כבר אורב עליו בלח, אף כי ררובם לא ישיבו ביום השבת משום—שחן "מכר אור ואל הצעור" בארצות, כי ענין ערש יתגורו בסדר ומספר נגון חיים בארצות ובשילום. גם בבית פחלם ששן וסולו; כל ריב ופדון ערד עליה שטמה או רוח, או ער מקומות בנותל מרדו לא יישעו בו מעולם, וכו לאביר החליבו לבנות בית הנכס אתי נירל ויתרמן הראשון יען כי הבית הראשון קצר וסחביל בחוץ כל החברים ועור רבים סחין להכירה כאשר יתקבצו ויבאו אל הרק שסע ארת בשנת לעשות חתונותם בבית הזה בימים הנוראים. מורים ורנגניו אלו חלם מעולם, והשחן אשר יבחו יישעו בבית כמנות: ארת לפני התוכה כשבתות ומועדי השנה להחלל סוקר בלי מקרהה ומנגנו, וגם ישיק סחיו לערלה בכל שבת ושבת בלשן המדינה. וזה כשנה יתכן בערה הואת ה' פריעולאקדער, ויבאו נכבד ארת בעני אשיר ערתי, ויש יעלה עבודתו באשנה, ואף כי אחריותם אסתי הוא, וידע הוא להלך על דמות הוסן והפסס וזה ישיק צדון סקהלה. יש חלם שחש סחור, אשר סלכר עבודתו הקדושה, עור משרה הואת ישישו ער שטנו ארתו להחלל שחיתו בררש"ל ויולי, כי בכל שבתות ומועדי השנה יתפללו שחיתו בביתם ביחודו, ואחרי כי יסעידו ררוב ילדי ארת הנכנסת קריאת הואת והרחלל סוקר (מסעה העשירי ער חצי הוסן). מחרת לבית הנכנס יש חס סוקר שחיתו ערובו כל הבררים הערונים.

הקהלה השנייה, היא ערד המרשניטום. ואף כי אין ילד אשכנזי ארת בכל אשיר החרה, יבנו את הקעה מרשניטום ער שסית ארת הה ילד ארץ מרשניטום, וזה הרבה. בעני הואת גם איש עשיר ילד ארץ מרשניטום, והאיש הואת הך ערירי כל ימי חייו, וידע באשר קרבו ישי לזאת תחית וידע אשיר סקו סיסל לבנות בית הפחל וליכון בו מחרת ארת הקרא ער שסן ארץ מרשניטום. כל הויס אשר יעבור ברת הואת וזה הקעה הואת יתגורו ע"ל מנעו המרשניטום האלמנה יסתר את צואת בעלת התה ובספר את הנפך לעשרה אשנים סחיו ארצות והנה יסתר ביתו הקעה הואת, וזה באשר מרשניטום וסר הפסדיו וזה מוידע חלם אלה יעני מה באשנה, וסן בקרשעט אל השר הערין ס' מאנפנאקל, ויארך יסיר, ויהלך את פני כי ואל כסובו לשלח חלם ש"ן

להשיב חובתם לה כאשר שבו את עסס. עטה, באשר הוכיח לדעת נגורה הנכבד כספסליו דחיל, אל חרטה בער האחרית על הדרך הזה, הי הוסן עשה חלם גם בלעיו ערטה, ובסע שסילם רבו בחתונ, אף ענינו רואות וכלת כי ערבים הסיס לנו לעת בואה. על חרבת, מספיו הסכלה בין יהודי רוסא? לשום זאת אר לב ולחרות ער נגלה שתי הפלות: "ערד לאומי", ויסנא לו מחרתם בין אנתו הערונים כסדרנה נכונה — גם אל חרבת שנים, עשרות שנים תחלופנה סוס נזה לראות יתר הקעה בעקרון נאמן, וסן יודע אס לא בנינו אשר יקסו ארצנו יבקשו ברב שוב הסיסן ויסיסו באנן אשר הנתינו אבותם הקונים לראש פנה. וסן יודע! כל איש חוזה הסיסן ידע אל נכון כי אס טוסק לרעך בנינו ברות ברתו חליתת חסות יחיו מספחתו בכל שאלת ישוב ארץ אבותינו ומשענו יהיה בעיניהם איש חרד הירוש לקסס שספחת ארץ ערד כאלו ררש לבנות הריסות כלל אר קרנא, כי בואת כסו באלה ידעו אר הרבה מחרתם בין אנתו הערונים כסדרנה נכונה — וואס מנכס באלה יושע ישראלי שרשע וספס? אס נחפון כי עס הודו הודך אל תחת הארעיק שספת נפשו, אס נאבה כי הנתענה האשיות לא תחזיק יסם בקעה על פני סיס אף חלק חלק וער על ענין המדינה הקרה, — או ערנו לראש כל מארדו בער חקן הננים לרלם ברות המדינה ולחנכס עס" ררך לאשית, וכל מאבד בחתונות לרנה ננים בונים סכס שלום עמנו וכלל פני ישראל יחי אור ב פוש ברותם ידעשת תו ראבנציק".

היהודים בקאנארא (באמריקא הצפונית).

בספר ישי שחתי בארץ הואת נתינו את לבי לחקור ולרדוש השב את תכונות בני ישראל המתגוררים בה ואת הליכותם וכן בקרש וכן בחיל, חלר ולדעת את מנכס החסיר, והספיו ומרשיו; וחשני חליתו כירי. אבל מעולם לא ערבינו אל לבי לבא בשערי ס'ע, לרסס מכל הקעשה מה עס אנתו, ואלא ארוננו המיל ס'ע, ספלין נלה לי רצוננו וספד ארת מני להרעיו מכל אשר אנתו בארץ הואת. לכן נערתי לבקשני—מרשיו יושב ארת ארבת המיל הרה לעמו ויהיו יוקר לו לשפוט את כל הפוצות אוחס כל מקומות מווריה, אס לא נכחו כמני נש קרדא, ספלין נכבדים אשר מרד הספס לדעת את דרכי בני ישראל בירר חלקי ההבדל ארת מנכס חיריה בין העסס אשר הם וספסס שספת, ובספסס בימים האחרונים מהת הנעתת האמריטאניא הלה להנכר בני ארצות בארצות, ונתינים נגוואות אל הארצות החקוק, אולי יעלה בידם לבנות ארת סקס מנחות אר קעשה הארץ, לען יחיו ספסל וספס לען ספסן רסה האנטיסמיטיזם אשר הרל לפרח בארצות אירופא כשילש שנים האחרונות. אבל אנה תנוסו אנתו האפסליוס? ואיפה תמצאו מנחות אשר נדרה מכם זה סכס? אל חרסו נשפססם לאס? אמריקא נעלה, אל הארץ החרשה נתינה מעלם, כי שס אשס ושולח יהיה לנו, כי שס אל נכר בן יסל לפני בן סס, ובארץ הואת אס עס כבש יור ווספ עס בני ריבין. לא, ארת בני עס, הנו אל לבכס לרדוש ולדעת יהיה אס מנכס אוחסס בארצות אמריקא עס בני ארצות הארץ חסיל חסיל חרד עספסס, וחרו ונכתי כי שניתם ברוחא. באו ארצות החרשה וער מררה הוכיח לדעת כי שפענת קנה רצון הוא לנו; גם סריוס וסוריוס נחשכנו ונחשכו — לא ער הרה. גם מה נשטס נעליו, נחשן שספסשקע ובאספסשקע ונחשכו, אשר כבלינו ערש יחסי לקראת אל הוסן בו יכלו לראות אס על בני שס ער ערוביות ליהודים כי קסחה? הלה אל לא כביר ואנטיסמיט חרד וססו Dr. J. H. Smith יבאו בחושוונא (ס'ע הרה) The nineteenth century ארת ולקנה את מערבות בני ישראל בארץ הואת, להבאיש ורתי בעני חקם ולספס אל כל יושב ארצות אחרות לספסס את היהודים היושבים בקרסס. תרות לאל עריון כי הוצור הוא נכח לדעת ער מררה כי דרבינו אל הכי שורש כלל בני ישראל, וספסס אל היה לו, בעור אשר מספר היהודים בארץ הואת שרש וסס וסס וכלו לפעוצ הואת להנחלל ערלס כמאציות אחרות. ולואת חקת האנטיסמיטס הוא היהת הפסד נפשו, ועמס שטא בן חלק. אבל מי לידנו יתקן כי חקת חקת ה' השפס בעל גם אריו אשר מספר היהודים ועלה וסחין בארץ? לא נכל אנתו יושבי ארצות אמריקא לעשות שרן כנשכס לאס? ברות כרחת עס בני בלי שס, שוט

country. However, Dr. Abraham De Sola died one and a half years ago, and was gathered to his people, mourned by all the inhabitants of this city because he had done great things while he officiated in this community. Through his efforts, a number of charitable societies were founded in this city. He also served as the secretary of the Montreal branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association, a society that he himself founded. Because of their great love for the deceased, the people of the community appointed his son, Mendele *[sic]*³⁶ De Sola, who serves as *hazan* and preacher of the Portuguese Congregation to this day. They also have a special ritual slaughterer, a place for [ritual] immersion, and land for their own cemetery. All the matters of the community are administered in peace and unity, justice and righteousness. In accordance with their character, they are truly Orthodox and devoted to their beliefs and religion, like the people of the Ashkenazic congregation.

The third and new[est] congregation, [which has been] recently established, is the congregation of the Reformers. Most of the men of that company come from Germany, and a minority were born in this country. All the members of this congregation separated from the German congregation³⁷ a year and a half ago. Until that time, they also were considered to be Orthodox, and they participated in all the [Orthodox] customs in the synagogue, even though they had already become foreign to them. Every time they attempted to reveal their³⁸ intentions within the community by abolishing a custom from the synagogue which, in their opinion, was unsuitable and undesirable, the believers arose and made an outcry against their opinion, and did not allow them to touch any of the group's laws and customs, even in the smallest detail. Thus, they suffered the scorn of [their] opponents, who were, in their eyes, like thorns and pricks as long as they were unable to build or rent a house for themselves and to establish a new group in accordance with the spirit of the young generation. They could only wait impatiently for the day when they could throw off the yoke of the Orthodox and all their customs from

themselves, and they would be able to do what was good and right in their opinion with no one to prevent them. However, the statement of our sages, may their memory be a blessing, is well known: “There is no man who does not have [his] hour.”³⁹ To these [Reformers], also, time brought in its wings an appropriate time to actualize all that they had long sought to do.

This is [the way] the matter [took place]:

A year and a half ago, a native of Poland, who had graduated from a German academy, came here. His name was Dr. [Samuel] Marks. He wanted to be chosen as *hazan* and preacher in the German congregation. On the first Sabbath, when he arose on the pulpit to show his great wisdom and eloquence in the language of the country, his first subject was [the necessity] to abolish all ancient customs in the synagogue, to change the prayer book, and to improve all the laws and regulations of the community, in accordance with the ways of their enlightened brethren in the large cities of the United States: New York, Chicago, and others. He also criticized them to their faces because they remained in their rebellion and did not learn from the ways of their cultured brethren, who were superior to them and honest in their hearts.⁴⁰

It is easy to understand that his words captured the hearts of the men who were advancing according to the spirit of the time, and that he also persuaded⁴¹ with his smooth lips, many of the believers who joined the Reformers. They greatly rejoiced in the man and in his words. He appeared to them as an angel of salvation [arriving] in a place of great darkness to shed new light in their dwelling place, a clear heavenly light that completely drove away all the shadows of ignorance and ancient customs from past generations. Now, there appeared to them a good prospect of creating something new in the land, and that no man would prevent them from achieving all they had planned.

The Orthodox, however, were very, very angry at the preacher and his words,

which, in their opinion, contained heresy, and [they felt] he had come to take them away from the religion [they had] inherited from their ancestors, to destroy all the laws and holy customs of their faith, and to establish in their place the laws of the nations and the deeds of the gentiles, the abomination of their souls. Because they were not able to keep still on account of their stormy spirit, they did not allow him to finish his words. They ordered him to shut his mouth, to cease his words, which were false, and to descend from [his] seat. If not, he would bear the consequences.

As a result of these things, there was an upheaval and confusion in the building. The men of the group strove with one another⁴² until the congregation was divided into two parties: the believers, on whose side was the president of the congregation and his vice-president who stayed in their places, and the Reformers [who] left the building and separated from the congregation. The latter rented a house, which they called “Temple Emanu-El,” and they established a Reform congregation with the help of Dr. Marks, whom they appointed as their *hazan* and preacher. All the customs and the order of prayers in the house are similar to [those of] Temple Emanu-El in New York.

They placed the holy ark on the western wall,⁴³ and the *hazan*, during his prayer, has his back to the ark and his face toward the east, facing the people who stand facing the west. Their house of prayer is closed tight all week long, and only on Sabbaths and the annual holidays (only the first day, for they do not celebrate the second holiday of the diaspora) do they gather in it — they, their wives, [their] sons and daughters together (for they have no women’s section) to pour forth their prayer before God, or, [perhaps] better, to enjoy the pleasant music of the gentile woman who plays the organ.

Beyond these three congregations, there is another small group that has recently been formed in the past month or two, from among the small

[number] of our brethren exiled from Russia, called *Gemilut Hasadim shel Anshe Russia*.⁴⁴ On the Sunday of the [weekly Torah] portion “Pharaoh sent forth the people,”⁴⁵ they celebrated the completion of a Torah scroll, which they purchased with money raised by their generous wives. They invited to this celebration many of the notables among our brethren, and honoured them when they came together with their families. The preacher of Temple Emanu-El, who was one of the distinguished guests, preached to them in a hifalutin manner on the day’s events, and urged them to unity and peace, which constitute the pillars upon which the group can stand. [Thus] they can excel in their deeds and way of life so as to find favour in the eyes of the officials and the nations that deal kindly with them. Among his remarks, he criticized them for the name they called their society — “Men of Russia” — after the land that spit them out and did not consider them to be faithful children [of their native land]. They are no longer “Men of Russia,” but rather inhabitants of Canada, since they live in it and find shelter in the protection of its government. However, they responded [to the preacher] properly that the land of their birth is very dear and precious to them. It is the land in which they lived most of their lives. Even in the land of their dispersion, they would not despise and condemn their native land. They are faithful children of [the land] and its king, and they would ever seek its welfare. Now let the mouths of our enemies and critics be silenced — those who accuse the Jews of not feeling love for the land of their birth in their hearts, and of being leeches, sucking on the flesh of its inhabitants and consuming it as foreigners. Could they show us the great wealth these people acquired on Russian soil, and the wealth they brought with them in their haste to flee to the New World? Each man had a wife and ten children, naked and barefoot with their faces pale like those of the dead. Beyond this — nothing. Despite this, the name of their [native] land is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and its memory they will exalt above their greatest joys. After [the address of] the preacher, Dr. Marks, other individuals from among the notables of the congregation spoke. Each

one counselled them concerning peace, [that they should] eliminate all strife and quarrelling from their midst. Only in this way will their good intentions succeed, to the joy of all our brethren who live in this city. They still do not have a house of prayer and assembly for all festivals, and until they are able to rent a house and acquire a plot of land for a cemetery, they will meet in a private house every Sabbath to pour forth their prayer before God. However, they constitute a disturbing factor in the eyes of many of our brethren because they pray according to the *nusah sefarad*,⁴⁶ and they have begun to go according to the ways and customs of the *hasidim*. They are most afraid that the malignant leprosy of *hasidut* will spread on the soil of this land, and that they will thus ruin the reputation of the children of Israel in the eyes of the inhabitants of the land.

First among all [Jewish] societies to be founded in this city, the *hevra kadisha*⁴⁷ stands as a sign and a glory. All the laws and regulations of that society are founded upon the foundation of lovingkindness, mercy and general love of humanity. How very appropriate is the name of the *hevra kadisha* in our land: *Gomlei hessed shel >emet*.⁴⁸ For all the laws of the society and its entire purpose are only to perform an act of “kindness and truth” for their fellows. The [members’] entire just desire is to extend help when a person who is alive is in trouble, and to render to him his final honour when he returns to the earth from which he was taken. As the height of heaven over the earth, so the ways of this society are superior to the ways of the *hevra kadishas* known in the cities of our land. These are the regulations of the society, which are the greatest and most honourable. If a person in the community should fall ill and become bedridden, the society is obliged to send him a member to sit with him for six consecutive hours, whether by day or night, to keep an eye on the patient, to give him his medicines at the proper time, and to do everything the doctor orders. The person cannot leave his place until another [member] comes in his stead, in order to give the people of the patient’s household a chance to

rest and recover a bit from their hard labour. Thus, the people of the society visit him until he is cured of his disease and leaves his sick bed. When a member receives notice from the supervisor to go to a sick person, he must fulfill his task without any excuse, and, if he cannot go himself, he must send another man in his stead. If not, he must pay a penalty set by the officials of the society. If a person of the society dies and is gathered to his people, the society deals with his burial without charge, and they do not differentiate between poor and rich. Once a year, all the people of the society gather to take counsel concerning their particular affairs and to improve the regulations of the society. They do not fast on the fifteenth of *Kislev* or the eighteenth of *Heshvan*, and they do not make a feast or banquet from consecrated money. They never go to prostrate themselves on graves nor to ask forgiveness from the deceased since they did not sin against them. Moreover, how worthy of public praise are the honourable women of the Ashkenazic community who, about three months ago, established a women's *hevra kadisha*.⁴⁹ Its purpose is similar to that of the original men's society: to extend help to women who fall ill and are bedridden, or to one who dies with no one to deal with her funeral. At this point, the society has, with great effort, found a poor woman to whom they have entrusted the work of the burial [preparation] of deceased women. Thus, they have risen to this holy work and have already made it a reality. [The women of the society] gather in the women's section of the synagogue, and have chosen among themselves a valiant woman as president and another as vice-president. Each of them has accepted, by her signature, to fulfill all the regulations of the society, which were based on the regulations of the first [men's] society. They also donated according to the largesse of their good heart. Concerning this women's society, the wisest sage among all men said, "Many daughters have done valiantly, but you have exceeded them all."⁵⁰

However, just as much as I am happy, satisfied, and full of pleasure in seeing

the wise measures and the good laws [established] in their congregations and societies, so my heart shudders when I bring to mind the education of the children, which is very bad. They do not have a school to teach their sons Torah or faith. They also do not have true teachers who will plant in the hearts of the youth love of their faith and religion. It will not be too long that their children will not know that they stem from Judah, for even now it is easy to see in this country older men whose knowledge of the religion of Israel is [equivalent to] that of a year-old babe in our country. They would never know that they came from the seed of Israel were it not for the evidence of their physiognomy.

When a boy reaches the age of five or six years, he begins to attend a secular school to learn the language of the country together with the children of the gentiles. His parents rejoice exceedingly when they see him succeed in his studies, even if he does not know what an *alef*⁵¹ looks like, nor has he ever seen one. He does not know what prayer is, for he never heard it from his parents. When he reaches thirteen (not for a *bar mitzva* or to put on *tefillin*), the congregation's preacher writes down the Torah blessings in Hebrew, though in Latin letters, and he learns it by heart to make the blessings when he is called to the Torah. His parents are enthralled to hear for the first — and possibly the last — time the name of God coming from their dear son's mouth. Thus, he grows up and becomes a man without Torah, faith, and religion, and to his discomfort, he is punished by the name of Israel. This is the way of educating children in the Reform community.

However, it also saddens our heart that the education of the Orthodox children is no better than the previous case. Even though their preacher, H. Friedlaender, took the problem⁵² in his hands and established a school called "Sunday School," which gives instruction to the boys of the community four times a week, two hours a day. After they return from the general school,

nonetheless, they do not fulfill their obligations. Nor is this the way to plant in the hearts of their youth the love of the faith and religion of the Israelites. [That is] because in the general schools, they burden the children with many subjects, and the child, when he comes home after three or four [in the afternoon, is required to] review his studies and also to understand them for the next day, so that he would not be severely punished should he not satisfy the teacher and not be able to correctly answer the questions he will be asked. After that, he will go out for two or three hours with those his age to develop his body and enjoy all sorts of games that proliferate in this country. Given this, the young man's heart is not [drawn] to the religious school and its subjects, which weigh upon him like a heavy burden. He looks upon the school, its teachers, and the teaching it imparts on him with exasperation. After he returns from the [religious] school, he will not desire to review that which he learned, or to prepare for the next day. That is because he is quite certain that just as he will not gain honour from the other young people if he excels in these studies, so he will not suffer contempt and shame and be judged [deficient] even if he knows nothing of all he has ever studied, for the teacher will certainly not dare to severely punish the son of a man from his community, from whom he receives his sustenance. He is afraid that he might bring the ire of the community upon himself, be fired from his position, and the mainstay of his livelihood⁵³ will be broken. Thus, the young stray according to the dictates of their hearts. There can be no expectation that from children like these will come men who are faithful to their people and their religion, for their souls are very much estranged from every feeling of belief and religion. Worse and more bitter than this, however, is the upbringing of the children of the poor who have recently come to this land, do not understand its language, and do not attend even the religious school. Moreover, those [whose parents] are not members of the congregation are not allowed to attend there. These children of the poor will be taught by their fathers when they come [home] in the evening, tired and exhausted from

working all day. Before the father goes to lie on his bed, he wakes the young man from his deep sleep to hold the prayer book and read a little in it. The young man with closed eyes will get up from his repose and, after he heavily reads a few lines, he will make the blessing, "Blessed be He who has caused me to be excused,"⁵⁴ at which point his father will drive him away with great anger and fluent curses. This is the state of [Jewish] education of children in this city. No one is agitating for something with higher Jewish standards — to establish a Talmud Torah or school and to staff it with faithful teachers to lead these lost sheep, [teachers] who combine knowledge and religious faith to educate them in wisdom and faith, so that even when they grow old they will not turn away from it. If only my words would penetrate the ears of the people of this city who have the ability to correct that which is wrong, most of whom are prosperous⁵⁵ and could, without a second thought, spend an adequate amount on the establishment of a Talmud Torah that equals all [other charitable endeavours],⁵⁶ and to take care of the children of the poor, from whom Torah will come forth.⁵⁷ They will be rewarded by a generous God.

In the higher schools, there are now two Jews to be found. About two years ago, two students of our brethren finished their course of study: one as a physician and the other as a lawyer. Both of them graduated distinguished with rings of gold, which honour fell on them from among several hundred Christian students. All the newspapers that appear in this city had to praise their great ability, and all the students of the school honoured and glorified them. They were a sign and a glory to all our brethren in this land.

In their relationship with the gentiles, in general, the Jews are equal in civil rights with all the citizens of the land. There is one law and judgement for all the inhabitants of this land, with no distinction regarding nationality or faith. The children of the covenant, just like those who are not, enjoy the

abundance of peace and tranquility that exists in this country. Each man does that which is right in his eyes regarding religion and faith, with no one interfering. However, if we look with a clear eye at the condition of our brethren and their relationship with the gentiles among whom they live, then we will discern that national hatred and religious bigotry are not absent from the hearts of the gentiles who dwell in this land. Their opinions could take their place with the ancient [anti-Jewish] testimonies and be recognized. Here, also, the common people accuse the Jews of acquiring wealth unjustly, consuming and not producing, living on others' accounts, and filling their hiding places with gold derived from another tree of life — that is commerce — to which alone they raise their eyes. All of them have taken hold of it since it is the best and most profitable source to fulfill the desire of their souls, which covets silver and gold, though they are very lazy and despise work that will not fill their storehouses with jewels and gold. On this, also, do [the common people] agree: there are no poor among the children of Jeshurun; each person called by the name of Israel must be considered among the moneybags. All this is so established and clear [in their minds] that the multitude has a saying that a certain man who is distinguished by his wealth is “as rich as a Jew.” However, we cannot deny that our brethren bring upon themselves the attention of the inhabitants of the land due to the ignoble sources of livelihood they possess, such as keeping stores that lend money on pledges called, in English, “Pawn Shop.” Most of [the Pawn Shop owners] in this city are Jews, and they are very rich. In conclusion, at every trouble in this country, the children of Israel feel the hatred and contempt that is held, in the heart of the inhabitants of the land, against us. The inhabitants of this land are divided into different groups. Some speak the language of England, and most of them speak the language of France, and they are the citizens of the land. Among them are Irish, Scots, and many others. They are also differentiated by religion: some are Catholics, Protestants of various denominations, and Indians who are idolators. Each and every group hates the others thoroughly.

Despite this, there is no group that is as despised as Israel, which becomes a shame and a scorn in all their mouths. If a Catholic or a Protestant should sin, no one from any group would seek to blame the sin on the entire nation. This is not the case with us, the children of Israel. We are distinguished from all the nations on the face of the earth. If a person from among our brethren should sin, wrath will fall upon the entire congregation. Open a page in any newspaper published in this country and you will read: "So-and-so broke into the house of so-and-so, robbed it, and also spilled blood and killed a soul; it is not known from which religion and faith he stems. And there was a Jewish man (like *zhid* in the Russian language), and the policemen arrested him because he went around with his merchandise in the villages and hamlets without a license."

In the past year, when a man of our brethren declared bankruptcy, his creditors gathered together to take counsel on what to do. One of them rose from his seat and said: "My brethren, the time has come for us to expel all the Jews from our land, just as they were expelled from the soil of Russia. For in a little while, their numbers will increase and they will rule over us." And if, to date, he did not succeed in [causing] what he said to pass and did not sway his fellows to follow his base counsel, we must still be very careful and understand that which faces us.

Yosef Eliyahu Bernstein, native of Poland

** I would like to thank my student, Don Charness, and Eiran Harris, of the Jewish Public Library Archives, who brought Bernstein's article to my attention.*

NOTES:

1. In that year, the English-language *Canadian Jewish Times* was launched in Montreal. There are reports of previous attempts at introducing a Yiddish newspaper in Montreal in 1887, 1891 and 1897, but these attempts were quite ephemeral, at best. Lewis Levendel, *A Century of the Canadian Jewish Press: 1880s-1980s* (Ottawa, Borealis Press, 1989), pp. 1, 16.
2. The article was published in three successive editions of the periodical *ha-Melitz*, published in St. Petersburg, Russia: volume 20, no. 30 (2 May, 1884), cols. 511-513; no. 31 (5 May, 1884), cols. 526-528; no. 32 (9 May, 1884), cols. 542-544. *ha-Melitz* had previously, in 1882, printed letters from one of the first Jews to migrate to Winnipeg. Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto, Lester, 1992), pp. 115-116.
3. The Montreal Jewish community does not yet have an adequate historical study devoted to it. Cf. Ira Robinson and Mervin Butovsky, eds., *Renewing Our Days: Montreal Jews in the Twentieth Century* (Montreal, Véhicule Press, 1995).
4. For a somewhat later description of Montreal Jewry in a Russian Hebrew periodical, see Jonathan Sarna, "'Our distant Brethren': Alexander Harkavy on Montreal, 1888," *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 7 (1983), pp. 58-73.
5. B.G. Sack, *History of the Jews in Canada* (Montreal, Harvest House, 1965), p. 220.
6. Michael Brown makes use of this article in his discussion on issues of language and anti-Semitism. *Jew or Juif?: Jews, French Canadians, and Anglo-Canadians, 1759-1914* (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1986), pp. 166, 221, 228.
7. David Rome, *The First Jewish Literary School, Canadian Jewish Archives*, n.s., volume 41 (1988), pp. 4-5. Rome comments: "Documentation in terms of accuracy is limited, but the freshness and balance of the report are unquestioned."

8. Cf. Shaul Stampfer, *The Lithuanian Yeshiva* (Jerusalem, Shazar, 1995) [Hebrew], p. 179.
9. "Ha-Meliz," *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Ramat Gan, 1970), volume 7, cols. 1232-1234.
10. Here, Bernstein is echoing the sentiments of a series of pamphlets written in 1882 by Isaac Joel Linetski. Cf. Milton Hindus, "Introduction" in Isaac Joel Linetski, *The Polish Lad* (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975), p. 14.
11. Due to the nature of the Hebrew text, the translation requires the occasional addition of words in order to facilitate comprehension. The translator's additions are presented in brackets.
12. The first Russian immigrant congregations that had an ongoing existence were B'nai Jacob and Beth David. Cf. Rome, *The First Jewish Literary School*, p. 4.
13. On opposition to Hasidism in Montreal, see David Rome, *The Canadian Story of Reuben Brainin, Part 2, Canadian Jewish Archives*, n.s., volume 48 (1996), pp. 33-37; Ira Robinson, "The First Hasidic Rabbis in North America," *American Jewish Archives* 44 (1992), pp. 501-515.
14. Alexander Zederbaum (1816-1893) was the founder and official editor of *ha-Melitz*. However, during this period, the actual editing of the periodical was done by Abraham Shalom Friedberg (1838-1902). *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Ramat Gan, Keter, 1972), volume 16, col. 965.
15. Son of Noah whose descendants were the inhabitants of Europe, according to Jewish tradition.
16. Son of Noah whose descendants included the Jews.
17. Cf. Isaiah 11, 6.
18. Cf. Isaiah 42, 3; 36, 6; II Kings 18, 21.
19. Literally, "transmigrated souls of Haman."
20. Adolf Stöcker (1835-1909) German anti-Semitic political figure. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Ramat Gan, Keter, 1972), cols. 408-409.
21. It is spelled "Ismotsi" in the original. The reference is to Gyözö Istóczy

(1842-1915), Hungarian anti-Semitic leader, who founded an anti-Semitic party that won 17 seats in parliament in 1884. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Ramat Gan, Keter, 1972), volume 9, col. 1099.

22. "Dolgwin" in English characters in the original.

23. On Goldwin Smith, see Gerald Tulchinsky, "Goldwin Smith: Victorian Antisemite," in Alan Davies, ed. *Antisemitism in Canada*, pp. 67-91. Cf. Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto, Lester, 1992), pp. 231-238.

24. Cf. Leviticus 13, 51-52.

25. The Canadian census of 1881 listed 2,393 Jews. <http://www.statcan.ca>.

26. The Canadian census of 1881 listed 140,247 inhabitants of Montreal. <http://www2.marianopolis.edu/quebechistory/stats/pop61-21.htm>.

27. The Canadian census of 1881 listed 811 Jews in Montreal. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, volume 12, col. 286.

28. Rabbinic term designating a synagogue.

29. *Babylonian Talmud*, Shabbat 118a; Pesachim 112a.

30. Some honours in the synagogue were considered more important and honourable than others. "Fat" referred to the more and "thin" to the less important honours.

31. Elias Friedlaender (1849-1927) was elected to the position of minister of the Congregation of English, German and Polish Jews of Montreal in 1884. See Ira Robinson, "Friedlaender, Elias" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

32. On May 12, 1876, the congregational board passed an amendment to the bylaw that stated "that the divine services on Sabbath commence in the morning at half past seven in the summer, and eight o'clock in the winter to *Ein Kamoch* (the beginning of the Torah service), and from *Ein Kamoch* at 10 o'clock." It was passed in spite of objections that "such alterations...would make the growing up generation forget the *shachris* or principle service altogether." Wilfred Shuchat, *The Gate of Heaven: The Story of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim of Montreal, 1846-1996* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), pp. 53-54.

33. Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, was founded in 1768, making it the oldest synagogue in Montreal and in Canada. On the history of this congregation, see Solomon Frank, *Two Centuries in the Life of a Synagogue* (Montreal, Shearith Israel, 1968).

34. Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) was not the one to whom the leaders of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation turned, but rather to the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation in London. However, they did send Montefiore, the most famous Sephardic Jew of his era, a congratulatory address on his hundredth birthday in 1884. The sending of this address, which undoubtedly was well known within the Montreal Jewish community, may have connected Montefiore and the synagogue in Bernstein's mind. Cf. Frank, *Two Centuries*, p. 85.

35. On De Sola, see Tulchinsky, *Taking Root*, pp. 40-52. Since he was only twenty-one when he began his career in Montreal, it was not he who had served in the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation in London. Bernstein must have conflated his story with that of his father, Aaron De Sola, who had indeed served the London congregation for many years. Frank, *Two Centuries*, pp. 64-65.

36. The rabbi's actual first name was Meldola.

37. The Ashkenazic Orthodox Congregation, Shaar Hashomayim.

38. Literally "company" (*hevra*).

39. Mishna Avot 4:3.

40. The sermon of Samuel Marks that caused the furore was, in the words of the Reform-oriented *Jewish Messenger*: "an effective sermon on the abrogation of the eighth day service of that Feast (Passover), and on general principles, overhauled Orthodox and medieval rituals, tenets, and injunctions to such an extent that the zealots of the Orthodox congregation ran to the newspapers to vent their abhorrence of the heresy of Rev. Marks." Shuchat, *Gate of Heaven*, pp. 36-37.

41. Literally "carried."

42. Cf. Ira Robinson, "Violence as a Factor in the Communal Life of the

- Montreal Jewish Community in the Early Twentieth Century," paper presented at the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies, 2003.
43. In Orthodox congregations, the ark is placed on the eastern wall.
 44. Literally "Deeds of Lovingkindness of the Men of Russia."
 45. February 10, 1884.
 46. This ritual had been adopted by eastern European Hasidim.
 47. Literally "Holy Society." In Jewish communities, it was entrusted with the task of preparing the bodies of the deceased for proper burial. Membership in this society was traditionally a sign of great communal prestige.
 48. "Those who perform [acts] of kindness and truth."
 49. The Ladies' *Hevra Kadisha* Society of Shaar Hashomayim was founded on December 1, 1883. Its constitution stated its objectives in the following way: "to attend to the dead (the dying, if required), to appoint proper persons to prepare them for interment according to the Orthodox Jewish rites, and the making of shrouds." Shuchat, *Gate of Heaven*, p. 59.
 50. Proverbs 30, 29.
 51. The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
 52. Literally "ruin."
 53. Literally "bread."
 54. This is a parody of the blessing that parents say when their child reaches the age of religious majority (13 for boys, 12 for girls): "Blessed be [God] who has excused me from responsibility for this one."
 55. Literally "live in the shadow of silver." The first Talmud Torah was established in Montreal in 1896.
 56. Cf. *Mishnah, Pe'ah* 1:1.
 57. Cf. *Talmud Bavli, Nedarim* 81a.

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