



The Canonsburg Jewish Community



Thirty years ago Morris Bernstein came to Canonsburg and his is the distinction of being the first Jewish settler of that thriving and progressive community. Mr. Bernstein is now a resident of Pittsburgh. Shortly afterward Mr. D. A. Skirble came to the city and these were soon joined by several others and when the community numbered only twelve families a congregation was formed. As the tendency of some was toward Orthodoxy and others Reform, a compromise was established and a conservative form of worship was adopted. At that time the services were held in a small hall known as McNary's. Even though the congregation was so small services were conducted by Rabbi Ginsberg, who remained with the Canonsburg community until four years ago. Rabbi Simon, formerly of East Liverpool, O., succeeded him. Five years ago the congregation, named the Tree of Life, erected a synagogue at a cost of some twelve thousand dollars and today the congregation numbers thirty-five members out of a total population of forty families, which is a splendid indication of the interest taken in religious affairs in the community. And under the guidance of Rabbi Simon the interest in the congregation has been greatly developed and strengthened. Particularly noteworthy have been Rabbi Simon's efforts in training the children and he has established an unusually well organized and well conducted Sunday School. There are fifty-five children enrolled. Mr. Edward Lebovitz is Superintendent and Rabbi Simon is the principal. The teachers are D. Weiner, A. Levine, Marion Levine, Eva Levine and Ida Klee. Jacob Brown is musical director. There were six

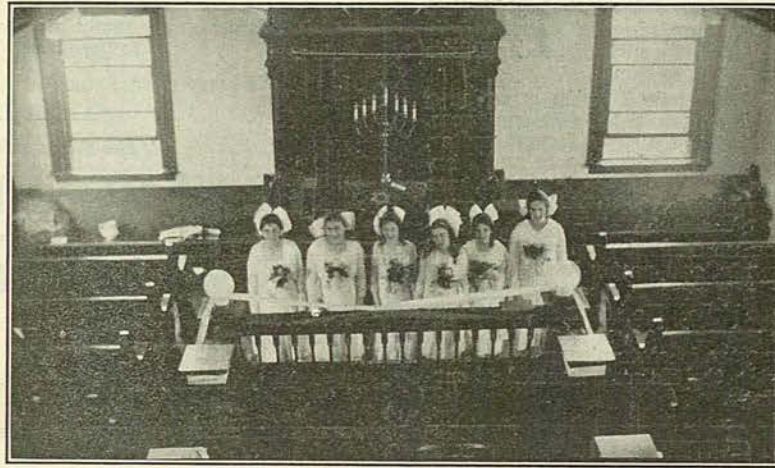
pupils in this year's Confirmation class. Miss Miriam Schoenfeld, of Pittsburgh, has assisted in organizing the school and has assisted in its promotion. The children observe the various holidays and in every detail of their work they follow the plan of the larger schools in the cities.

There is also a Hebrew School, which has an attendance of 35.

The Congregation is in excellent condition and the present officers are Samuel Berg, Presi-

Levine has been chosen a delegate to the big Chicago convention, which is to be held shortly and which will be graced by the presence of Louis D. Brandeis and Dr. Weizman, the great English Zionist. The officers are N. Berman, President; W. Brand, Vice-President; D. Weiner, Secretary; J. D. Levine, Treasurer. New officers have been elected but not yet installed. They are the President, J. Katz, and Vice-President, H. Ginsburg. There has also been

the very near future. As a result the Zionist Organization in New York is putting forth every effort in the smaller communities to add branches and to increase the interest in the movement. And it must be said that these communities, as in the case of Canonsburg, are responding. Canonsburg promised, or rather pledged itself, to raise \$1,600 for the Palestine Fund and thus far over \$600 has been contributed. As a result of this intensified campaign the membership in the Zionist organization has increased remarkably and has done much to strengthen the hands of the leaders.



Confirmation Class, Tree of Life Congregation of Canonsburg

dent; Benjamin Klee, Vice-President; Samuel Finkel, Secretary, and Jacob Morris, Treasurer.

THE ZIONISTS

The Zionists are strongly organized in Canonsburg, having a membership of 75. While the organization is of recent date, yet it has shown unusual activity and interest in all national Zionist work. Speakers have been brought to Canonsburg from New York to bring the message of Zionism. Mr. J. D.

organized about a month ago a Young People's Zionist League, which includes practically all of the younger element in the community and much activity is promised. Joseph Rosenberg is President; E. Cushner, Vice-President; Eva Levine, Secretary, and Harry Ginsburg, Treasurer. The membership at present is 25.

Great interest is being taken in the Zionist movement by reason of the probability of definite action of some kind being taken with reference to Palestine in

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

One of the most promising organizations was the Young Men's Hebrew Association, which was obliged to disband two years ago because of the war. But it is expected that now some of the leaders are returning that the association will again become active. The Y. M. H. A. movement is gaining strength every year and all over the country the Y. M. H. A.'s, which found it so difficult to make progress, are now able to secure the enthusiastic support and co-operation of their communities. Every Jewish community realizes the value of these Y. M. H. A.'s and are willing to support them. So if the Jews of Canonsburg wish to promote an organization that is essential to the very welfare of their community, their faith and their people, they should by all means encourage the re-establishment along successful lines of a Y. M. H. A.

The Ladies' Aid Society numbers about forty and has done splendid work in looking after

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the wants of the needy. Like all other patriotic groups these women, during the war, worked for the Red Cross, solicited funds for War Relief, helped collect money for Jewish war sufferers and entered heartily into all those activities which required the utmost from the nation in time of the great trial. Mrs. Berman is President; Mrs. Finkel, Vice-President; Mrs. J. Morris, Treasurer, and Mrs. Claire, Secretary.

In connection with the war activities it is not amiss to note that the Jewish residents of Canonsburg as a whole took an active interest and performed their duty in the matter of promoting all the various activities in connection with the Liberty Bond, the Red Cross, the United War Work and other campaigns. Of course the boys who went into service are entitled to a place on the roll of honor: Sergeant John Weiner, Lieut. David Weiner, Hyman Cain, Samuel Margolis, and Isadore Zeman.

This small but enterprising community keeps in touch with Pittsburgh and in every way tries to do its share in contributing those efforts that are of value in advancing the cause of Jews and Judaism. They have shown their initiative in creating organizations and societies and have indicated their appreciation of the value of the spir-

itual side of their faith in their congregational life. They are to be commended for their progressiveness and should strive to continue to develop along the

lines that they have laid down. Only by those methods and following that path will the right kind of Jewish communities be developed.

THE MOURNER

By Louis Goodman, St. Louis, Mo.

(A Tale of Those Who Mourn.)

It was late in the night.

The last electric light from a nearby restaurant had just been extinguished. The streets were dark and deserted. Here and there a flash of lightning could be seen—followed by peals of thunder, and as if signalling to some hidden friend and being answered back—the patter-patter of rain came down in torrents.

In an obscure and dilapidated hallway of an old tenement house near a certain corner in New York stood a man. A sort of a determined by dogged expression covered his face; an expression of grotesqueness and formidability—and yet a consistent individual could observe and detect in his expression a forlorn aspect, an aspect of pleading and an inexplicable susceptibility.

Who is this man?

Who is this individual who stands in an obscure hallway and is so shabbily attired? Who and what is he? A man who bears the vestige of bitter struggle and strife—of hunger and thirst and poverty. Who is this individual whose attitude is so strikingly forlorn, and vague, and homeless? Why is he so haggard and pale? Why does he tremble and shudder from time to time?

Surely this man must be insane.

From all appearances the man

seemed to be of Jewish origin. The eyes, the nose, the hair, the general appearance of the man betrayed him. Surely this individual is not the submissive, the cringing, the servile Jew! This man's eyes were glaring, red with the fire of madness, blazing with wrath and ferocious anger and reproach—yes, those eyes spoke of unlimited tortures, they held a biased and not vague enmity. Those eyes hold an inevitable tale of sorrow, distress and misery. Yes, this man is a Jew. * * * * *

The rain became a fearful torrent; again came the lightning, followed by a nerve-shattering crash of thunder . . . the winds roared, shrieked and screamed . . . and somewhere far away a little Bird called Democracy hopped on one foot, for the other was broken, endeavoring to fly, but in vain . . . and as she lay on the Road of Mankind and Civilization calling, pleading and patiently waiting for help, a man in a dilapidated hallway stood writhing in pain and misery; a man whose eyes were red, probably from weeping and blazing and penetrating vaguely the dark skies in search for someone. . . . Is he searching for a little Bird that lies crippled on a certain Road?

Old men are massacred and shot. . . . Houses are burned and de-

stroyed. . . . Young girls are forcibly taken from their wild-eyed mothers. . . . Babies shriek with pain and distress as they are taken from nourishing breasts. . . . Children are hunting in vain for dead mothers and fathers. . . . Brothers are tortured unmercifully as they endeavor to protect their sisters and parents. . . . Towns are enveloped in flames. . . . Many are seen fleeing with packs on their backs—some falling exhausted to the ground, others shot in their attempts to escape. . . . Women shriek and cry for their husbands and babies. . . . Men fall, groan and die as the minutes pass. Young men fight in desperation. . . . Blood flows . . .

And then came the newspaper reports all over the world with their brief notices: "Unofficial report that Poland is killing Jews. Poland denies accusation, says rumors are false. Poland officials state that Poland is too free and democratic to harm Jews."

And the world believed it!

Surely Poland would derive no benefit in massacring Jews. What peculiar people these Jews are—always disturbing the world's peace . . . and the world forgot!

Blood still flowed. . . . Houses crumbled into ashes. . . . Men ceased to moan. . . . Bodies still blocked the roads—and here and there a child screamed and a wild-eyed mother cried. . . .

And the man still stood in that obscure hallway. From time to time he ran into the street and back again as if looking for someone. He was wet to the bone. He shuddered. "God," he murmured reiteratingly, "Good!" He knelt on his knees and prayed fervently in a hoarse whisper!

"God of my people, have you forsaken us? What have we done to earn this punishment? How much longer shall we be stifled and choked?"

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