

HENRIETTA SZOLD

December 21, 1860–February 13, 1945

By **LOTTA LEVENSOHN***

I

HAD Henrietta Szold died at the age of forty, her passing would hardly have been noted far beyond the confines of her native city of Baltimore. Within her own community she would have been mourned as a highly intellectual, public-spirited woman who had made her mark as an educator and literary worker. Her counsels would have been missed in communal undertakings. The local Hebraists and Zionists would have lost a staunch ally in her. But it would not have been known that the Jewish people had lost a potentially great leader and nation-builder, because her gifts in those directions were to be revealed only later. Fortunately, she was granted a life-span of over eighty-four years. Fortunately, too, the latter half of her life coincided with the development of the Jewish Homeland in Palestine, where she made magnificent pioneer contributions in the fields of health, education, and social service.

Only in the fifth decade of her life did Miss Szold begin to reveal her essential greatness. In her sixth decade she became an acknowledged leader in American Zionism, and her seventh found her in the front rank of the nation-builders in Palestine. In her seventies she attained to international fame as the head of a movement for transplanting Jewish children from Germany and other lands of Nazi oppression to Palestine, where she integrated them into the pioneer life of the country. When she died in Jerusalem last winter, her passing evoked affectionate and reverent tributes

*Writer and journalist, Jerusalem.

throughout the Jewish world and far beyond. She had long been a legend; her last breath enshrined her in history.

But for a curious twist of destiny, Henrietta Szold would have been born in Goethe's Germany and not in the America of Lincoln. Her father, Rabbi Benjamin Szold, though of Hungarian birth, was so deeply steeped in the German culture of his day (he was born in 1829, while Goethe was still alive) that he had no dearer wish than to settle in Germany with his young bride, Sophia Schaar, who was also Hungarian-born and shared his enthusiasm for things German. A call from a German congregation made him completely happy. Then fate stepped in. An older colleague of Rabbi Szold had just then been invited to occupy the pulpit of the Oheb Shalom Congregation in Baltimore, but hesitated to uproot himself and his growing family from the German soil to which they were attached heart and soul. Would not young Szold, he ventured to ask, consent to exchange pulpits? There was little in the Jewish life of America in the middle of the nineteenth century to attract a highly cultivated man like Rabbi Szold, who combined wide Jewish learning with a profound knowledge of ancient and modern classics. But, with a self-abnegation that was also to characterize his eldest daughter, he sacrificed his own wishes to his friend's. That was in 1859.

Late in December 1860, the first of the Szolds' eight daughters was born in Baltimore. Her father named her Henrietta, after the brilliant and charming Henrietta Herz, whose salon in Berlin had been a center for the leading intellects of Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

It would be idle to seek to determine whether heredity or early environment contributed more toward shaping the lofty personality of Henrietta Szold. The fact is that she was very fortunate in both. From her scholarly father she inherited a noble spirit and a rich intellectual endowment, from her practical mother a strong sense of duty and remarkable executive ability. Both parents realized that she was unusually gifted and did all that lay in their power to bring out her capacities to the full.

Benjamin Szold was a passionate believer in democracy and human rights. At the age of nineteen he had fought

behind barricades in Vienna during the Revolution of 1848, and as a young newcomer to Baltimore had been one of Lincoln's few supporters in that Southern city. His political doctrines were based on the universalist teachings of the Hebrew prophets. His daughter Henrietta eagerly embraced those doctrines and integrated them, as he did, into her philosophy of Jewish life.

All her life, Henrietta Szold lived by the light of her father's dictum that "Judaism is not only a faith or a creed, but a way of life." "You cannot have Judaism in full flower," he explained, "unless you have a normal human life in which you illustrate your Jewish principles." Under the impact of the Jewish problem, Miss Szold held that "Judaism in full flower" was possible only in a national home in the Land of Israel.

With her graduation at the age of sixteen from a girls' high school in Baltimore, Henrietta's formal education came to an end. Vassar was something hardly to be dreamed of by a girl who had to begin to earn her own living as soon as possible. But she found the best of teachers in her father, who gave her a thorough grounding in Hebrew, the Bible, and Jewish history. At the same time he instructed her in the German classics and assigned her intensive reading in general history and philosophy. In her girlhood she served as her father's secretary, and in his study acquired the capacity for clear and logical exposition that was to stand her in very good stead throughout her career. From her father, too, she learned to give a warm personal touch even to formal correspondence.

Her wise mother saw to it that the girl's academic education was balanced by training for practical life. Under her expert tuition she learned to cook and bake, sew, knit, and embroider. She became her mother's deputy in the large and busy rabbinical household, and practically brought up her younger sisters.

In the Szold home, plain living and high thinking fused into a joyous whole, and to the end of her life Henrietta was to revel in memories of a happy, affectionate, and cultured family circle.

Miss Szold's professional life began soon after leaving high school. For the next fifteen years she taught English,

French, German, algebra, botany, and other subjects in a private school for girls run by impoverished Southern gentlewomen. On Saturday and Sunday mornings, she taught classes in her father's congregational school. On Saturday afternoons, she led a Bible class for adults, and on one of the other afternoons of the week a Jewish history class for adults.

While she was still under twenty, she became the Baltimore correspondent of the New York *Jewish Messenger*, in which she discussed the contemporary Jewish scene with vigor and an occasional touch of acerbity. Her rare leisure hours were given over to her one hobby, botany. This accomplished scholar was an enthusiastic lover of nature, as befitted one whose ancestors had cultivated their Hungarian vineyards with their own hands.

II

The Jewish tragedy was brought home to Miss Szold when, as a young girl, she accompanied her father to the port of Baltimore to welcome refugees from the Russian pogroms of the early 1880's. Then and there the lines of her destiny were laid down. Some of the young refugees won her for Zionism. (Those were the days when Leo Pinsker, an Odessa physician, published his pamphlet, "Auto-Emancipation" as a solution for the Jewish problem; and Russian and Rumanian pioneers were founding settlements among the swamps and sand dunes of Palestine.) She helped a group of the Russian refugees to organize the first Zionist society in Baltimore in 1893, three years before Theodor Herzl, the Viennese littérateur, published his "Jewish State" and became the founder of the modern political Zionist movement.

If Henrietta Szold took a long-range view of the solution of the Jewish problem, that did not prevent her from trying to deal with aspects of it nearer home. With a heavy heart she watched the struggles of the Russian refugees, and then, as was her way, worked out a method of helping them in a practical way. She conceived the idea of evening classes, where immigrants would be taught English, American history, bookkeeping, dressmaking, and other subjects so as to enable them to adjust themselves better to the cultural and economic life of America. She enlisted the aid of a

Hebrew literary society formed by some of the younger refugees, which she herself joined as an active member. Soon others came forward to help carry the maintenance costs, which were beyond the capacity of the students themselves, though all paid a fee. This evening school, which was one of the first opened for immigrants in the United States, was later taken over by the City of Baltimore.

Miss Szold's formal teaching career came to an end in 1893, when she resigned from her post in the girls' school. Though she had never had any pedagogical training, she was so inspiring a teacher that her lessons were joyfully recalled by her pupils when they themselves were grey-haired. She was, in fact, a born educator, and thought her way through to a theory of education of her own. At the age of twenty-seven, we find her formulating her educational creed at a Maryland State conference of teachers, and adding a touch of prophecy besides. "Do we always bear in mind," she asked, "that conveying information is only a subordinate part of the teacher's work? Do we always labor with the sole end in view of *training* the minds entrusted to our care? . . . The true utilitarian will confine his attention to those elements that educate the *man*." From this principle she proceeded to its application in the coming age. "Everywhere," she added, "we discern the fact that life in the twentieth century (she was speaking in 1887!) will not be easy to live, that it will require high courage to face the truth, steadfastness and unflinching purpose . . . The work we have to do is to prepare them for a struggle from which they will not be spared." Here she is already manifesting essential qualities of leadership: vision and foresight.

When she gave up teaching, Miss Szold did so only to enter a wider educational field. In 1893, she accepted the post of editor in the Jewish Publication Society of America, having already served on the Society's editorial board for five years. Her duties comprised criticizing and editing manuscripts, translating, compiling, indexing, proof-reading, seeing books through the press, and carrying on a ramified correspondence with authors. She defined the purpose of the Society as a "re-interpretation, in modern forms and English garb, of the Judaisms of all the centuries and all lands, and the demonstration of their essential unity."

To her exacting literary tasks Miss Szold brought not only a superior intellect, but an almost perfect memory; wide-ranging Jewish and general knowledge; an admirable English style; an excellent command of Hebrew, German, and French, and a working knowledge of Yiddish. She was thorough and conscientious to a fault; her habit of industry was amazing.

Although she held her post in the Publication Society for nearly a quarter of a century, Miss Szold never wrote a book of her own. The nearest she came to it was a monograph entitled "Recent Jewish Progress in Palestine," which was published in the *American Jewish Year Book* for 1915-16. Apart from occasional articles in the Anglo-Jewish and Zionist press, she lavished her considerable literary gifts on the work of others. She edited a condensed translation of Graetz's standard "History of the Jews," and compiled an index volume for that work. Her numerous translations (many of which she left unsigned) include "Ethics of Judaism," by the philosopher-psychologist Moritz Lazarus, the first four volumes of "Legends of the Jews," by the Talmudic scholar, Professor Louis Ginzberg, and "The Renaissance of Hebrew Literature," by Dr. Nahum Slousch, an authority on the subject. She compiled several issues of the *American Jewish Year Book* and collaborated in the preparation of many others. The public knew very little about her devoted labors until the Publication Society celebrated its semi-jubilee in 1913. After referring to the "Society's good fortune in finding a translator in the person of Miss Henrietta Szold, the Secretary to the Publication Committee," the tribute proceeded: "To speak of the literary output of the last twenty-five years is impossible without remembering some of her services as translator, as reader, as annotator, as bringing to bear, upon the preparation of manuscripts for the printer, her many-sided culture and her great Jewish enthusiasm."

When her father died in 1902, Miss Szold constituted herself his literary executor. He had published a Hebrew commentary on the Book of Job which was highly esteemed by scholars. Now she wished to prepare his unfinished manuscripts for publication. Feeling the need of further study, she enrolled as a student in the Jewish Theological

Seminary in New York, where she took courses in Hebrew, Talmud, and other subjects. (Her studies she carried on in addition to, and not in place of, her heavy daily stint of professional work.) Soon the little walkup flat she shared with her mother on West 123rd Street, opposite the old Seminary building, became a kind of salon where professors, students, and other intellectuals gathered around her — drawn by the charm of her personality, the breadth of her scholarship, and her illuminating conversation.

Rabbi Szold's unfinished manuscripts never were published. The time had come for his daughter to step out from the seclusion of her study. In New York she met Zionist leaders and came under the spell of the vibrant Zionism of the Jewish masses. Zionism was stirring the active side of her character, which had for many years been subordinated to her scholarly interests, and impelling her to undertake some specific responsibility in the movement. A simple incident pointed the way for her. One day in 1907, she was approached by Dr. J. L. Magnes, then honorary secretary of the Federation of American Zionists, on behalf of a group of girls who wished Miss Szold to join their new Zionist study circle, but were too shy to ask her themselves. True to her axiom that in Zionism "honors mean work," Miss Szold rejected the idea of honorary membership in the circle, but offered to come in as a working member. For the next two years or so, the girls studied, under her informal guidance, the works of Moses Hess, Leo Pinsker, Ahad Ha'am, and Theodor Herzl, and at the same time gained an insight into Jewish affairs in general through discussions of current events.

III

Then, in 1909, Miss Szold took a long-overdue vacation, which she spent in Europe and Palestine. Some of her friends had hinted that her first contact with Palestine might cause her to give up her Zionism. What happened was the very reverse. In summing up her attitude, she explained: "The result is that I am still a Zionist, that I think Zionism a more difficult aim to realize than I ever did before, and finally that I am more than ever convinced that

if not Zionism, then nothing — then extinction for the Jew!" It should be borne in mind that these words were written over two decades before Hitler. Before leaving Palestine Miss Szold wrote: "If I were twenty years younger, I would feel that my field is here." Thinking herself too old for Palestine at fifty, she was nevertheless to find her field there at sixty. The next ten years of Zionist work in America were inevitably to lead her to Palestine.

Returning to America, Miss Szold at once plunged into practical Zionist work. In February 1910, she became the honorary secretary of a committee to sponsor an agricultural experiment station in Palestine to be directed by Aaron Aaronsohn, a son of an early pioneer in Samaria and Palestine's first agricultural scientist. Several years previously, Aaronsohn had astonished the scientific world by discovering the long-sought original wild wheat in a Galilean vineyard and on the slopes of Mount Hermon, — a discovery which opened up possibilities for the growing of wheat by dry-farming methods in arid regions.

Later in the year 1910, Miss Szold was persuaded to accept the honorary secretaryship of the Federation of American Zionists, where she undertook to clear up an administrative muddle that taxed even her skill and patience to the utmost. But clear it up she did, though she was not at all well at the time, and soon after came down with a serious illness.

In the meantime, Miss Szold had reported some of the things she had seen in Palestine to her Zionist study circle. She told the girls about Jewish women who had to be delivered in their miserable hovels or else go to mission hospitals where their infants were certain to be baptized, and about thousands of Jewish children who were being blinded by trachoma for lack of prophylactic measures. "Let us stop talking," she urged, "and do something!"

After months of discussion and planning, a meeting was called on February 24, 1912, in the vestry rooms of the old Temple Emanu-El in New York, where a society was formed with a two-fold program: to establish and maintain a system of district visiting nursing in Palestine and to foster Zionist education in America. Miss Szold was elected president as a matter of course. The name "Hadassah" was chosen mainly because the meeting was held at Purim

(Queen Esther's Hebrew name was Hadassah), but also because, for some unremembered reason, Hadassah had been the name of the study circle, which formed the core of the new society. The latter started with less than forty members.

In founding and developing Hadassah, Miss Szold displayed a multiplicity of talents, a resourcefulness, and a capacity for getting others to work that may have been a revelation even to herself. She was equal to any and every demand made upon her as leader of the growing organization; in fact, she often created those demands herself. "We can do anything," she once said in the early days. In her own person she combined the functions of organizer, writer, and public speaker; executive and parliamentarian; mentor, educator, and leader. An educator she had always been, but here she was faced with a very difficult task: to train mature women, to transform housewives, teachers, secretaries, and librarians into capable voluntary workers able to turn their hands to any task Hadassah might require of them. Even more, she taught them to work together as a self-disciplined army in which it became second nature to subordinate personal convenience to Zionist duty. If, as she was glowingly to describe it many years later, Hadassah is a "marvellous, flexible, well-oiled machine," it is because she herself built it up with unprecedented precision and skill.

In the year 1945, Hadassah's membership is nearing the 200,000 mark. Its chapters are to be found in almost every State of the Union. It maintains the largest Jewish health service in Palestine, culminating in the Hadassah University Medical Center on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. At the present writing, Hadassah and the American Friends of the Hebrew University are jointly raising a fund of several million dollars for an undergraduate medical school, which will be the first in Palestine. Hadassah's responsibilities in Palestine also include Youth Aliyah, of which it is the largest sponsor; a network of educational and child welfare services; and the acquisition of land, through the Jewish National Fund, for pioneer settlement. This close association with the new Jewish life in Palestine is reflected in scores of thousands of homes of Hadassah members in America in the form of

intensified traditional observance and the fostering of Hebrew culture.

When Miss Szold founded Hadassah, she combined the presidency of the organization with her professional duties, a feat accomplished only by her will power and unusual physical stamina. But the more she revealed her capacity for leadership, the greater seemed the pity that she did not devote herself to it altogether. It was questioned, too, whether she could go on indefinitely as she was doing. A group of her friends felt this so keenly that in 1916 they relieved her of the necessity for earning her own living. She resigned from the Jewish Publication Society after twenty-three years of service, and used her new freedom to work harder than ever. She was then fifty-five years of age. Happily, she had almost thirty years of life before her, during which she continually revealed fresh creative powers that seemed to be drawn from some hidden perennial spring.

In 1916, the World Zionist Organization appealed to the Zionists of America to send medical help to Palestine, where the war had left few doctors and no drugs to cope with the epidemics that were rife throughout the country. With the backing of the Zionist Organization of America and the Joint Distribution Committee, Hadassah undertook to organize an American Zionist Medical Unit for Palestine. The task of organization fell to Miss Szold and her efficient lieutenants.

Next Miss Szold worked out a more suitable plan for the organization of the Zionists of the United States, which was based on geographical units instead of on sporadic societies. When the plan was adopted, she took a very active share in the complicated task of reorganization. And once that was accomplished, she organized and headed an educational department in the newly constituted Zionist Organization of America.

As might have been foreseen, Miss Szold eventually had to follow the American Zionist Medical Unit to Palestine. Administrative and public relations problems of great complexity arose when the Unit tried to carry out its functions in Palestine, and a year and half after its arrival in 1918, its director appealed for help from America. Miss Szold arrived early in 1920, and at once plunged into the maze

of problems. She traveled up and down the country, observing the activities of the Unit at first hand and acquainting herself with the health situation in general. In particular, she studied the health needs of the pioneer immigrants, who fell an easy prey to the prevalent malaria. Not content to limit herself to the task in hand, though it teemed with perplexities, she turned her attention to the political situation of pre-mandated Palestine, which was very unsettled; to the harassing Arab problem; and to the unclear economic prospects. All the while she was making the acquaintance, at first hand, of the heterogeneous communities that make up the Yishuv.

When the director of the Unit had to go abroad on business, Miss Szold several times took entire charge of the work as his deputy. On one such occasion, she wryly asked her family: "Isn't it ridiculous that I should be directing hospitals, nurses' training schools, laboratories, clinics, school hygiene, and most medical service?" It was not, in sober fact, ridiculous at all. She was an able and thoroughly informed executive, and technical medical knowledge was not necessary for her purpose. All in all, she found that the Unit was doing an excellent job. Although she knew its faults as well as anyone and was a severe critic besides, she could bring herself to question whether "any such big piece of constructive work had ever before been done in a 'colony' even by the greatest imperialistic powers." The tiny seed she had planted in America was bearing sound fruit in Palestine. It was during this period that the temporary Medical Unit was converted into the permanent Hadassah Medical Organization of today.

The two years for which Miss Szold had consented to go to Palestine lengthened into three, but still she was held fast by the Medical Unit's incessant demands on her time and energy. Then came an overriding summons from America: one of her sisters was stricken with a mortal disease.

IV

When Miss Szold returned to America in 1923, she found Hadassah a thriving, expanding organization with a strong sense of responsibility for its Palestinian "child." She was

immediately drawn back into the leadership, and served as president for several years. It seemed then that, except for the occasional trips she took to Palestine on Hadassah business, she would spend the rest of her life in America.

But the Zionist Congress of 1927 disposed otherwise by electing her to the Palestine Zionist Executive, a non-party triumvirate, whose other members were the late Col. F. H. Kisch and Mr. Harry Sacher. To Miss Szold, the first woman elected to the Zionist Executive, fell the portfolios of Health and Education. She assumed office under most inauspicious circumstances. Palestine was in the throes of a severe economic depression, following a "boom"; the scanty Zionist resources were being drained to the utmost by a dole paid to thousands of unemployed laborers; the director of the Hebrew school system had resigned in protest against a severe cut in his budget. Upon Miss Szold devolved the trying task of balancing the educational budget without inflicting a vital injury upon the school system. The situation was still further exacerbated by the conflicting claims of the Zionist parties in the educational field. Miss Szold's talents as an educator and organizer stood her in good stead in those days; so did her skill and patience in negotiation. Her greatest asset was that all concerned had complete trust in her integrity and impartiality. Single handed she saved the kindergartens by personally raising their budget.

To her Health Department Miss Szold brought a large fund of experience acquired during her Medical Unit-Hadassah days. The scope of the Department included malaria, typhoid, and dysentery control; sanitary inspection of rural settlements; care of chronic invalids; building of new hospitals; hospitalization of mental and tubercular patients; control of immigrants at embarkation ports so as to exclude chronic cases. In her negotiations with the Government of Palestine, Miss Szold stressed the inadequacy of the health legislation and urged the enactment of a compulsory health insurance law. Simultaneously she helped the Jewish health agencies to coordinate their activities, and urged the local community to make larger contributions toward the maintenance of the health services.

Either of the two Departments of the Palestine Zionist Executive would have been enough to tax the powers of

one half her age. Nevertheless, Miss Szold often carried all the major responsibilities of the Executive, including political negotiations, during the frequent absences of her colleagues. (She always insisted that they must go when their presence was required abroad, though she knew very well what was in store for her.) How did she stand up to the excessive strain? One of her colleagues furnished the answer: "Her selflessness goes so far that even bodily fatigue disappears under the control of her will power, which is relentless when applied to her own person."

In 1929, Miss Szold was elected to the Executive of the newly formed Jewish Agency for Palestine, in which Zionists and non-Zionists are represented in equal numbers, but resigned some months later and returned to America. Nearing seventy now, she was very, very tired; and it seemed as if, at long last, she would allow herself the quiet and serene old age she had always thought she wanted. In 1931, however, she was back in Palestine in response to a call from Keneseth Israel, the new Jewish Community Organization of Palestine, which had been founded under the authority of the Mandatory Government. She was asked to serve on the executive committee of Keneseth Israel as the member responsible for the transfer of the Health and Education services from the Jewish Agency to Keneseth Israel. This opportunity of doing a "definite piece of organization work," of which she thoroughly approved as the foundation for communal life in Palestine, appealed to her irresistibly. So, said she, "I go back!"

She went back, but not only to arrange for the transfer of the services.

When she had spoken of Palestine as her "field" in 1909, she was probably thinking in terms of social service. On her return in 1920, she had encouraged a group of women to organize a social service association that is doing excellent work to this day. Small wonder, therefore, to find her reporting in 1931 that "with temerity unprecedented, I am charging myself with the task of organizing the central bureau for the social work being done in the whole of Palestine. This bureau is the undertaking of the Vaad Leumi [executive body] of Keneseth Israel." Her "temerity," as she called it, may have been due to her lack of professional

training in the social service field; but she consoled herself with the thought that "ordinary common sense with even a few grains of general experience with men and their affairs will go a long way toward clearness and organized relations before the fine points of social science or art can be usefully applied." For all that, she set about at once to consult all the professional and voluntary workers who had anything of value to impart on the "fine points."

Apart from placing the multifarious social welfare agencies under centralized control, Miss Szold also had to convert the community to the idea that modern social service is no less essential, no less constructive, in the nation-building enterprise, than settlement on the land, the promotion of industry, and the like. Many otherwise progressive people then disdained social service as "unproductive" or "philanthropic" or ignored it altogether. Miss Szold then launched a countrywide campaign to convince them to the contrary, pointing out wherever she went that modern social service was a remedy for social maladjustment, that it transformed the backward and underprivileged into useful citizens. Often to her own surprise, she found eager and intelligent volunteers to work with her once they were convinced of the rightness of her plans. These lieutenants she called her "intermediate public," that is to say, those who assisted both the beneficiaries of the social service and the professional social workers. With their help she built up urban and rural social service bureaus and corrective institutions like G'vot, which were attached to the local community organizations or municipalities, and through them affiliated with her central bureau.

Family case work, in which the unit to be aided is the family and not the individual, forms the central activity of the Social Service Bureau, and is directed in particular to children and maladjusted immigrants. (Before the introduction of family case work, the numerous agencies dealt only with individual problems, never with those of the family as a whole.) The problem of Jewish juvenile delinquents,

which no one in the community had ventured to tackle before, was brought by Miss Szold into her social service scheme under the authority of the Government's chief probation officer.

Upon her initiative, a training school for social workers, the first in Palestine, was opened in Jerusalem. She arranged conferences of professional and voluntary social workers that proved increasingly successful from year to year, and did much to win public support for modern methods of social service. All these activities meant frequent and long trips out of Jerusalem because Miss Szold firmly believed in personal contacts and discussions. Indefatigably, disregarding her "tired heart," she made the rounds despite the hot desert winds of midsummer and the heavy, cold rains of midwinter. She was not deterred from her routine even when the disturbances of 1936-1939 made the roads of Palestine highly unsafe for travel. At first she agreed to travel in the convoys; then, finding that convoys were time-consuming, she often went in unescorted vehicles, explaining that at her age she had no time to waste.

In 1939, Miss Szold retired as head of the Central Social Service Bureau, but retained to the last the chairmanship of the local Jerusalem bureau, which had the most difficult conditions in all Palestine to cope with. While she was still working hard to organize the social service for Keneseth Israel, her final and greatest opportunity for service came to her in the form of Youth Aliyah (Migration).

V

The year 1933 brought throngs of refugees from Germany to Palestine, many of whom were all but destitute. Those came naturally within the scope of the Central Social Service Bureau and its local affiliates. But there were as yet no funds. Miss Szold headed a drive for the needy refugees, the first of its kind in Palestine, and obtained what she considered fairly satisfactory results. In any event, she was

able to do much to help refugees make their initial adjustments.

In October 1933, Miss Szold represented Palestinian Jewry at a general conference held in London to consider ways and means of meeting the German situation. From London she went to Hitler's Berlin, "entirely," as she put it, "in the interest of the children," and took the initiative in shaping the incipient plans of the German Jews for transferring adolescents to Palestine. Two months later she was writing from Jerusalem: "My new job, the organization of the transfer of children from Germany to Palestine, is growing under my hands from day to day. It deals with children — it is not child's play. The responsibility is great." The opportunity, also, was great, and she rose to it superbly. But not at the expense of leaving her social service plans in the lurch. "The children's undertaking," she reported, "is, of course, added to my social organization work." She was then in her seventy-fourth year, and her heart was definitely rebelling against the strains imposed upon it.

The purpose of the Youth Aliyah was defined as the rescue of the bodies and the redemption of the souls of the German-Jewish youth. A Youth Aliyah Bureau, headed by Miss Szold, was set up in Jerusalem under the new German Department of the Jewish Agency. Once more she was having to blaze trails of her own in virgin fields. The whole experiment of transplanting children was unparalleled in human history. Miss Szold was faced on one hand with complicated political and administrative problems, on the other with an educational undertaking lacking all precedents. She pointed out that "a new language was to be taught, one which was built up on linguistic principles utterly removed from the ken of the German-speaking youth. . . Nor was Hebrew the only province to be conquered; the average young Jew from Germany was a stranger in the whole of the Jewish spiritual domain." Besides, there were "the psychic conflicts attached to adolescence, and no less attached to a transfer from parental care to a degree of

self-dependence upon communal authority." The adolescents (they were fifteen to seventeen years old) also had to be adjusted to "the peculiar conditions of life in Palestine" and to undergo the "change from an individualistic form of life in the family to the collective form" of the communal settlements in which the great majority of the Youth Aliyah wards are trained.

The educational program elaborated by Miss Szold for the first Youth Aliyah group in 1934 is still followed in all its essential parts. It provides for a two-years' apprenticeship in agricultural settlements, where the day is divided between work and study. The practical training includes all work done on the farms, mechanical as well as agricultural, while the plan of study comprises Hebrew, Jewish history, Jewish literature, and the geography of Palestine as a cultural background. Physics, botany, and chemistry are studied as a theoretical background for the agricultural activities.

By far the greater number of Youth Aliyah wards have chosen the agricultural-pioneering life, either joining existing settlements or founding new ones of their own. Of the 13,000 adolescents transferred to Palestine up to 1945, 10,000 are already "graduated" from Youth Aliyah; and of the 10,000 "graduates," 7,000 are engaged in agriculture, fishery, industry, and crafts on the land. Others are teachers, musicians, and research workers. Fifteen hundred enlisted in the armed forces to fight their worst enemy. Not all are of German origin. As conditions progressively worsened in Europe, Youth Aliyah groups were transferred from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Greece, and Turkey. Some were even brought from Iraq and the Yemen. And several groups of underprivileged Palestinian children have been successfully integrated into the Youth Aliyah scheme of agricultural training.

Miss Szold must have known personally thousands of her Youth Aliyah wards. Officially, she knew the case of each and every one. Most she had welcomed on their arrival at

the port of Haifa, and from there accompanied them to their host-settlements in order to see that they were properly installed. She discussed their problems with them on her frequent visits to the settlements, and in special cases invited them to come to Jerusalem for a talk with her.

Miss Szold was concerned as much with the Palestinian child as with the child immigrant. For a quarter of a century she pondered the plight of the child in Palestine, which was due chiefly to the lack of a compulsory education law and to defective child labor legislation. Finally, she worked out a plan based on the famous Swiss "Pro Juventute," and established a Palestinian counterpart to the extent that local conditions would permit. On December 21, 1941, her eighty-first birthday, she formally set up a Children's Foundation (Lemaan Hayered ve-Hanoar) under the aegis of Keneseth Israel, and turned over to it sums of money she had received as birthday gifts at various times from Hadassah and the Palestinian community as the beginnings of a trust fund. In this way she set up a system of communal guardianship for the community's children. Soon after her passing the Foundation was named for her, and it is the hope of the trustees soon to be able to bring up the trust fund to at least £P 100,000, so as to yield an income sufficient for its numerous research and coordinating activities. In Miss Szold's view the Children's Fund was of equal importance in the national scheme with Keren Hayesod and the Jewish National Fund, the two major financial instruments of the Zionist movement in Palestine.

VI

The sum of Henrietta Szold's achievements does not by any means add up to the total of her personality. She was greater than all her deeds taken together. Much as in her modesty she would have deprecated such a statement, she was in the true line of the prophetic tradition as a moral force. Like the prophets, she believed that the golden age

lay in the future, which is another way of saying that she believed in the perfectibility of mankind. That was the motive power that animated all her efforts as educator and organizer, for she aimed at perfection in whatever field she took as her own. In her absolute concentration on duty, she sternly denied herself what in her extreme old age she wanted most: to return to her dearly loved family in America, which she cherished as the land of her birth even as she revered Palestine as the land of her people. "One has a conscience," she said when discussing the matter; and so made her decision.

To those not privileged to know her, Miss Szold might have seemed remote and unapproachable. She was, in fact, anything but that. She was accessible to all who sought her out, and never failed to hearten even those whom it was not in her power to help. Multitudes of friends flocked to her simple lodgings in Jerusalem, drawn as much by her great womanly charm, her wise conversation, and her flashing humor as by respect for her vast achievements. Rarely did anyone leave her presence without feeling somehow uplifted, better and wiser than when he came.

Miss Szold's seventieth, seventy-fifth, and eightieth birthdays were widely celebrated both in America and in Palestine. Honors were lavished upon her, and the love and esteem in which she was universally held were manifested on all sides. Her eightieth birthday was a public holiday in Palestine, particularly for the children. The peak of the celebrations was reached in an assembly of hundreds of Youth Aliyah wards and graduates at the Ben Shemen Children's Village. With it all, she was truly averse to receiving personal tributes; in fact, they were a sore trial to her modesty. When the national Jewish institutions in Jerusalem insisted on commemorating her eightieth birthday at a public reception, she consented only on condition that there be no more than three speakers, and that those three confine themselves to reviewing the developments of the previous eighty years in Jewish life as reflected in Zionism, America, and Palestine.

In her reply to the eulogies she could not entirely evade, she declared that, for her own part, she was much more aware of the things she had failed to do than of those she had done.

Henrietta Szold has passed out of our sight, but she lives on in our midst. Her inspiring words are treasured, her great works surround us on every side. Blessed be her name and her memory.