

https://dspace.org/

Class, community, language and struggle: Hebrew against Yiddish in South Africa 1900-1914

Mantzaris, E. A.

1987-02-09T11:47:04Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/8133

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

MANTZARIS



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

HISTORY WORKSHOP

THE MAKING OF CLASS

9 - 14 February, 1987

AUTHOR: E. A. Mantzaris

TITLE: Class, Community, Language and struggle: Hebrew against Yiddish in South Africa 1900-1914

AFRICANA LIBRARY

CLASS, COMMUNITY, LANGUAGE AND STRUGGLE : HEBREW AGAINST YIDDISH IN SOUTH AFRICA 1900 - 1914

OR EA MANTZARIS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE

(A) INTRODUCTION

The class differences and struggles within the Jewish community in South Africa from the early period of its existence found their realisation on many levels : the material/production process through strikes as in the case of the 1906 Cape Town tobacco-makers' struggle against the Policanski brothers,[1] the ideological, as in the case of the struggles of the early Bundist inclined socialists and the Zionists,[2] and on the political as in the case of the "Friends of the Russian Freedom" in the period 1905 - 1910,[3] or the Yiddish-speaking branch of the International Socialist League in the late 1910's and early 1920's against the middle-class propagandists of Smuts or Creswell during the same period.[4]

All these struggles have been conveniently overlooked by the "official" historians of the Jewish Community.[5] Another struggle which has been relegated to non-existence by the same historians is one of the most pertinent cultural manifestations of deeply rooted social, economic and political in short class divisions. This struggle resulted in the long and desperate efforts of the Zionist ideologies and leaders, to destroy Yiddish, the authentic language of the Jewish working and artisan classes in South Africa. This paper will look at the problem of the conflict of the Hebrew and Yiddish languages in South Africa. A brief historical background to the problem will explore its roots and then the historical circumstances under which this struggle took place will be explored.

(B) YIDDISHISM AND HEBRAISM: A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The rivalry between Hebrew and Yiddish (or the "master tongue" and the vernacular "gargon" as they were known for a long time) goes deeply into the social-historical past of the jewish people. Unlike Hebrew which was the language of the scriptures, Yiddish was basically a Middle High German dialect which was adopted by the Jewish people in the 13th - 15th centuries during their sojourn in Germany. The language in the process of its existence was enriched with an abundant Hebrew vocabulary, reconstructed both in grammar and style of the Hebrew language and thus was recreated and crystallised as a new Jewish spoken and written tongue. Facing the wrath of the mono-Hebraists who accussed Yiddish of being a "servant" language, a "jargon" with a defected syntax and grammar, Yiddish was used by some of the masters of Jewish and world literature such as Scholom-Aleichem, I.L. Peretz, Sholom Ash, Sholom Abramovitch and I.B. Singer. Although it was primarily used as a language of both secular and religious importance especially in the Chassidic tradition, it was the political muscle of the powerful workers' organisation known as the "Bund" which made Yiddish an integral part of the culture, life and struggles of the Jewish workers' masses in Russia, Poland, and the Jewish Diaspora.(6)

Following the declaration of the Basle Program and the creation of the Zionist movement, the mono-Hebraists launched an attack on Yiddish by advocating its abolition and the declaration of Hebrew as the only "national language of the Jewish people". This attack was by no means cultural alone. By attacking Yiddish, the Zionists attacked not only the language of the working class. They attacked the workers culture, their life and most importantly their vision of socialism. This attack took place all over the Jewish Diaspora, and South Africa was no exception.

(C) THE HEBRAIST ASSAULT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The mass emigration of Jews to South Africa which followed the Tsarist pogroms in the Pale of Settlement between 1895 and 1905 injected the already existing jewish Community in the country with new blood. The new streams of immigrants changed the existing class stratification system within the community in a dramatic way, as most of the newcomers were artisans and small traders, but also more politically inclined and ideologically more radical than the well-established Anglo or German-Jewish bourgeoisies or petty-bourgeoisies of the Cape and the Transvaal. Additionally the new immigrants created new forms or organisation based on certain cultural, ideological and political roots. In South Africa, as in Russia or Poland the vital link between politics, culture and ideology was the Yiddish language. Yiddish was the common denominator of political meetings, Jewish trade-union agitation, cultural evenings or entertainment gatherings.

The vibrant "Eastern" culture soon became an "embarrastment" to the Anglo and German-Jewish section of the population. The efforts of certain anti-semitic elements in the "liberal" Cape Province environment to declare Yiddish as a "non-European" language was defeated by the determined efforts of the Jewish population under the leadership of M. Alexander and D. Goldblatt, the doyen of Yiddish journalism in the Province.(7) The real intentions of the "Anglicised" and pro-Zionist jewish elements in the Cape became apparent as early as 1904. At that time a large number of English-speaking Jews including H. Liberman(8) and the Reverand Bender(9) signed petitions alongside Christian clergymen opposing Yiddish plays to be performed on Sundays. Although this application was defeated in the City Council by 8 votes to 6, Liberman's testimony that a large number of Jews "who lived in luxury had no need for this kind of entertainment"(10) points to the already existing rift between the two classes of.

rich, English-speaking and poor Yiddish-speaking Jews.

The significance of such attitudes is of vital importance as Yiddish theatre was one of the most popular entertainment mediums of the poor Jews in South Africa and everywhere in the world. In South Africa the first Yiddish travelling players toured the country in 1899. They performed in the Gaiety theatre in Johannesburg and in Cape Town where the Jewish players pursued "their artistic avocation" for the enthusiastic crowds of the recently arrived Yiddish speaking immigrants. Morris Waxman a "heavy" Yiddish tragedian and his wife Rosa toured the country in 1899. Mr and Mrs Wallerstain created a stir when they visited South Africa in 1901, and Madame Janie Kayzer, a tragiedienne of the old school was the next arrival. Several other comedians and serious Yiddish artists toured the country such as Sam Sherman and Axelrod.[11]

The controversy over the Sunday plays was solved as D. Goldblatt and the Yiddish-speaking public fought against the odds for Yiddish plays to continue[12] as they were an integral part of the poor Jew's culture.[13] This particular case illustrated the fact that certain sections of the Jewish Establishment had initiated an open war against Yiddish and soon this war was to be intensified.

The Zionist ideology, contrary to the diatribes of Shimoni[14] and Gitlin,[15] did not find fertile ground for development in South Africa in the initial stages of mass Jewish immigration to this country. As it has been shown in detail elsewhere, it was the Bundist and other radical left-wing ideologies which were prominent among the Jewish population, both in Cape Town and Johannesburg.[16] This fact did not stop the Zionist leaders, however, from trying to agitate among Yiddish speakers. Thus their meetings during the

initial period, were adressed both in English and Yiddish. Additionally there was a small number of East European Jews prominent in Zionist circles, who tried to introduce Yiddish as one of the languages of the movement.(17)

However, the propagation of the Hebrew as the only language of the South African Jewish population soon began the Zionist leaderships' cry of "non-assimilation" within the country of reception (in this case South Africa) which was totally contradictory to the radical Jews idea of total integration within the struggles of the workers of the country,(18) led to the formers' belief that Hebrew should be the "language of every Jew".(19) This process posed a serious challenge to Yiddish. Although the S.A. Jewish Chronicle, the journal of the Jewish Establishment supported the belief of Goldblatt and other prominent Yiddishists that Yiddish was a European language,(20) it appealed to the Jewish people to speak and teach their children Hebrew "as the only language of the Jews".(21) The resurgence of activities of Zionist leaders in the major urban centers, led to direct attacks on Yiddish as a "jargon". Feldman has noted that the idea amongst Zionist leaders that if Hebrew was not spoken then English was the "official" language of the Jews in South Africa was arrived at because Yiddish was the language of the poorer, not-educated, in other words the large majority of the Jews. He wrote that the upwardly mobile, newly rich Jews preferred to communicate in Hebrew and English and thus showed a contempt of the Yiddish language. Inevitably the struggle between Yiddish and Hebrew became a class problem.(22)

The Hebraists established an organisation under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Landau who made an appeal to all Jewish people to "love Hebrew and speak the language of their fathers and also to teach their national language to their children". An editorial in the S.A. Jewish Chronicle supported wholeheartedly Landau's movement, "Iveya".(23) Continuous editorials in the

Journal supported the movement[24] and reported all its meetings. The first general meeting attracted only 70 people[25] and those that followed did not attract large audiences.[26] During that period Yiddish had won its battle against the state on the immigration issue, due to the dedicated efforts of two individuals (Goldblatt and M. Alexander) and the help of those who spoke the language. Its emergence as a modern language with a grammar as well as the literature received from overseas with the novels and poems of Aleichem, Asch and Gordin, press and theatre made the Yiddishists in South Africa feel that the concept of "jargon" was alien to their language. They felt that the more they used Yiddish the more they strengthened their ties with not only their "old life", but also with their new. They felt that Yiddish as an expression of their rich cultural heritage made their life within their new environment "more bearable".[27] The insistence of Yiddish-speakers to use their language in all spheres of their lives gave impetus to the struggle of the languages, which found also its political and ideological expression on the political arena. Thus, the Zionists were vehemently opposed to the organisations and political groups with leftwing sympathies such as the Bundist-inclined "Friends of the Russian Freedom" and the militant Jewish trade unions in Cape Town and did everything possible to alienate the majority of the Jews from these movements. Landau, who was the main initiator and propagandist of Hebrew during that period, regarded Yiddish as "unpatriotic", and a language which was against the "national interests" of the Jewish people. Landau and his circle of sympathisers saw the dominance of Yiddish and the cultivation of this language as an obstacle to the "correct" socialisation of the Jewish children.[28]

He was an ardent Zionist who came to South Africa in 1903 and was a Hebrew "writer of note". Following Rabbi Hertiz'departure Landau was the most important religious leader in the land and his place as an executive member of

the S.A. Zionist Federation reflected his devotion to the "cause".[29] He was also the major speaker in Zionist lectures dealing with the language problem as he was considered an authority on the subject. In one of his most striking anti-Yiddish speeches, Landau while analysing the past, present and future of Zionism, pointed out that there were three factors in the Zionist movement which united to make it an unbreakable cord which binds jewry together for the "coming struggle of emancipation", ie. jewish science, the Hebrew language and political Zionism. He said that the cultural "renaisance" "prominent" at the second and third Zionist Congresses showed that Jewish people paid a special attention to the Hebrew language. The result was that thousands of young Jews and especially students learned the language and conversed it into a modern language. His attack on Yiddish started as follows:

> "That Yiddish cannot be mentioned in the same breath as our glorious Hebrew tongue is a truism, for the wonderful thing about the ancient language is that, instead of being dead, it is so modern and lends itself so easily to every requirement of scientific and commercial life, that the most celebrated works are now printed in pure Hebrew and bussinessmen write bussiness letters to friends and customers in Hebrew from one part of the globe to the other. For the merchant, Hebrew has annihilated space, and scattered as the Jews are commercially it is putting the Jewish people on a far higher commercial level, when such facilities are at hand for intercommunication"[30]

Landau pointed out that it was a serious mistake to assume that Hebrew was kept alive in the synagogue because Zionism was also a major factor in the revival of the "Jews" national language. He concluded by calling upon

everyone to become an active worker for Zionism and the return of Jews to Judaism.[31] Hebrew Zanophone records for gramophones imported from America were on sale for the upper classes in 1909,[32] while articles began appearing in the S.A. Jewish Chronicle on the disadvantages of Yiddish. In one of these articles it was pointed that the use of this language created a ghetto-like wall of ignorance and mediaevalism around those Jews who used it. The same Jews were accused of ignorance of the facts of life around them. Although the editor "rejoiced" that Yiddish was recognised as a European language, he appealed to all Eastern European Jews to learn at least one of the two official languages and cultivate it, because not much advantage could be gained from the cultivation of Yiddish, because mainly it served no useful purpose. With Hebrew, according to the writer it was different, because it was the language of Jewish prayers and was "indissoluably" bound up in the Jews' existence. He appealed to those who published newspapers and gave lectures in Yiddish to stop them because these actions were the greatest drawbacks to the gradual and consistent evolution of the Jewish people.[33] Goldsmid certainly "rejoiced" with the recognition of Yiddish as a European language but he could not afford to compete with the Yiddish press, as the vast majority of the new immigrants from Eastern Europe spoke only Yiddish. Although he called for the abolition of all Yiddish mediums of communication and especially newspapers, "The Jewish Advocate" published by D. Goldblatt was published in Cape Town for 10 years (1904 - 1914), the "Jewish Standard" was published from 1909 to 1913 and two "Afrikaners" one by N.D. Hoffman in Cape Town and one in Johannesburg by Vogelson.[34]

During the period under consideration and the vociferous attacks on Yiddish both from the chief spokespersons of the Jewish establishment and the newly-rich middle class (Goldsmid and the S.A. Jewish Chronicle) and Zionism (through the Rev. Landau), the international struggle waged by the Jewish radical

intelligentsia against Hebrew was at its peak. Thus in the first Yiddish language Conference at Tchernowitz in 1908 the Yiddishists inflicted a severe defeat on the mono-Hebraists, who represented the rising star of Zionism. A resolution supported by the "Bund" declaring that Yiddish was the sole national language of the Jewish people and that Hebrew was a historical monument only, the revival of which was an utopia was narrowly defeated. However the resolution which was carried out at the Conference declared that Yiddish was a national language of the Jewish people. Although Peretz and several other delegates voted against the latter resolution it was generally felt that the Yiddishists and the radical intelligentsia had inflicted a heavy defeat on Hebrew, the Hebraists, Zionism and "assimilationism".(35)

However up to 1914 the S.A. Jewish Chronicle continued to support Hebrews as the "only national language of the Jewish people".(36)

When the tensions between the first Jewish settlers in Palestine and the "Hilfsverein der Deutchen juden" (Federation of German Jews) began regarding the medium of communication at Universities and Colleges in Palestine, the journal advocated the immidiate withdrawal of "German", and propagated the use of the Hebrew language as the only solution for the creation of a Jewish culture based on the national religious and cultural tradidions of the Jewish people.(37) For Zionists Yiddish was the "every day language of a section of the people" but Hebrew was the "living national language" and thus could never be replaced. The animosities between Hebraists and Yiddishists in Palestine were reported regularly in the "Jewish Chronicle" whose major contributors believed that Hebrew was the "only language representing the Jewish people".(30) Contrary to this claim even the South African State recognised that the vast majority of the Jewish people in South Africa

were Yiddish-speaking by appointing the Immigration officer of the Board of Deputies as Yiddish censor. He censored all letters and newspapers which arrived in South Africa written in Yiddish. No such censor was appointed for the Hebrew language.(39)

(C) THE YIDDISHISTS RESISTANCE AND COUNTER-ATTACK

The deeply-rooted class antagonism which found its realisation in the vociferous attack of the Zionist leaders and the media representative of the Jewish bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisei on the Yiddish language did not pass unchallenged. In South Africa as in Russia and Poland the cultural renaissance of the Yiddish language and culture gave impetus to a new political and ideological awareness amongst the majority of the population, and additionally it created new organisational structures within the newcomers. On the political/ideological level, the use of Hebrew as the only language to be used by Zionists certainly created a dilemma, as a significant number of newcomers were either sympathetic or could be influenced by the ideals of Zionism. However, the snobishness of most of Zionist leaders towards Yiddish signified as Adler has bluntly suggested that Yiddish became an integral part of the struggle of the people against the Jewish bourgeoisie. The Hebrew/Yiddish conflict became part and parcel of the more general conflict within Jewish society - that of working class socialism against middle-class Zionism.(40)

This conflict was materialised on many fronts. For example Yiddish was the language upon which the Jewish trade unions which were established and developed during the period under investigation. All the meetings of these unions were contacted in the Yiddish as was their printed literature.(41) The Bundist-inclined radical organisation "The Friends of the Russian

Freedom", which operated in Johannesburg and Cape Town and was active in agitation among the newly-arrived Jewish immigrants used Yiddish as the only medium of communication.(42) The visit of the Russian Jewish revolutionary Sergius Riger, one of the leaders of the Bund in 1907, not only intensified the already bitter ideological struggle between the Jewish left and Zionism, but also gave a strong impetus to the Yiddish language as Riger was one of the most "culturally inclined leaders of the Jewish working class but also at the same time a vociferous opponent of Hebrew."(43)

However, very few would deny that the institution which really played the major role in this cultural struggle and for a long time perpetuated the dominance of the "Yiddish" over the "Hebrew" culture, i.e. the working class versus the bourgeoisie was the "landmanschaften".

It was the Yiddish language, as the strongest bond of the culture of the "Motherland" which played the most important role in the establishment of the "landsmanschaften" (the society of townsmen). These institutions proved to be the most important (together with the radical and benevolent societies) associations for the preservation of the radical culture of the "Pale of Settlement". Their membership was primarily based on kinship lines or common residence in a Russian city or region. Such societies were not a unique phenomenon in South Africa or only among Jews. In America Greeks, Italians and Jewish immigrants also organised such societies which operated as a link of the new immigrants with the "old country", with the older immigrants, and were also seen as a strong deterrent against "assimilation" with the new environment.(44)

Goren has shown the vast impact the landsmanschaften had on early Jewish

life in America, as groups which reached a large membership would in the process start to divide themselves into sub-groups based on ties of common geographical origin. He wrote that in 1917 there were approximately 1000, landsmaschaften out of 3.600 Jewish organisations, or approximately 30 per cent of the total number.[45] The reasons for a newcoming immigrant joining such an organisation were obvious. The transitional period of adjustment, the ensuing economic and cultural problems, the need for social sureness, a nostalgia for his/her home atmosphere, or more importantly an environment where the only language he/she could speak and understand was used, were only some of the reasons for the establishment of these organisations. Such an institution was a "bridge between his (the immigrants) past and future life" as Doroshkin has correctly suggested.[46] Abrahams wrote that in Cape Town landsmanschaften were established by people sharing common childhood memories. He, however, paid attention only to the religious activities of the associations by pointing out that the Jewish "orthodox" sub-sections established their own separate housed of prayer and study and later established the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation.[47] It would be a mistake however to assume that the primary function of these organisations were religious. Far from that. Although it is a fact that Russian and Lithnanian Jews were actively involved in "community" affairs and a number of them were indeed religious and participated in philanthropic associations, old-age homes and benevolent societies etc. the landsmaschaften were something more. They were institutions which brought together people with possibly different interests in life but who shared a common culture, historical roots and (more importantly) common class interests. They were also keen to preserve their rich cultural traditions through further education, readings, lectures etc. Sowden suggested that the landsmanschaften had a dual purpose, ie. social and charitable, but she insisted that their objectives were <u>essentially</u> benevolent.[48] Thus Sowden (to the same degree as Abrahams)

has completely ignored the cultural (and related to it) the political and ideological elements, which predominated within these "circles" as vividly described by an author and committed socialist who spent most years of his turbulent life in the rich and stimulating environments of the landsmanschaften, ie. L. Feldman.(49)

The members of these organisations met at different places such as restaurants, houses, bars or bussiness premises, where the new immigrants met with their old friends, compatriots and comrades. As the unemployment was rife for many of the newly-arrived immigrants, many better established persons within the "circle" felt obligated to offer employment to the newcomers and thus many of the latter ended up with the same occupation as their older compatriots.(50) What is of vital importance here, however is that the landsmanschaften were very much a Jewish working man's phenomenon, as not many Russian Jews were employers during the early days of Jewish mass emigration to the Cape or Transvaal.(51)

This phenomenon meant that Yiddish-speaking workers were closely interacting in a number of different settings. Besides the similar cultural, historical , social and economic backgrounds, they also shared the same experiences in their everyday life in their new country. Thus, a new set of interpersonal and social relationships were built. These relationships gave impetus to a "new" unique "subculture" within the Jewish community. The cooperative feelings of comradeship amongst the members of those institutions facilitated the recreation of a Yiddish-speaking culture, which was one of the most important elements of the landschaschaft. It is widely believed that the first landsmanschaft was established in 1895 and lasted for only five years. It was called "Jewish Polish Alliance". In 1896 a landsmanschaft was organised by people who lived in the Lithuanian towns of

Ponevez and Drisk.[52] During the same year, in the middle of the Anglo-Boer war, people from the Keidener area established the Keineder Society.[53] A brief look at the landsmanschaften until 1914 would give us the following picture.[54]

NAME	DATE OF FOUNDATION
Lutzin Resitsa United Benevolent Association	1905
Poshwohl Friendly Benefit Society	1904
Scavlaner Sick and Friendly Society	1911
Kovno Sick Benefit and Benevolent Society	1911
Kelmer Benefit Society	1910
Keydan Helping Hand and Benevolent Society	1900
Kroze Benefit Society	1905
United Minsk Sick Benefit and Benevolent Society	1908
Schawler Sick Benefit and Benevolent Society	1910
United Hebrew Polish Society	1911
Esras Achim D'Plungian	1904
Tels Sick Benefit and Benevolent Society	1907
Hebrew Order of David Kurland and Riya	1914
Wilner Sick Benefit and Benevolent Society	1912

Congregation of Ponevez Sick 1896
Benefit and Benevolent Society

As there are no records or other documents regarding the activities or membership lists of these societies it is impossible to establish their actual numerical strength. A life-long member of the Kovno Society of Johannesburg, however had this to say

> These were friendly, comradely groups of people. They were not middle-class bureacrats keeping books, list of names, members etc. Even in the case of the collection of funds no accounts were kept of the individuals contributions as there was absolute trust upon the leaders of the group. As for the numerical strength it is hard to say. Our society had at least four hundred members. At the meetings 50-60 came, at our socials there were one thousand five hundred. It is impossible to be precise. I believe that some societies kept books in one way or another but most of them were lost during several periods.(55)

During the early period of their establishment most of the landsmanschaften operated with few members as the number of members depended totally on the arrivals of new compatriots. In 1900 for example a society of people from Keydan had a membership of 40 people. The same number of people belonged to the society of Poshwohl which was established in November 1903 and the Society of Shadev which was organised in June 1904. Each society had its own postbox number so every letter from the "old-country" could arrive at a place where the member could collect it.(56)

It is also known, that younger members of the societies brought girls from their hometowns or from villages nearby as prospective wives. The introductions of the new ladies to their new lives occurred during social gatherings which took place in the premises of the societies.(57) In these socials Yiddish plays, poems and songs were recited and sung, and the atmosphere was a "combination of friendliness, cultural spiritualism and matrimonial introduction"as one of the participants observed.(58) The newcomers who were still bachelors regarded the societies as their true home, where they could meet their "fellow country-men in a brotherly atmosphere".(59) As Feldman has observed political discussions were not discouraged. On the contrary many of the newly-arrived immigrants through these societies renewed their party and political and ideological affiliations. In the years following 1905 some societies published pamphlets with news of "the old country", politics and cultural news, memories of their countrytowns etc.(60) None of these pamphlets seems to have survived, but according to Feldman all of them were in Yiddish. The publication of such pamphlets was very important as the Yiddish "baggage" they brought with them was based only on the spoken word. According to R. Feldman the written Yiddish of these first immigrants followed a German rather than a Yiddish pronunciation of words. This was unlike the spoken language.(61) It is thus interesting that a survey undertaken just after 1910 in Johannesburg among Jewish booksellers revealed that as many as 5.500 copies of Yiddish newspapers and journals were sold weekly including 2 000 copies of the local newspapers.(62) This, together with the fact that several well-educated Yiddishists also played a prominent role in the South African workers movement such as W. Kalk and S. Liknaitsky were the initiators of their respective landsmanschaften, indicates the significance of Yiddish as the vital link between the working class and the intelligentsia. There were several intellectuals amongst the immigrantants who continued to use Russian and Polish in their discourse and

social life, but they were too few and insignificant to be dealt with.(63) Yiddish was the mortar of the Jewish working class and artisan subculture as it was the universal language of the Russian and Polish immigrants. This language was the basis upon which the supportive institution of this subculture were rooted, ie. theatre, literature or press.(64)

During the period under investigation and while the attacks on the Yiddish language on the part of the "cultural Hebraists", the Zionists and the representatives of the Anglo-Jewish bourgeoisie were both continuous and vicious, the Yiddish newspapers in the country never attacked Hebrew or English. At the same time their editors publishers and journalists never felt necessary to defend the Yiddish language against these attacks.

The reason given by one of the keenest observers and historians of the Jewish community on the problem seems self-explanatory:

> "The Yiddishists in the early years and up until the 1940's were always sure of the superiority of the (Yiddish) language over Hebrew. They knew that the majority of the people of their generation spoke the language, loved the language, lived for the language. The People's schools were the culmination of this love and affection. The Yiddish-speaking people and journalists for that matter did not care what the Zionists thought or what Goldsmid wrote about their language. Their feelings were based on their love and understanding of the language."(65)

CONCLUSIONS

The pattern of the "struggle of languages" (Hebrew versus Yiddish) in South Africa did not differ significantly from the patterns found in the Diaspora or in the "Motherlands" (Russia or Poland). The efforts of the "Hebraists to uproot the Yiddish language although it took a "cultural" form did not adequately cover their political/ideological content. The struggle of the "Hebraists" against the Yiddishists, in other words the struggle of middle-class Zionism against the working class and its radical ideologies and culture continued for many years to come. The resistance of the Jewish working class took the forms of political or semi-political organisations such as the Yiddish-speaking branch of the International Socialist League or the Industrial Socialist League of Cape Town,(66) cultural organisations such as the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Society in Cape Town and Johannesburg(67) or the Yiddish Peoples' Schools.(68)

The defence of Yiddish as the peoples' language and its development as an integral part of the socialisation process of the younger Jewish generations in South Africa was a tough path to follow. The subsequent Zionisation of the community, the rapid dissapearance of the Jewish artisan class and the educational and economic social mobility of the Jewish population led to the ultimate demise of Yiddish as the "living language" of the Jewish working classes. However, the dedication of its pioneer teachers and speakers and an increasing awareness of the younger generation of Jews to rediscover their historical roots has led to a reorientation and rediscovery of Yiddish as a useful medium of communication. The recent rejuvenation of the language in the Diaspora especially in Britain and the U.S.A is a pattern which can have important repercussion for the younger generations of South African born Jews. Yiddish was the language of their grand-fathers and fathers and without its

knowledge it would be very difficult, if not impossible for them to re-discover the correct historical roots of the community.

(1) See E.A. Mantzaris "The Cape Town Tabacco-Makers' Strikes 1906 - 1907 and the First Workers' Cooperative Society", unpublished paper 1981.

(2) E.A. Mantzaris "Bundist Activities in South Africa" in Bulletin of the Bund Archives of the Jewish Labor Movement, New York 1981.

(3) E.A. Mantzaris "Bund, Jewish Nationalism and Assimilation in South Africa 1904 - 1912", unpublished paper, U.C.T. 1981.

(4) E.A. Mantzaris "Radical Community : The Yiddish-speaking Branch of the I.S.L." Witwatersrand History Workshop 1985.

(5) See Saron G and Hotz The Jews in South Africa, Cape Town 1955.

(6) See E Mendelsohn Class Struggle in the Pale Cambridge University Press 1970.

J. Frumkin (ed.) Russian Jewry 1860 - 1977 N.Y. 1966;
A. Antonovsky The Early Jewish Labor Movement in the United States N.Y. 1961; P. Wiernik History of the Jews in America (2 volumes) N.Y. 1931.

(7) E.A. Mantzaris "David Goldblatt : A Yiddish Revolutionary without a Cause" unpublished paper, UD-W, 1984.

(8) South African Jewish Chronicle (hereinafter S.A.J.C.) 24/6/1904.

(9) Ibid 26/10/1904

(10) Ibid 17/10/1904

(11) See Yiddish Theatre in South Africa in Zionist Chronicle 7/11/1941.

(12) See letter of "Israel" to D. Goldblatt in S.A. News 26/10/1904; Letter of E. Levi to Goldblatt in ibid 17/10/1904.

(13) Letter of D. Goldblatt to S.A. News 25/10/1904; S.A. News 28/11/1904.

(14) G. Shimoni Jews and Zionism : The South African Experience, O.V.P.

(15) M. Gitlin The Vision Amazing.

(16) E.A. Mantzaris "The Myth of Zionist Dominance in South Africa" unpublished paper U.C.T.m 1980; "Jewish Trade Unions in Cape Town 1906 - 1907" paper presented at the Third History Workshop, U.C.T., 1983.

(17) S.A. Jewish Chronicle 30/6/1905; 11/8/1905.

(18) E.A. Mantzaris "Bundist Activities in S.A." op.cit; "Jewish Trade Unions ..." op.cit.

(19) S.A. Jewish Chronicle 5/10/1906.

(20) Ibid, editorial 16/5/1907.

(21) Ibid 23/8/1907

(22) L. Feldman "Yiddish in S.A." 1910 - 1960 "Jewish Affairs" 1960 - p. 64 - 69.

(23) S.A. Jewish Chronicle 24/7/1907.

(24) Ibid 7/8/1908.

(25) Ibid 14/8/1908.

(26) Ibid 13/11/1908.

(27) Personal interview with M.H. Calminowitz Berea, Johannesburg 4/12/1978.

(28) See afvertisement which appeared in the S.A. Jewish Chronicle 18/6/1909.

(29) See S. Rappaport "J.L. Landau : Thinker and Writer" in Saron and Hotz op.cit. pp. 283-298; Also Shimoni : "Jews and Zionism" op.cit. p. 21.

(30) S.A. Jewish Chronicle 6/6/1907.

(31) Ibid.

(32) Ibid 18/6/1909.

(33) Ibid 19/12/1913.

(34) See Grossman Trends and Tendencies ... pp. 450-527.

(35) The First Yiddish Language Conference in Tchernowitz, 1908, Reports and Documents (in Yiddish) I.W.O. Publications, 1931, Vilna pp. 65-67, 106-109.

(36) S.A. Jewish Chronicle 27/3/1914.

(37) Ibid 1/5/1914 "on the Communal Step"

(38) Ibid 7/5/1914, editorial, Emphasis in the original.

(39) Ibid 30/7/1917.

(40) T. Adler "Lithuania's Diaspora : The Johannesburg Jewish Workers' Club 1928-1948" in Journal of Southern African Studies vol. 6, No. 1, October 1979, pp. 76.

(41) Mantzaris "Jewish Trade Unions in Cape Town 1906 - 1907" op.cit.

(42) Mantzaris "Bundist Activities op.cit.

(43) E.A. Mantzaris "S. Riger in South Africa" (in Yiddish) in "Unzere Zeit" Journal of the Bund Archives of the Jewish Labour Movement, 1984.
See E.A. Mantzaris "Nationalism and Assimilation : The Greek Experience in South Africa 1905 - 1913" Apollonia.No. 3.

(44) E.A. Mantzaris "Bund Jewish"
Nationalism and Assimilation op.cit; T. Kessner "The Golden Door Italian and Jewish immigrant Mobility in New York City 1880 - 1915"; O.V.P. 1977.

(45) A. Goren "New York Jews and the Quest for Community : The Kehillah Experiment 1908 - 1922 Columbia University Press, 1970, pp. 20 - 21.

(46) M. Doroshkin Yiddish in America : Social and Cultural Foundations New Jersey, No date, p. 137.

(47) I. Abrahams Western Province Jewry 1870 - 1902 in Saron G and Hotzl. The Jews in S.A. (O.V.P. 1955). pp. 40.

(48) D. Sowden "In the Transvaal till 1899" in ibid pp. 153.

(49) See L. Feldman Yidden in Dorem Afrike" (Jews in South Africa) (in Yiddish), Johannesburg 1937 pp. 115 - 116.

(50) Sowden ibid pp. 154.

(51) Feldman ibid.

(52) Ibid.

(53) Sowden ibid page 153.

(54) South African Jewish Yearbook, Johannesburg 1929.

(55) Personal interview with M.H. Calminowitz Johannesburg/Berea 4/12/1978.

(56) Feldman Yidden in Johannesburg ibid.

(57) Sowden op.cit. p. 154.

(58) Calminowitz op.cit.

(59) Feldman op.cit.

(60) Ibid.

(61) R. Feldman "Yiddish in South Africa 1910 - 1960" in Jewish Affairs, May 1960, pp. 64 - 69.

(62) This survery was undertaken by L. Feldman, who is quoted in R. Feldman "Yiddish in S.A." op.cit pp. 65.

(63) Calminowitz op.cit.

(64) M. Weinrich "History of the Yiddish Language" (translated by S. Noble) The University of Chicago Press 1973. Yivo Institute of Jewish Research

(65) G. Saron, personal interview. Johannesburg 5 June 1981.

(66) E.A. Mantzaris "The Yiddish speaking Branch" op.cit; E.A. Mantzaris The Vision of the Impossible Revolution : The Industrial Socialist League in Cape Town 1918 - 1921 in studies in the History of Cape Town, vol. 3, 1983.

(67) E.A. Mantzaris The Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Society in South Africa 1922 - 1935 :
A Defence to Assimilation" unpublished paper UD-W , 1984.

(68) E.A. Mantzaris The Yiddish Peoples' Schools in Cape Town and Johannesburg unpublished paper UD-W 1984.