

Hebrew and German
From the Shavei Tzion Archives
Judith Temime July, 2015

The majority of the founders of **Shavei Tzion** were not Zionists by affiliation but rather immigrated to Palestine in 1938 and 1939 in the framework of the bold imitative undertaken in **Rexingen** when it became clear that life for Jews in Germany was untenable. Those settlers who had identified themselves as Zionists in Germany and had belonged to Zionist organizations had had both the impetus and opportunities to acquire at least a modicum of modern, spoken Hebrew. The familiarity with Hebrew of the other pioneers likely began and ended with the language of the prayers and blessings. With great effort and tenacity, in a series of lessons that were conducted here for years, some of the settlers succeeded in achieving competence in Hebrew. But for others, the Hebrew spoken in the Land of Israel remained a hindrance, and a mystery.



Evening Hebrew lesson, **Shavei Tzion**, 1962. From left: **Betty Linver, Menachem (Menko) Berlinger, Yehudit Marx** and **Leopold Marx**. Photo by **Moshe Pridan**.
Courtesy of the National Photo Collection, State of Israel.

On the eve of World War II, the Zionist "Hechalutz" organization counted 1000,000 young members in 19 countries, "from Damascus to San Francisco". In a brief German-language information booklet entitled "Who is Hechalutz?" published in 1933 by the organization and aimed at "every Jewish youth", we read the underlying conviction of the organization: "The situation of the Jews in the Diaspora, in the Galut, is utterly hopeless." The booklet enunciates the Hechalutz platform: "The route to labor and homeland for Jewish youth is...*(through)* spiritual change. The Jews of the different countries, who speak various languages and are the product of various cultures, must gather in Palestine. From North America and South Africa, from Russia and from Argentina, from Germany and from Iraq, our youth must stream toward the homeland. Without Hebrew, Palestine will become a new Diaspora...only through Hebrew will the Jews become sympathetic toward one another; only through Hebrew will it be possible to create an independent form of new Jewish culture; only through Hebrew will we see a furtherance of our activities; only in this way will we become mentally free. Jewish labor in Palestine is the first step in assuring the revival of Hebrew. Thus, the path of Jewish settlement, pioneering *(and)* the mission everyone will adopt: the acquisition of homeland, labor and language."

To the information campaign that Hechalutz waged on behalf of Hebrew as the national language, the organization enlisted both emotion and logic. However, before the founding of the State of Israel, the status of Hebrew in Palestine sometimes provoked loud debate, and the German language was sometimes at the heart of the confrontation. From the fall of 1913, a strident "War of Languages" was fought in Palestine, centering on the question of the language of instruction at the "Technikum", that is, the nascent Technion (Institute of Technology) soon to be opened in Haifa. The supporters of German claimed that it would be impossible to teach technical subjects in Hebrew because of the lack of instructors competent in Hebrew and, moreover, because of the dearth of indispensable scientific terms in the Hebrew lexicon. With that, at the beginning of 1914, after many persons had been enlisted to "defend" Hebrew, and with the use of fiery posters and mass public meetings, it was decided that the primary language of instruction at the Technion would be Hebrew. After the "War of Languages", Hebrew was recognized in most circles as the incontestable language of the Jewish Settlement (the Yishuv) in Palestine.

The British Mandate in the Land of Israel sanctioned Hebrew, along with English and Arabic, as one of the official languages. Beyond the official uses that the authorities had decreed, Hebrew became the language of the street, at least among the more veteran settlers. Immigrants brought with them their native languages and then, with a greater or lesser degree of difficulty, learned Hebrew. In contrast to adult immigrants, immigrant children (as children everywhere who find themselves in the environment of a new language), tended to learn Hebrew quickly and enthusiastically. Adult immigrants (as adults everywhere who find themselves in the environment of a new language), tended to conserve their native languages, at least in private settings. There were some calls for the institution of Yiddish as a unifying national language, but the use of any "alien" language was widely considered harmful to the status of Hebrew and damaging to the momentum of Zionism. In 1923, students and others founded the "League of Defenders of the Language in the Land of Israel", and they acted militantly to assure the ascendancy of Hebrew.

Posters published and displayed by the League demanded, "Hebrew man, speak Hebrew!" and League members intervened to prevent the use of foreign languages in private conversations in the street and in discourse in public meetings. Thus, for example, a poster declared, "The entire Hebrew public will champion the value of our language and it will, at long last, govern our lives...Be strong and of good courage! Be vigilant of the language; fight its war and win---!"

אל הצבור העברי בארץ!

מיסדותינו הפרטיים והצבוריים אינם מתיחסים בכבוד ראש לשאלת השפה בארץ ומולאים בה לעתים קרובות. הממשלה ומוסדותיה שבתו כמעט כי יש לנו העברים שפה לאומית והיא פונה לרב אל התושבים העברים בשפה זרה להם. בשוק, בחנויות, במקומות מקה וממכר, משא ומתן – השפה השלטת לרב אינה עברית. עיי אדישות הצבור שלנו וקלות העתו הולך ורב הולול בשפתנו, שהוא אחד מיסודות קיומנו בארץ!

למען תשלט השפה העברית בחיינו הפרטיים והצבוריים, למען תכיר הממשלה סוף סוף, ששפתנו היא עברית ורק עברית ובי אין אנו מבינים או רוצים להבין את כל הכתוב ומדפס על ידה בשפה אחרת, עלינו לשנות את יחסנו אנו כלפי שפתנו. ועיב הגנו פנים אל כל הצבור העברי בארץ בדרושה –

אל הפקוד העובד במשרדו:

אל תוציא מתחת ידך אף מכתב הכתוב בשפה אחרת וולת עברית!

כל הכתוב אליך בשפה זרה אל תקבל! (דברים אמורים כיום למכתבים הכתובים ושלוהים בארץ).

נהל את ספרדיך אך בעברית!

אל הסוחר והרוכל:

ללקוחותיך ענה רק עברית!

כל מקה וממכר, משא ומתן נהל אך ורק בשפה העברית!

אל הקונה:

בקש ושאל אך בעברית ואם לא יבינה, הקשה את לבך, הסבר פנים ופעמים

עד אשר תקבל את הדרוש לך!

אל כל קהל העברים:

מכתבים, השבועות, דברי כתב השלוחים ממוסד ממשלתי, צבורי או פרטי בארץ

שאינם כתובים עברית אל תקבלו!

שלוחים חורה הוספת המלים: **אנו מבינים רק עברית!**

את הכתבות על מעטפות מכתבים הנשלחים בארץ כתבו אך ורק עברית

מבלי הוספת שם העיר בלועזית! (המכתבים יישו לשיעורם בלבד).

בקשות ומכתבים למוסדות ממשלתיים, צבוריים ופרטיים כתבו אך ורק בעברית

מבלי הוספת כל תרגום שרוא!

עיי הוספת התרגום הנכם מוכרחים שאין לשפה העברית כל ערך ושאינה שפה רשמית בארץ, ואם תפגע

במעצורים מגיל כתבכם עברית או בדומנעכם לקבל כתב ידוע הכתוב בשפה זרה, אל תרתעו!

המטובו ללכת בדרך זו כי שבר הדבר בצדו מעשים אלה מלבד זה שיש בכחם להרים את ערך שפתנו

הם גם ירמיו באופן ישר להתרבות הפקודים העברים במוסדות הממשלה ומוסדות צבוריים אחרים.

כמו כן הגנו הודשים מכל הצבור העברי בארץ לכל עבר בשתיקה על כל פגיעה בכבוד שפתנו ולחודיע עליה בהקדם

להנהגת גדרו מנגי השפה.

הגנו בשוחים כי בהתאמנות כל הצבור העברי ידוע ערך שפתנו והיא השלטת סוף סוף בחיינו וקראתנו היא:

חוק ואמין! אל תערין ואל תחת! קנא לשפתך, לחם את מלחמתה ותנצח!

הלאה! שם תהיה. גדרו מנגי השפה. מחלקת המסדות.

כתבת משרד גדרו מנגי השפה: נחלת בנימין, בית דוד ברוך (רוזנשטיין) אי: תבת דאר 160.

הרב קאמניצקי, ראשול העיר, סלאב – 25 הסודות לקח הקטן של

Poster of the "League of Defenders of the Language", 1924.

Zalman Pevzner Collection of Posters and Leaflets.

Courtesy of the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel-Aviv University.

In the 1930s and 40s, the battle against foreign languages focused on the hostility to German, which was identified with the evil operations of Hitler and his helpers.

In July 1935, *The Palestine Post* reported that the daily newspaper *Orient Express*, printed in German in Beirut and aimed "exclusively at German readers in Palestine", would no longer be published due to the opposition of the Association of German Immigrants in Palestine (H.O.G.) and of "additional sectors among the Jews of Palestine". H.O.G.'s opposition to the German-language newspaper is surprising on the face of it, but the Association was actually tirelessly active on behalf of the assimilation of German-speaking immigrants and already in March 1933, its *Mitteilungsblatt (MB)* newsletter announced: "First of all, we will provide instruction in the Hebrew language and publicize practical opportunities for its study. That objective is directly linked to our aim of helping our people take root in the Yishuv, both practically and ideologically." The achievement of that goal was, however, not yet at hand and, except for a single page translated into Hebrew, that newsletter of 1933 was published in German.

Later issues of the H.O.G newsletter included more material in Hebrew, including entire articles and some of the headings of commercial advertisements placed therein. In October 1934, the directors of H.O.G. addressed "...persons who place advertisements! ...The role of the booklet (*that is, the MB newsletter is to*) help the immigrants to cope and to settle in in the country. The goal of the booklet is to give the immigrants opportunities to read in German such advertisements as may be of importance and significant value to their assimilation. But publication of the booklet only in German is considered only temporary. Slowly, the immigrant must become familiar with Hebrew and its use. Therefore, insofar as it is possible, we ask that all advertisers compose their announcements in both German and Hebrew. Ads in both languages serve the reader as interesting study (*material*). Apart from the educational value of such advertisements, retained in (*the reader's*) memory, they are also more engaging. "

In March 1939, *Davar*, the veteran Hebrew daily newspaper founded as "The Newspaper of the Workers of the Land of Israel", brought its readers a report concerning "the defense of Hebrew and Hebrew culture" which cited activities and proclamations voicing objections to the appearance in Palestine of the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau (Jewish World Review, JWR)*. Thus, the declaration of the Committee for the Hebrew Language: "The publication and distribution of a foreign-language newspaper in the Land greatly endangers the authority of Hebrew in the life of the Yishuv (*which is*) the most valuable achievement of the period of revival, (*won through*) great battles and with tremendous spiritual effort. The Committee for the Hebrew Language appeals to the publishers and distributors of (*JWR*) and demands that they cease their activities which undermine the solidarity of culture and language of our scattered people who have returned to build up the ruins of the homeland".

On the same page of that issue, *Davar* published the opinion of the Association of Hebrew Writers in Palestine: "Not a few concessions having to do with language have been made by the Yishuv for the benefit of our brothers the German immigrants, from a desire to ease as much as possible (*the transition*) of these brothers, these returnees to Zion, from the upheaval they have experienced in their lives, and in order to bring them closer to the new life in (*the Land of*) Israel of (*our*) unified and unifying language. But we must note, with sorrow, that those concessions have been interpreted by some of the German immigrants as if they were an affirmation of the special privileges of the German language and (*as if it were*) possible and permissible to forgo learning the Hebrew language—the very foundation of our national and cultural solidarity in the Land."

From 1902, until the Nazi prohibition against its publication in 1938, the *Jüdische Rundschau* had been the journal of the Zionist Federation of Germany. The opposition to a German-language newspaper in Palestine, voiced in 1939 by the Committee for the Hebrew Language, Student Union and many others, was aimed at the *Jüdische Welt-Rundschau*, which replaced the outlawed *Jüdische Rundschau*, from March 1939. The paper, during its brief life, was edited in Jerusalem and then printed in France for distribution to 60 countries. The same fiery collection of opinions and proclamations printed in *Davar* in the first month of the *JWR*'s publication, included the report of a conference in Tel Aviv which had featured 12 speeches which noted, among additional complaints, "the disrespect shown Hebrew in public places (*and*) in kindergartens which are conducted in German". From an article by **Thomas von der Osten-Sacken** in the journal *Kesher* published by Tel Aviv University in 2002, we learn to what degree the opposition to the *JWR* was connected to political maneuvering in the Yishuv, and to what degree the supporters of the paper feared that German-speaking Jews might be isolated and estranged from Zionism. In any case, in 1940, with the invasion of France and its neighbors by the army of the German Reich, the *JWR*, which had served 60,000 German-speakers in Palestine and many others around the world, ceased publication and the voice of German Zionism was heard thereafter only from the pages of the H.O.G. *Mitteilungsblatt*.

Hostility toward German was expressed as well by the wider public, in letters to the editors of the daily newspapers. On December 6, 1935, **Zev Segal** wrote to *Davar*, "Dear Editor, Please print the following letter, the answer I sent to an agent who wrote to me in German: (*I wrote*) 'I received your letter in German, but you should know that I don't reside in Hitler's country, but in the homeland, the Land of Israel, and a person who wishes to write a letter to a Jew who lives in the Land, and

especially if the writer is also, as it appears to me, a Jew, must write in Hebrew. The time has come, dear sir, for you to understand your place in this, our country. I regret that I must reject your proposal, as I have not even read it.' "

In a letter to the editor of *HaMashkif* on December 17, 1941, **Chemda Giladi** wrote, " The 'freedom of speech' abused by the speakers of foreign languages in the Yishuv and especially (*by the speakers of*) the language of the enemy, has often infuriated nationalist Jews...The English quickly found a way to stop the mouths of German speakers. When German refugee immigrants were streaming into England, every Englishman was equipped with notes that read, 'Speak your foreign language in a whisper.' and those notes were thrust into the hands of refugees speaking foreign languages... An association of nationalist women (*in the Land of Israel*) which sees as its chief function fighting the impertinent foreign language which would hold sway over most of the people of the Yishuv, has decided to adopt the English method. We have printed a multitude of notes, which read: 'Jew! You must speak Hebrew and if you are not yet competent in the language, speak your own foreign language in a whisper when you are in the street or in a public place.' This appeal is made first to those who do know Hebrew: they will lower their voices when meeting (*other*) persons (*speakers of foreign languages*) who disrespect our language...our hope is that many of the refugees will be shamed by those mute notes and will reach the appropriate conclusions. If the members of the nationalist movement help us to disseminate the notes, we shall be able to banish the voices of that irritating choir of foreign languages in the streets of the Yishuv."

But how was one to learn Hebrew in such a charged atmosphere? In 1995, Bonn, Germany was host to an exhibition entitled *The "Jeckes" in Israel, the Contribution of German-speaking Immigrants to Building the State of Israel*. The exhibition catalogue notes the difficult experience of those immigrants in acquiring Hebrew: the strange alphabet and the direction in which Hebrew is written and read which, of course, are a burden to all immigrants, but also the large number of German immigrants who had been academics and professionals for whom language was a critical tool and who, upon their immigration, felt themselves obstructed. Perhaps more than anything, there was the association of German with the Nazi regime. The catalogue tells us that "the fate of the Jeckes (*Yekkes*) in Israel, who could not deny their passion for European culture and for the German language..." has become an important theme in Israeli literature in recent years. The catalogue quotes as well the German-Jewish author and poet **Schalom Ben-Chorin** in a passage titled "Language as Homeland": "A man may emigrate from his country but not from his mother tongue".

Already in September 1932, the first issue of the newsletter of the Association of German Immigrants, promoted beginning Hebrew lessons to readers. In spring 1933, the newsletter published a questionnaire the purpose of which was to determine the levels of competence in Hebrew among immigrants, both adults and children. Did the adult immigrant know how to read and write? Did he read Hebrew literature and attend lectures? Were the children attending school? If the adult immigrant knew Hebrew, had he learned it abroad or in the Land? The "culture committees" of the Association (H.O.G.) in the big settlements across the country where German immigrants were living, organized a variety of courses: spoken Hebrew for children and adolescents; evening conversational Hebrew "circles"; and groups for children and youths aged 10-16 the purpose of which was quick acquisition of Hebrew through activities including hiking. Because H.O.G. had announced that its goals included, "providing a variety of opportunities for learning Hebrew and for deliberating the development of the country," the Association's center in Tel Aviv planned a rich program of activities for the winter of 1934-35: Hebräischer Zirkel (Chug Iwri, that is, a Hebrew conversational group); an introduction to the Bible, in Hebrew; the history of the Jews in the period of the Second Temple, in Hebrew. Offered in German were Palästinakunde (that is, Palestine studies); the Land of Israel in current events; the history of Zionism and of the Yishuv; and a review of the week's newspapers.

For the founders of **Shavei Zion**, the value of schooling their children in Hebrew was quite clear and, from their first day in Palestine, the children were given Hebrew lessons. All of the other subjects were taught in Hebrew, as well. The children, as we know, did not live in the camp, the early settlement here, in its Tower and Stockade iteration, but rather stayed behind in Haifa, where they were cared for by several of the mothers under the supervision of the teacher **Margalit Berlinger**. Even before they moved to the "Ahava" residential school in Kiryat Bialik (where they remained until the fall of 1938 when the first family houses in **Shavei Zion** stood ready to receive them), the children had begun Hebrew lessons with **Margalit**. In June of that year, after **Dr. Manfred Scheuer**, the settlers' representative and the British Mandate-appointed mukhtar (headman), visited the children at "Ahava", he wrote in his journal that they were speaking Hebrew with "**Frau Berlinger**", and among themselves the children were speaking "mostly Hebrew, albeit slowly". Before the founding of the State of Israel, educating Jewish children in Palestine in Hebrew was a natural and pragmatic expedient, but Zionism was **Margalit** and **Zev Berlinger**'s clear rationale for insisting upon Hebrew. In an article in *Davar* in April 1939 which reviewed the year which followed **Shavei Zion**'s founding, **A. S. Uris** observed **Margalit**: "A young woman, the wife of the teacher here, her excitement cannot be contained. For 400 hundred years, her forefathers were farmers in **Rexingen**. Now, they have been expelled. And she has

vowed that not a single word of German will cross her lips. And although she manages with some difficulty, she speaks Hebrew joyfully".



Uri Neckarsulmer and Ruthi Kalbermann, Shavei Tzion, 1939.
From the collection of the **Shavei Tzion Archives**.

In May 1943, **Zev** and **Margalit** were interviewed on **Ya'acov Tschernowitz'** Palestine Broadcasting Service radio program *In These Days*, in a segment that marked five years since the founding of the moshav: *From Rexingen to Shavei Tzion*. **Margalit**, we have seen, accompanied the children from the day of their immigration and, when the little school was opened here in 1939, **the Berlingers** taught all eight classes, with **Margalit** teaching the four lower classes and **Zev** the four upper levels. **Margalit** recalled those early days for the radio broadcast: "...how remote (*the children were*) from Jewish culture and from the Hebrew language. Little **Bilha (Stein)** asked me when we arrived here, 'Are there really Hebrew songs?' and **Chanan (Alsberg)** answered her proudly, 'Of course, and I've even already seen a Hebrew picture!' **Naomi (Frölich)**, 12 years old, wanted to know 'Why do the Jews study the Bible so much? What kind of book is it?' And then she asked, 'In what language is the Bible written?' But", continued **Margalit**, "the children acclimated quickly. I was their teacher...and I wasn't yet really competent in our language. I had no choice but to sit on the school bench together

with the children and to compete with them in their studies. It's a good thing that no prizes were awarded, because even the children studied with diligence and love and it wasn't always easy to stay ahead of them. Today, Hebrew is our children's language, in which they speak and play, read and dream. Today, **Amos (Frölich)** returns from the nearby village (*Nahariya*) and he's very angry: 'The children there (*he says*) 'are Yekkes. They speak German!' And don't forget," adds **Magarlit**, "that German is still dominant among the adults in **Shavei Tzion**. That's a painful wound in the hearts of the youth. They're embarrassed to speak German with their parents in the presence of kibbutzniks and persons who were born here."

In 1938, **Ludwig** and **Bella Marx**, and their young daughters **Thea (Tamar)** and **Inge (Yehudit)**, immigrated as members of the founding group of settlers in **Shavei Tzion**. According to a review of **Bella's** life, viewable now with her photograph in a small exhibition of portraits of founding settlers, she had been "the driving force in the (*family's*) decision to immigrate to the Land of Israel". This eulogy of sorts tells us of **Bella's** varied activities in the moshav, of her industry and of her "ready willingness to volunteer". We read also that "...with great effort, **Bella** tried to learn Hebrew, but without much success." For years, **Bella** and **Ludwig** corresponded in German with **Rosa Wittasek**, a German woman who had worked as a sales clerk in the **Marx** family's textile business in Munich. In September 1938, **Bella** wrote to **Rosa** about her work in the camp, about the weather and about the children's living arrangements at "Ahava" in Kiryat Bialik. **Bella** also wrote, "I don't know if this will be of interest to you, but I think perhaps it will. Our girls manage easily in the language (*Hebrew*). **Inge** chatters endlessly, like a waterfall, and **Thea** no longer has any difficulties and studies with enthusiasm, in contrast to us (*Ludwig and me*) who have forgotten almost everything we learned with so much exertion in (*those*) evening lessons in Munich".

The children effortlessly accomplished what was for the adults a cumbersome burden. On April 19, 1943, to mark the fifth anniversary of **Shavei Tzion**, the German-language newspaper *Jedioth Chadaschoth* published in Palestine reported the unique story of the co-operative and the evidences of its success. The article, titled *Fünf Jahre Schawe Zion*, described "the teacher (**Zev Berlinger** *who*) is himself an exemplar of the Hebrew man (*and who*) understands that the children in his school and the older youth have metamorphosed completely (in five years!) into Hebrews". The article noted that for the celebration of the anniversary "in the community hall (*that is, in the synagogue*), a youth choir had been organized and it sang the words of Bialik to a Schubert melody".

Amos—then **Walter—Frölich**, who immigrated with his family in 1938 when he was eight years old, writes in his memoirs: "...(*we were taken*) to the 'Immigrants' House' (*for German Jews*) in Ahuza on the Carmel, for a stay of several days. There, we met the Land of Israel for the first time, with its sights, its odors, its climate, its people and the Hebrew language, which was strange for us at the beginning, as it was for all the Yekkes. There, too, I chose the name 'Amos' for myself, after I had met a boy of my age whom I liked who bore that name. The Hebrew name that had been given to me when I was born was not used at all and, despite the fact that I didn't know one word of Hebrew, I didn't want to be called 'Shmaya'."

Writing about his experiences after those early days, when he was already residing permanently in **Shavei Tzion**, **Amos** writes, "Our childhood in **Shavei Tzion** was happy. In a certain sense, we lived in a bubble in this Yekke village. The adults' dominant language in the settlement was German. The manners, attitude toward work and way of life were as they had been in Europe. Chances to travel and ramble outside of **Shavei Tzion** were rather limited (*and*) we didn't have much contact with Israeli (*sic*) youth. We spoke fluent Hebrew, but with a German accent and veterans and sabras (*native-born youth*) considered us new immigrants. We understood that (*only*) later, when we met (*such youth*) in the Haganah, at agricultural schools and at various events in the Land, where we were obliged to compete with them. Some of the sabras in those days were naturally, or had been educated to be, haughty. They considered whoever had not been born in the Land to be of lesser value, even if he had arrived here as an infant. That was perhaps because they were the first generation of native-born Israelis". **Amos** adds, "(*We*) children didn't want to be Yekkes. (*I*) wanted to be Sephardic. I was envious of their accent. I was envious of their beautiful Hebrew. German was tainted. We were obliged to speak Hebrew (*and*) within a few weeks or months, we did. What we didn't know, we improvised. We were embarrassed to speak German. We applied ourselves diligently to the study of Hebrew—German became 'taboo'."

Singing was one of the means to acquiring competence in the language, though not singing to the music of Schubert. **Amos** tells us, "One day, **Yeshayahu**, the local Haganah commander, offered to teach us a new Israeli (*sic*) song. We (*children*) gathered around him in the little weapons storeroom at the foot of the tower (*that is, the watchtower at the entrance to the moshav*), and he taught us a new Hebrew song which I still sing today."

Thus, thus, thus! Thus, thus and no differently.

The Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee, Bashan and Gilead,

From then until now.

Hey, sing to me in the daytime and sing to me at night,
My country of hills, hills and valleys.
Sing to me, sing to me again and again
My tears have betrothed me to you.

Song "Thus, Thus". 1940s. Lyrics by **Aharon Ashman**, music by **Mordechai Zeira**.

Song was also a key to the customs and behaviors of the Land of Israel, and singing played a part in the acclimation of the children of **Shavei Zion**. **Amos** remembers the arrival of a substitute teacher at the settlement's school: "Our teachers, **Zev** and **Margalit**, were away for a year, studying, and **Chaim Lubin** was brought in...a commonplace sabra from the Tel Aviv of those days, tall and thin. (*He had*) only just graduated from the teachers' seminary (*and*) we were his first guinea pigs. For us, too, who until then had lived in a bubble, it was a big change. Suddenly, there was a young teacher among us, an Israeli (*sic*) sabra from the big city in our little Yekke school in the village... First of all, he didn't like our Yekke accent and he tried to change it... The songs he taught us were Land of Israel songs, and Russian songs, as were customarily sung (*here*) in those days." **Amos** explains, "We sang boisterously! ... That, of course, was not acceptable to **Margalit** when she returned from her studies. **Margalit** was our singing teacher and she had tried hard to teach us classical melodies and, above all, she demanded that we sing quietly and not shout. But here comes a young teacher...and he turns (*our repertoire*) upside down." The children adopted for themselves the custom of sing-alongs and **Amos** says, "After dinner, we would gather every evening on the 'Big Lawn' to talk, enjoy ourselves and play. Everyone tried to be there. We would play, sometimes run wild, sit in a circle or lie together in a heap, but we would always sing. **Elkana (Frölich)** and **Meir Weil** would accompany us on the harmonica and **Hillel Baum** would play the accordion. In general, (*we would*) sing at every opportunity, at gatherings, on outings or while we waited for an event (*to begin*). We sang Land of Israel songs and many Russian songs."

The acclimatization of the children, their metamorphosis into Land of Israel youth, proud Hebrew speakers, were consonant with the Zionist mission. "**Shavei Zion**," says **Amos**, "was a small and rather isolated settlement. Our possibilities were very limited...everyone knew how to make do with little, though we didn't realize that (*at the time*). In those days, we didn't expect much. Everyone lived in the present moment (*and lived to*) work. We felt that we were partners in a great and special enterprise being pursued here...We were taught to believe that we had received a

great privilege whereby in our generation the Jewish people, abused and persecuted for two thousand years, were returning to the melting pot, the land of our forefathers, and the prophecy 'And your children shall return to their own border' was being fulfilled. We pitied those Jews who, in our generation, lived in the Diaspora and had not been privileged to become part of the enterprise".

At the same time, while the children of **Shavei Tzion** were constructing their new identities as Land of Israel youth, the affairs of the family households were being conducted in German. **Yehudit Kahn** (*née Stern*) tells us how she experienced German in her childhood, in the 1940s: "From as early as I can remember, we spoke German at home. We were sung German children's songs that I still remember. We were told stories in German. There were albums at home... which held postcards showing landscapes in Germany and I was told stories about them... I learned to read and write German at a very young age. It was my grandfather (**Max Stern**) who decided that, in spite of everything, in spite of the Holocaust, (*we ought*) to preserve (*our*) ties to German culture and to the German language. He sat me down when I was maybe seven or eight, and taught me the letters and how to read in German. I remember that the **Ludwig Marx family** owned one of the children's books from which I learned (to read). On its cover was a picture of Hitler (may his name be blotted out). That didn't interfere with (*using it*) to learn (*to read*). Once I had grasped the principle of reading, I would read weekly photo magazines and in that way I slowly gained competence in reading and then in writing. When Grandpa taught me German, he always said that "in the future the language would be important again and it would help (*me*) in life". **Yehudit** notes that German was indeed helpful in her working life and tells us "the productive years my husband **Zev** and I spent working in China--he was also the son of Yekkes and knew German--were thanks to our competence in the language." She adds, "The German language links me to my parents and my childhood. Until her last day, I spoke German with Mother (**Friedliese Stern**). With Dad (**Lothar Stern**), I spoke both Hebrew and German. I think of German as my second mother tongue. I've always been proud of my knowledge of the German language and of my Yekke heritage. They were never an obstacle to integrating in society outside of the moshav."

Aron Berlinger was born in 1944, the second son of **Asher** and **Fanny Berlinger**. He, too, grew up in a German-speaking household. He tells us, as he himself was told, "at (*my*) circumcision ceremony, the blessings were recited in Hebrew but everything else was spoken in German. Later, in the infants' nursery, our caregiver **Klara Stein** spoke to us in German. I was exposed to Hebrew for the first time in the kindergarten taught by **Miriam Weiss** and **Yehudit Marx** (**Yardeni**). At home, with Grandfather and Grandmother (**Shmuel and Frida Kahn**), we spoke German, of course. With my brother **Gadi** and my sister **Chana**, I spoke Hebrew."

Aron understands the customs so eagerly adopted by the first children who came to live in **Shavei Tzion**, by **Amos Frölich** and his band of friends: "The cultural dictates," says **Aron**, "demanded that we speak Hebrew at every possible opportunity. Already from a very young age, we unconsciously knew that outside of the house, with our little friends, we would speak Hebrew. If I were with a friend and his parents interrupted our conversation, we switched to German with them but continued in Hebrew between ourselves." In the home, however, the daily rituals of family life were conducted, naturally, in German. "When our parents were not too tired," remembers **Aron**, "They would read us stories in German: *Der Struwwelpeter (Shock-headed Peter)*, *Baron Munchausen* and others, although we quickly exchanged those for *Hasamba*, *Robinson Crusoe* and "*Our Country*", (which we read ourselves, in Hebrew)." In his memoirs, **Elkana Frölich (Ron)**, 11 years old when he arrived in the country in 1938, described himself as "a bookworm": "Because there were many German books at home and only a few in Hebrew, I continued to read a lot in German and thanks to (*reading*), I remained familiar with the language". For younger children in the moshav, German-speakers at home, it's likely that they were exposed to children's literature in German, but they did not necessarily learn how to read. As **Yigael Schwartz**, born in 1950, recalls, "All the children here knew German. We were proud to speak German. Hebrew was foreign (*in the moshav*)". **Yigael** remembers German-language children's books in his childhood home, but he wasn't able to read them.



Cover of *Der Struwwelpeter*, by Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann, in an early edition, in Gothic text:
"merry stories and funny pictures for children ages 5-6".
The Hebrew version is *Yehoshua HaParu'a*, "entertaining stories and happy pictures".

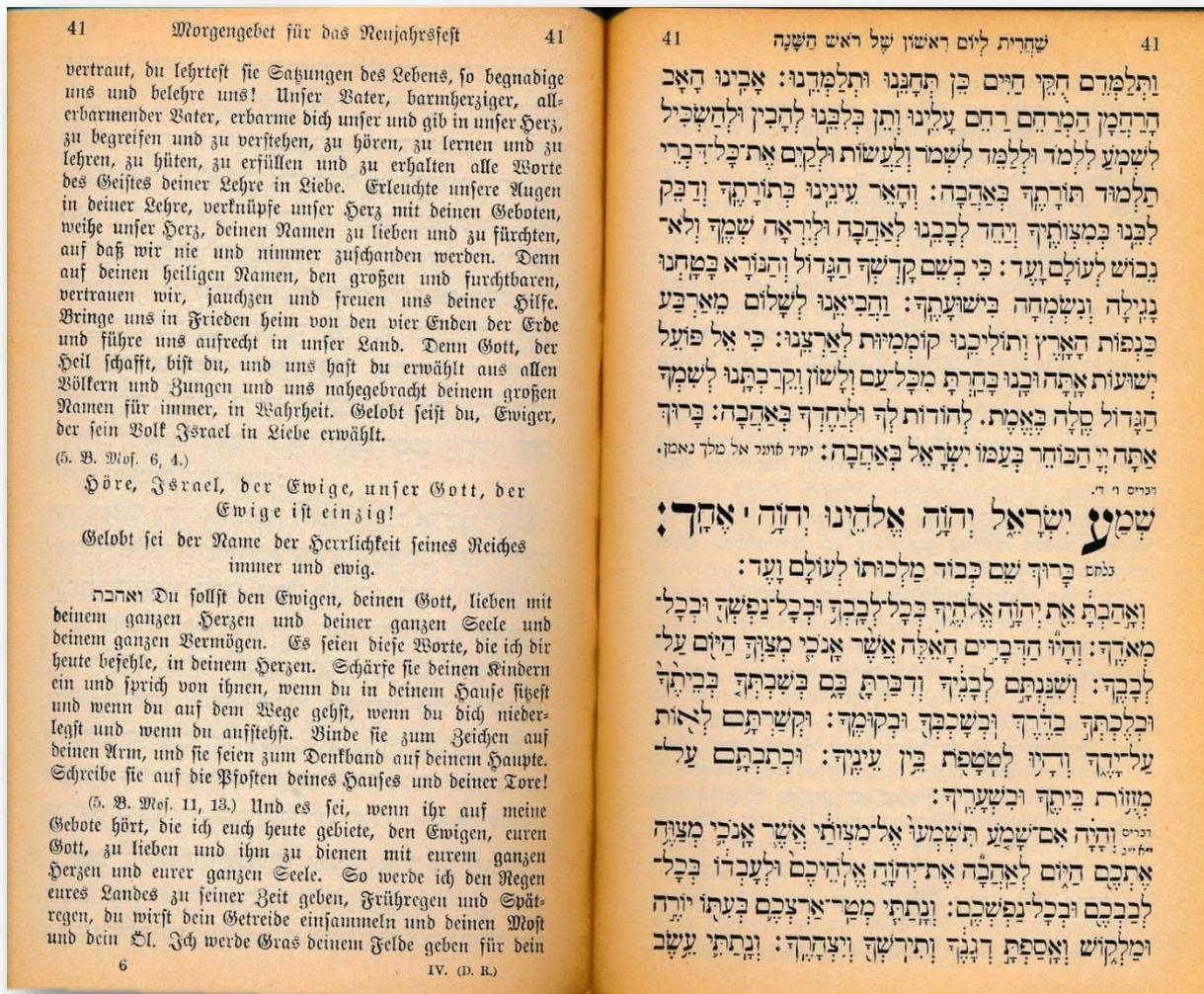
"Every morning," says **Aron Berlinger**, "Mother woke us at 'halb-acht', half-eight, and not seven-and-a-half, (*that is, seven-thirty*)."
Despite those concepts imposed directly from German that were a part of the children's cognitive constructs, **Aron** notes, "The German we children spoke wasn't fluent. We were out of breath by the time we finished a sentence because the German language, with its long and complex sentences, puts the verb at the end of the sentence". The result must have been a charming--or peculiar--melange of languages: "When our parents put us to bed, the 'Shema al ha'mitah' blessing, (*the bedtime 'shema'*), began in Hebrew with 'May the angel who has delivered me from all harm, bless these boys...' and then continued in German, 'Lieber Gott lass uns gesund sein...' (*Dear God, grant us health...*)."
Aron says, "My emotional and personal language was and remains the German that I took in with my mother's milk. In spite of the terrible associations that the language suggests to us, it was the Germans who went mad and not the language of Goethe and Schiller".

In the middle and late 1940s, **Max Stern** wrote a series of engaging letters to family members who had survived the war but remained in Europe. He described events in Palestine (and, later, Israel) and also the structure of the moshav and, in detail, the way of life in **Shavei Tzion**. His granddaughter, **Yehudit Stern Kahn**, whom **Max** had taught German, has translated the letters into Hebrew and made them available to the archives. On February 27, 1949, **Max** wrote, "...Individuals from around the world are streaming here from different cultures and customs, different languages, and all of them must join together as a single, unified people. The advantage of our people in comparison with other peoples is that there is a future for our tradition in this country, and countries of origin will be forgotten, a thing that other peoples cannot do. We, too, (*in Shavei Tzion*) feel that we can already forget Germany-Europe, and our next generation will know no other country and will not yearn for any other country." The children in **Shavei Tzion**, as we've read, gave their whole hearts to the Land of Israel reality, while the adult, like emigrants everywhere, were hard put to acclimate and to transform themselves. In another, undated letter, **Max Stern** wrote, "...People who are middle-aged and older (*in the moshav*) all speak German, the children and adolescents speak German and Hebrew and also English and Arabic. **Lothar**", (*Max's son*), "speaks all the languages spoken here." **Max** and his wife **Frida** lived with **Lothar** and his family (his wife **Friedlise** and the children **Yehudit**, **Micha**, and **Yochanan**), and though the children spoke both languages with their parents, for the sake of the grandparents it was German that linked the three generations. **Max** and **Frida**, **Yochanan** tells us, "didn't know a word of Hebrew" despite **Max's** enthusiasm for the Zionist melting pot.

From its founding, **Shavei Tzion** was a settlement that conducted its business in German and according to German mores. The German spoken here, however, was the 'Schwabisch' Swabian dialect typical of the village of origin of the first settlers, **Rexingen** in the state of Baden-Württemberg. The dialect, **Amos Frölich** says, "is extreme and harsh" and "not understood in the north of Germany". In the moshav's newsletter *The Echo of our Settlement* that was issued in April 1963 for **Shavei Tzion's** 25th anniversary, **Sophie Scheuer** published in her column entitled "Anecdotes", the story of an early event as remembered by her husband, **Dr. Manfred Scheuer**. On April 13, 1938, "on the day when we 'took up the land' (*that is, set up the camp on the lands allotted to it*), when all hands were laboring, a British officer (*named*) **Ring** brought us 6 rifles and swore in 6 young members as ghaffirs (auxiliary policemen). Then, there were exercises with the rifles and he asked me to translate what he said into Hebrew so that the ghaffirs would understand". Despite the intentions of the officer, the members weren't capable of understanding his instructions in Hebrew and so, continued **Dr. Scheuer**, "I translated his words into Swabian...and everyone understood." In a later moshav newsletter, **Dr. Scheuer** added a piquant note to his story: "Apparently, (**Officer Ring**) thought that (*I was speaking*) Hebrew. In any case, he didn't ask for an interpretation of the strange language. That evening, Haganah men brought additional weapons (illegal) and they were hidden in the secret cache".

Hans Schwartz, one of the young men sworn in as ghaffirs in April, 1938, would actually have understood instructions in Hebrew as he had been in the country for a number of years and had some competence in Hebrew. But before he knew any Hebrew at all, not long after he had immigrated from Germany in 1933, he lived in the Hadar neighborhood in Haifa and he worked in an auto garage in the lower city where repairs were made to R.E.O. trucks and passenger buses. In memoirs he wrote in 1988, **Hans** recalled that the crew of employees at the garage included Jews and Arabs who worked together in a pleasant atmosphere. In general, they made themselves understood to one another, too. As for **Hans** himself, he noted, "I didn't yet know Hebrew but because of its similarity to German, I learned Yiddish pretty quickly." He added wonderingly that, to his good fortune, there was "among the workers, a Sudanese, as black as coal, who spoke wonderful Swabian since he had worked in Jaffa in the branch of a German company". **Vardit Meir**, a native German who spoke Hochdeutsch, that is standard German, came to **Shavei Tzion** in 1957, after having heard that "there are Yekkes there", but she was surprised, upon her arrival, to find that she "simply didn't understand" German as it was spoken here. In 1961, the journalist **M.Y. Ben-Gavriel** (in a German-language newspaper article found in the archives with no citation for the source), noted that **Schavey-tsiyon** was still a Swabian enclave.

Aron Berlinger tells us that "among the adults in **Shavei Tzion**, public discourse everywhere in the village was held in German: in meetings and gatherings, during social visits, in the office, in the fields, in the grocery shop and in members' assemblies... In the synagogue, on the Sabbath, **Rabbi Dr. Aharon Keller** gave his sermon in German and all the chattering among the worshippers, during the Torah reading, was in German despite the repeated attempts of **Sigfried Weil**, the beadle, to silence them...in German, of course." The prayer books used were written in Hebrew and German, with key words in Hebrew placed in the German text as a help to those worshippers who read the translation to themselves and needed to look for the lines being read in Hebrew from time to time, in order not to become completely lost.



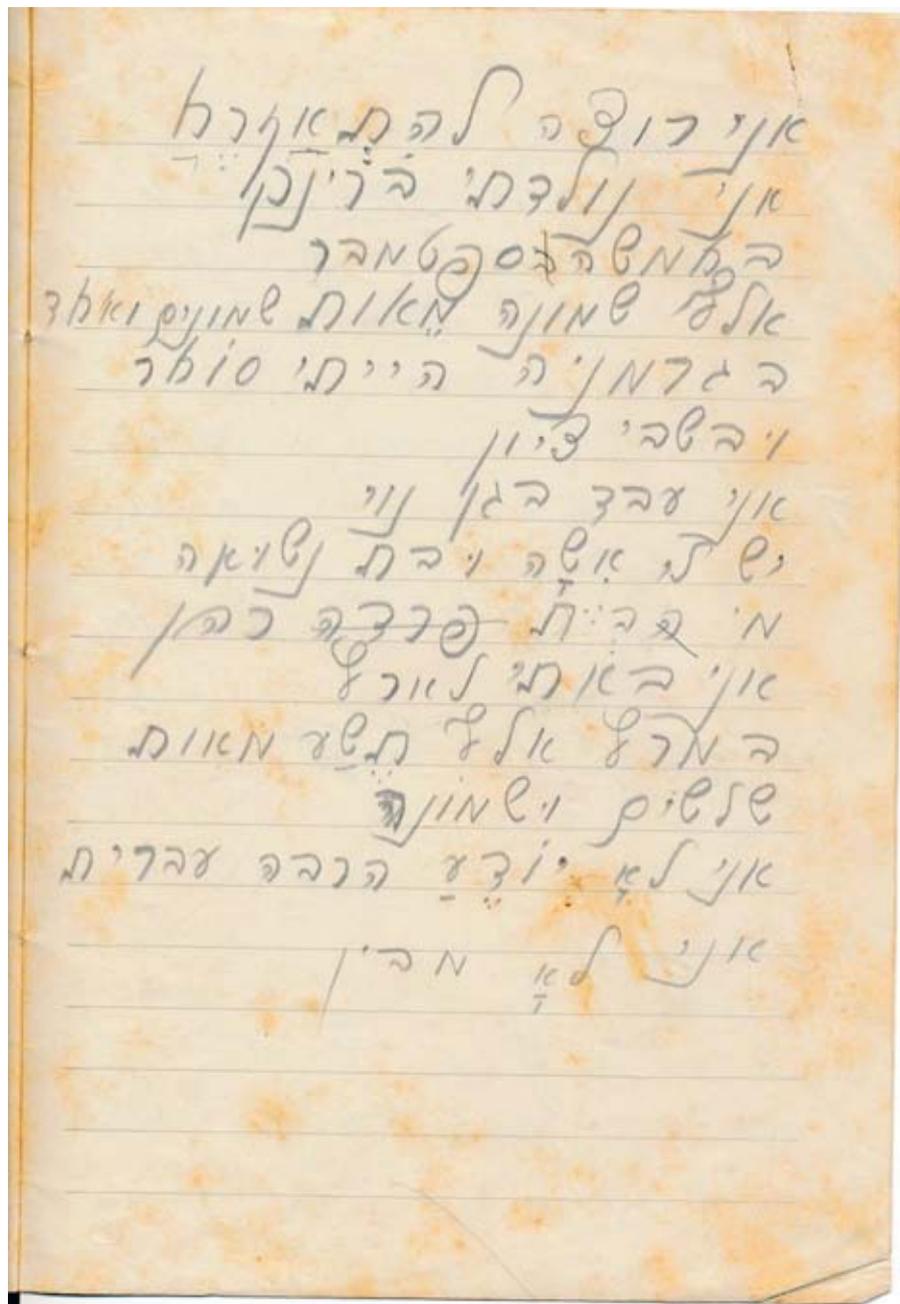
Gebetbuch für das Neujahrsfest: Prayer book for Rosh Hashanah, in "Ashkenazic translation". Hebrew and Gothic German. Printed by "M. Lehrberger and Company", Frankfort am Main, 1915 (?). From the collection of the **Shavei Tzion Archives**.

In 1960, a booklet titled, *Über Schavej Zion (About Shavei Zion)*, written by moshav member and poet-author **Leopold Marx**, was published here in both German and English versions. **Mr. Marx** wrote, "veteran (*members*) know the prayers well and can even lead services (*but*) that's of no help to them in (*understanding*) the spoken language and thus, even today, all of the members' assemblies are conducted in both languages, though principally in German". The management of the moshav did indeed rely on German for many years, but from the founding of **Shavei Zion**, the co-operative also tried to help adult members and residents acquire competence in Hebrew. Only two weeks after the Tower and Stockade camp was raised in 1938, **Dr. Scheuer** wrote in his journal, in German, "the first Hebrew lesson (*has been given*): (*by*) **Scheuer** for the beginners and (*by Zev*) **Berlinger** for those more advanced". Several days later, **Dr. Scheuer** wrote, "The assembly this evening was cancelled because the corrected general plans and the plans for the houses that **Markowitz**, the expert provided by Rassco (*The Rural and Suburban Settlement Company*), should have brought, haven't arrived. Instead, a Hebrew lesson was held for those persons who were not too tired, and there are others who are studying energetically. We hope it will continue so". But not long after, when the provision of electricity to the moshav was still very problematic, **Dr. Scheuer** wrote in his journal, "The Hebrew lesson this evening was cancelled because there wasn't enough light".

For years, members attended evening Hebrew lessons, although not in summer when it was thought to be "too hot". **Elma Erlanger** tells us, "The older women learned ten words every winter but by the time lessons began the following winter, they had already forgotten them". **Leopold Marx**, who himself attended Hebrew lessons, wrote, "*The level of* instruction in Hebrew was good, but not everyone assimilated the language". And **Yonatan Schwartz**, a native-born "son" of **Shavei Zion**, likes to say, "It was easier to be embarrassed than to learn Hebrew".

If some of the settlers in **Shavei Zion** were never able to conduct a conversation or generate original sentences in Hebrew, it still appears that most learned at least a few everyday words, were able to use them in appropriate contexts, and were also able to echo complete, simple sentences. It was a common speech habit here to interpose some of that basic Hebrew vocabulary in German constructions: "Ich gehe am Yam", for example ("I'm going to the sea.") was typical. Those same basic Hebrew words are also found throughout the minutes of the moshav's management committee, which were written only in German until 1955. Hebrew words in the minutes appeared without translations, in German transliterations and with an initial capital letter in nouns, as required in German: Taksif, Machane, Sidur Avodah, Assefah, Chawerim, Waad, Gusch Naharia, Machbesch, Gisbar, Schmirah, Mazkir Chuz, Galil Maarvi. The very first Hebrew word appearing in the

minutes, recorded at the beginning of 1939 when meetings were first documented in collected protocols, was "Sifsif", meaning the coarse sand mined on the sea front in the first commercial enterprise in **Shavei Zion**.



Notebook of **Shmuel Kahn**, a founding member of the moshav. Date unknown. The last two lines of the exercise read: "I don't know much Hebrew. I don't understand".
From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.

In his *Über Schavej Zion* booklet of 1960, **Leopold Marx** wrote, "The Swabian character of the village has changed somewhat, but (*not*) the German character, and new members learn German whether they come from Hungary, Egypt, Tunisia Argentina or Israel". **Elma Erlanger** tells us of her first encounter with German, upon arriving in **Shavei Tzion**. **Elma** emigrated to Palestine from Egypt in 1946, following her brother **Nachum Levi**. In their childhood home, the eight **Levi** siblings had spoken Greek with their mother, who was a native of Crete, and Italian with their father, a native of Corfu. Outside of the home they spoke French and at elementary school, Italian. Once they had completed their primary education, the children were sent to a religious school where the language of instruction was French. Later, **Elma** attended a school run by Irish nuns and there, between the ages of 15 and 17, she learned English. When she arrived in pre-state Palestine as an "illegal immigrant", **Elma** knew no Hebrew beyond the familiar prayers and blessings. After a short stay in Ramat Gan and an even shorter stay in Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan, **Elma** was accepted as a student in the religious framework at Mikve Yisrael. She was the only Sephardic student in an all-Ashkenazi class. The 21 months that **Elma** spent at the school were devoted mostly to agriculture and religion, with formal lessons in Hebrew only once or twice a week. However, she quickly learned to put together "full sentences" in the new language.

At "Mikve", **Elma** joined a group of 20 young Czechs and Hungarians who planned to begin a new moshav shitufi (co-operative agricultural settlement). The group came to **Shavei Tzion** for training in 1948. Here, **Elma** tells us, the group slept in Beit Hava and held prayers and meetings there. They took their meals in the communal dining hall in the wooden barracks "on the hill" near the present-day grocery shop. "The young people in **Shavei Tzion** would come to our rooms every evening, especially on Friday evenings," says **Elma**. "We talked, told stories (*and*) sang." Among those who regularly visited the new immigrants in their rooms were **Elkana Frölich (Ron)** who told tall tales, **Meir Weil**, **Motke Loewengart**, **Amos Frölich**, **Chana Ruth Schindler (Frölich)**, **Shula Schindler (Gefen)**, **Miriam Ofer (Klein)**, **Yitzhak Ofer**, **Aliza Pressburger (Klapfer)**: the same young people who had immigrated to Palestine from Germany ten years earlier and were now so confident and proud of their new identities as youth of the Land of Israel. **Elma** remembers that the gatherings were instrumental in improving the Hebrew of the members of her group.

But what good was Hebrew in **Shavei Tzion** without German? For **Elma**, who had competence in the four languages she had learned as a child in Egypt and with her newly acquired Hebrew, there was still no choice but to learn German. At her job in the communal dining room, the women working there addressed her only in German and, she recalls, "When they told me, in German, to prepare breakfast, I had no idea of what they wanted of me!" In 1949, **Elma** married **Pinchas Erlanger**, a member of **Shavei Tzion** who had emigrated from Germany as an adolescent.

Elma learned German, of course, and she preserves her competence even today, but she does not forget those distant days when her first tentative steps in the language began with the first words she heard in the communal dining room: "Kartoffelsalat"—potato salad—and so on.

Alexander and **Elisheva Neumeir** fled Germany and the Nazi persecutions in 1938, and immigrated to Argentina where they lived for 12 years in the "Avigdor" Jewish agricultural colony in the Entre Ríos province. There, the family spoke German at home but the children studied in Spanish at school. **Alexander** and **Elisheva** quickly learned Spanish themselves and it was in Spanish that they communicated with the local workers on the farm. In 1950, when it seemed clear, wrote **Alexander** in his life story, that "...the only future for the Jewish people was in realization of the Zionist idea" the family immigrated to Israel. The **Neumeirs** became members of the moshav in 1951 and, here, their younger daughter was born, sister to the three children who had left Argentina. The older daughter, **Yehudit Neumeir Ben Shmuel** tells us "Dad attacked his study of Hebrew with great seriousness of purpose (*and*) attended at least two courses at Ulpan Akiva in Netanya. (*He*) also struggled hard to read only in Hebrew and he gained competence fairly quickly. Mother, on the other hand, enjoyed speaking German, her native tongue, with the residents of **Shavei Tzion** and we spoke German with her until the end of her life! She could hold a conversation in Hebrew when she had to, but she always preferred German and English."

Reading, we know, is wonderfully helpful in acquiring language competence, and therein lies the logic of **Alexander Neumeir's** efforts. From the end of 1935, the Hebrew newspaper *Davar* included in its pages a modest supplement of several columns under the title "*Davar for the Immigrant*". Newspaper clippings from the **Shavei Tzion Archives** show us that *Davar* reached the settlement here in its earliest years. If there were members who actually studied the "*Davar for the Immigrant*" columns, they would have read, in vowelled Hebrew, about the Arab riots taking place:

"...On Monday night, gang members fired on a police vehicle near Majd al-Krum, on the colony of Shavei Tzion, on Sejera, Ein HaShofet, Kiryat Haim and Kiryat Motzkin. There were no injuries. Fire was returned."

ב א ר פ

המאורעות בארץ

של המשטרה נעצרה במחסום בכביש בין תל-אביב לשרה-נהר עופה של דוד. המחסום: עמיד חשמל שנעקר והנח לרוב הפגיש. גם עמיד חשמל שני נזק. על ככנייה-המשטרה ירו. פשהגיעה למקום.

— הנוטר שימה עיני נפצע אתמול בבקר ברגלו בירושלים. 3 ערבים תקפוהו ליד בית-הנספר ט"ט ג'ורג' ואחד ירה עליו מאקדח.

— פרוצדור נפצע אתמול בבקר הפועל באר-הלב. בקן 50 בעבדו בפרדס ברוך וינד התנקש ערבי בנפשו ביריח אקדח. האקדח לא ירה. חלב התנפל על המתנקש להוציא מידו את האקדח ואז נפצע בראשו ממכה הערבי נמלט.

— ארבעה נפצעו אתמול בבקר הפועל באר-הלב. בקן 50 בעבדו בפרדס ברוך וינד התנקש ערבי בנפשו ביריח אקדח. האקדח לא ירה. חלב התנפל על המתנקש להוציא מידו את האקדח ואז נפצע בראשו ממכה הערבי נמלט.

— אתמול בבקר השפס נסו עני אנשים לשבר דלת חנוה פודי-סליב. בחיפה. משמר שוטרים הפתיע את המת-פרצים וירה בהם. הם נמלטו. שוטר יהודי שעמד על משמרתו על גשר הירקון לקרבת פתח-תקנה צוה על שני ערבים לעמוד. שני הם ירו בו ונמלטו. נעצרו כמה השודים. אמש נמצאה פצצה על גג בית יהודי ברחוב ש"ס בתל-אביב. ליד גבול יפו. השוטרים הוציאו את הפצצה.

— זרבי מזון שודד אתמול בפועל יהודי בפרדס גודל-פרב בנס-ציונה לעון וסכום כסף.

— הערבים שבחו אתמול ביפו ובתל-יונים במחאה על תכנית הממשלה בועי-דת לונדון.

— אמש נהרג סולימן חסין פועל מחצבה מיריות ערבים ברחיב סטנטון בחיפה. בליד שני הצתה ונשרפה טחנת-קמח באבו-שושן. אשר ליד משמר-העמק. אתמול בבקר ירו 2 ערבים 5 יריות אל ערבי אחר ליד בית-המטבחיים בנצרת ולא פגעו בו. הירורים נמלטו.

Moshav members, **Yochanan Stern** tells us (among them his parents **Lothar** and **Friedliese**), read the vowelised Hebrew newspaper for beginners, *Omer*. *Omer* was a morning paper owned by the Histadrut (the General Federation of Labor in Israel) and published from 1951 to 1986. Members also bought subscriptions to *Jedioth Chadashoth*, a German-language morning paper published in pre-state Palestine and Israel between 1935 and 1973. In **Shavei Tzion**, three or four families would pay for a subscription together and the paper would be passed from house to house and read in turn.

For those members who had meagre competence in Hebrew, the business of everyday life sometimes became more complicated than necessary. **Hava Lemberger Berkowitz** tells us about such a moment. **Hava's** mother, **Kaethe Lemberger**, certainly possessed a level of Hebrew and she participated in evening classes here, but she made errors in both speaking and writing and her understanding of spoken Hebrew was sometimes confused. Still, says **Hava**, **Kaethe** "wasn't embarrassed by (*her mistakes*)". **Kaethe**, who worked as a nurse in the **Shavei Tzion** clinic, remembered that once a couple staying at the Kupat Cholim (*Sick Fund*) Rest Home here appeared at the clinic and asked to see the visiting doctor. The couple waited "with long faces", says **Hava**, retelling her mother's story. **Kaethe**, naturally, asked their reason for wanting to see the doctor and the couple answered, in Hebrew, "our parents died". **Kaethe** thought that that was an odd reason for wanting to see the doctor but she didn't interfere. **Kaethe**, though, hadn't understood the forlorn couple with the unhappy faces when they had told her, in fact, "our hemorrhoids are acting up".

Persons who had even less control of the language occasionally became utterly confused. Veteran members of the moshav still tell laughingly how when **Julius (Jula) Rothbein** would still have been considered a new immigrant by any measure, he was sent at the beginning of the 1950s from **Shavei Tzion** to "the farm in the Negev" where he worked the moshav's agricultural lands there along with a group of young members. The work was arduous and the young people were short on sleep, as they plowed, planted, watered and harvested the produce around the clock. The young farmers needed, as well, to be constantly vigilant against the Fedayeen attacks and depredations that were, at that time, a serious threat to outlying settlements and farmlands. **Jula** was working alone in a field one night when he suddenly made out a shadowy human figure. When he couldn't identify the figure, he called out apprehensively, in Hebrew, "Who am I? Who am I?"

The Hebrew-speaking children of the early settlers spoke German with their parents and grandparents, both in order to demonstrate respect to the older generation and also, in many cases, because they had no choice. Some of those

same children who themselves navigated so easily between languages wonder today that they hadn't been more understanding of the adults. In the exhibition catalogue *Shavei Tzion 1938-2008, Place of Refuge and Promise*, **Sarah-Hinde Schindler (Rosenstock)** wrote, "Since we already knew the new language, we became rather impertinent toward 'the old folks' who lagged behind (*in learning Hebrew*) because of their heavy workload." The burden of work in the young moshav and the process of acclimatization in general, certainly left the adults little time to study Hebrew and, of course, they had their native German and that was perfectly serviceable unless they left the confines of **Shavei Tzion**. But, says **Amos Frölich**, "We ran roughshod over our parents. We didn't show them enough consideration. They were 'galutnikim' (*Diaspora Jews*)." **Amos** tells us that when his mother **Liesel Frölich** had had her fill of the "machine-gun" speed of **Amos'** Hebrew chatter with his brother **Elkana** at family meals, she rapped on the table and exclaimed, "We speak German here!"

In the framework of the little school that served **Shavei Tzion's** first years, the children were also given lessons in English and in Arabic. The memoirs of both **Amos** and **Elkana Frölich** recall that the children of the moshav would meet Arab shepherd children along the barbed wire fence surrounding the settlement's encampment, and the language used in those encounters was the Arabic the Jewish children were learning at school. **Amos** writes, "We adopted the local codes of behavior. We spoke...colloquial Arabic, the basis of which was taught by (*our*) Arabic teacher **Yusuf El Baghdadi**... Later on, using Arabic at work with our Arab neighbors and with the Druze broadened our competence and improved our accents. It's true that we all studied Arabic with the same teacher, but it was mostly **Mordechai (Motke) Loewengart, David Sahn, Putzo (Mordechai Rosenberger), Jacob (Frölich), Elkana** and myself who had more contact with our Arab neighbors and with the Druze, and (*with them*) spoke Arabic.

Ahmed Bashir, who would later work for many years as the **Shavei Tzion** Local Council's loyal caretaker, began to visit the moshav when he was still a young child. He made friends with the children here and, as we've noted, they all spoke together in Arabic. Today, of course, "**Bashir**", a busy pensioner, speaks fluent Hebrew. When he was recently asked if he had learned a bit of German during those early years when he often visited **Shavei Tzion**, he answered that he had learned only "two words": "Bitte schön!" and "Danke schön!" In what context? **Bashir** explained that one of the donkeys used on the farm here often escaped its handlers and ran off, sometimes to Ein Sara in Nahariya and sometimes to Samaria, **Bashir's** own village. Occasionally, young **Bashir** would have the good luck of catching the donkey and leading him back to **Shavei Tzion**. **Sally Lemberger**, the moshav's manager, knew no Hebrew, so he would take the donkey in hand and thank the

boy, saying "Danke schön!" and then, telling him "Bitte schön!", would give **Bashir** a couple of coins. With his reward, **Bashir** ran to the grocery shop. There, he tells us, for half a "grush", **Simcha Ofer** "thrust both his hands into a burlap bag" and filled the child's outstretched shirtfront with a double helping of candy. Presumably, **Bashir** told **Simcha**, "Danke schön!"

In effect, learning stock phrases for everyday use in a second (or third) language is a legitimate and useful strategy. A new immigrant who had reason to travel beyond **Shavei Zion's** stockade walls and wire fence, may have used a conversational guide printed in both German and Hebrew, although a guide published in those years would have suggested translations that sound labored and stilted or poetic to us today. In fact, we wonder if even 75 or 80 years ago, the Hebrew sentences offered in such a guide would have been very much like the brisk language then spoken in the street. An early conversational guide, republished in 1960 with no apparent revisions to the content, contains an entire chapter entitled *Ein Ausflug in Palästina (An Excursion in Palestine)*. The guide provides some 20 pages of phrases for the tourist making that excursion in Palestine. The closing sentence (rendered from the German and Hebrew) is "It is my hope to return and settle in this country".

With or without a conversational guide in hand, words and phrases primed for insertion into a conversation were a help to German-speakers whose work took them outside of the settlement. Otherwise, how, for instance, would **Leopold Schwartz** have managed when his work was mainly driving truckloads of the moshav's produce to market? **Leopold's** son **Yigael** tells us that though **Martha**, his mother, spoke Hebrew well, his father "didn't know Hebrew" and yet **Leopold** coped with all the demands of his job for many years.

In his memoirs, **Elkana Frölich Ron** wrote, "My first encounter with the Land of Israel (*was*), of course, at the seaport in Haifa (*in 1938*). I still remember the boiling hot Oriental atmosphere...the chaos, the filth (*and*) I understood clearly that we had arrived in a different world. At the immigrants' hostel in Ahuza where we stayed for about a week, Mother had her first experience of washing clothes by hand, using a vat of water heated with wood. **Amos** and I, (*at that time still*) **Walter** and **Helmut**, were sent to find kindling. Ahuza was then still a very sparselypopulated neighborhood." The hunt for wood allowed the two boys to wander about near the hostel. **Elkana** wrote that "**Walter**", then eight and a half, was amazed to discover that "the cows mooed exactly as the cows in Germany had done, and not in any other language, not even in Hebrew". **Elkana** described additional discoveries that the two boys made: "A new world, new odors, the scent of eucalyptus, the taste of halva and most of all, the new language!" For the

moshav's children, learning Hebrew was a springboard to adopting the way of life in Palestine: "What characterized our move from Germany to the Land of Israel," wrote **Elkana** "(was that) the good-boy-Shabbat-shalom slowly turned into an undisciplined wild thing. The sea, the fields, the farmstead—all these attracted us and became the center (*of our lives*) and the most important things. Homework was a matter of lesser importance. Barefoot, dirty, (*we were*) barefoot even at school, of course, and only began to wear shoes around Chanukah time". The children of the founders of **Shavei Tzion**, who had been despondent and fearful in Germany, blossomed in the freedom that they discovered here and they passionately desired to emulate the youth of the Land.

The adults, however, tenaciously preserved their European behaviors and those persons who didn't know Hebrew insisted for years on preserving German as the language in which the moshav functioned. In the catalogue *Place of Refuge and Promise*, we read: "For the adult settlers, and in particular for the parents of the pioneers who had been accepted to the settlement, their common language eased (*their adaption to*) the new life... Rassco's instructors spoke German and the residents of neighboring Nahariya could communicate (*with the settlers*) in their own language. But Hebrew studies...were needed in order to make possible all of the various contacts (*between the moshav and*) the outside world." From the founding of the settlement, correspondence received from bodies in Palestine (the Central Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, for example, and the Agricultural Workers' Organisation of the General Federation of Jewish Labour in Eretz-Israel), was written in Hebrew; correspondence received from organizations in Germany, in German. Thus, **Dr. Leo Baeck**, head of the Jewish representation in Germany (Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland) wrote to **Dr. Manfred Scheuer** from Berlin on April 21, 1938, one week after the settlers and a legion of helpers had erected the camp in the place called "**Shavei Tzion**":

"...Ich freue mich ganz besonders, so gute Nachrichten über den Fortgang des Werkes Ihres Aufbaues zu erhalten..."

"...I am very happy to have received the news of the progress of your project..."

Dr. Scheuer and **Manfred (Fredi) Weil** managed the moshav's business with external entities, using German and Hebrew, while business with the British Mandate was conducted in English. Within the moshav, the minutes of meetings and members' assemblies were recorded in German. As early as August 1940, **Leopold Marx** suggested that the minutes of all meetings be recorded in Hebrew, but this was not done. In the minutes of the management committee which opened the Hebrew year 5713, on September 28, 1952, **Dr. Scheuer** remarked that 15 years after the founding of the moshav, the time was right for recording in

Hebrew the minutes of all meetings. Although it was decided that "the minutes of the general assembly of members would be written in Hebrew, the minutes of the management committee would be written in German for the benefit of the older members...". The reasoning was probably that the general membership did not take part in committee meetings but did have an interest in following management decisions. In 1953, it was still only signatures on the minutes that were written in Hebrew.

After a discussion in the committee in October 1953 which dealt with "Sprache Protokolls", the language of the minutes, it was decided once more (and once more for the benefit of the older members) that the minutes would continue to be recorded in German. The committee decided only in October 1955 that "the minutes will be recorded in Hebrew and German in a special log so that every member will be able to read them. Because it is desirable that each member of the committee signs the same version, and because not everyone understands Hebrew, it is decided that the German version will be signed." The decision actually gave de facto authority to a custom instituted in the committee's previous meeting, when on September 24, the minutes were written in both languages for the first time. From September 1957, the minutes of management committee meetings were recorded in the log only in Hebrew, although a note by **Gershon Kahn** on the page that opens that year's records, tells us, "German translations will be signed as well. (See the special folder!)" The bi-lingual proceedings must have been burdensome and when discussions in the members' assembly took place in Hebrew, there were sometimes angry cries of "Sprech' doch Deutsch!", that is, "Speak German!" **Vardit Meir** remembers, "In **Shavei Zion**, one must get used to things. We went to the assembly and because both of us (*my husband Tzvi and I*) knew both German and Hebrew, the meetings were one big bore".

In the fall of 1953, the moshav's mimeographed newsletter *Beineinu (Between Us)* appeared in two versions, in Hebrew and in German, but with all of the headlines in Hebrew only. That issue contained a message to readers: "The moshav is growing and only a few members are able to keep track of developments in (*our*) various enterprises. Therefore, we wish to publish a monthly newsletter that primarily will contain information about the farm. The newsletter will also serve as a platform for debate by members, on economic and social questions. The newsletter will give space to noting both positive and negative aspects (*of our communal life*) in order to make improvements. With your participation and your interaction with the newsletter, you will influence its character and contribute to its success." That issue devoted three pages to a review of the field crops in **Shavei Zion**, the field crops being farmed in the Negev, the vegetable garden, the poultry house, the dairy barn, the fodder crops and the activities of the management

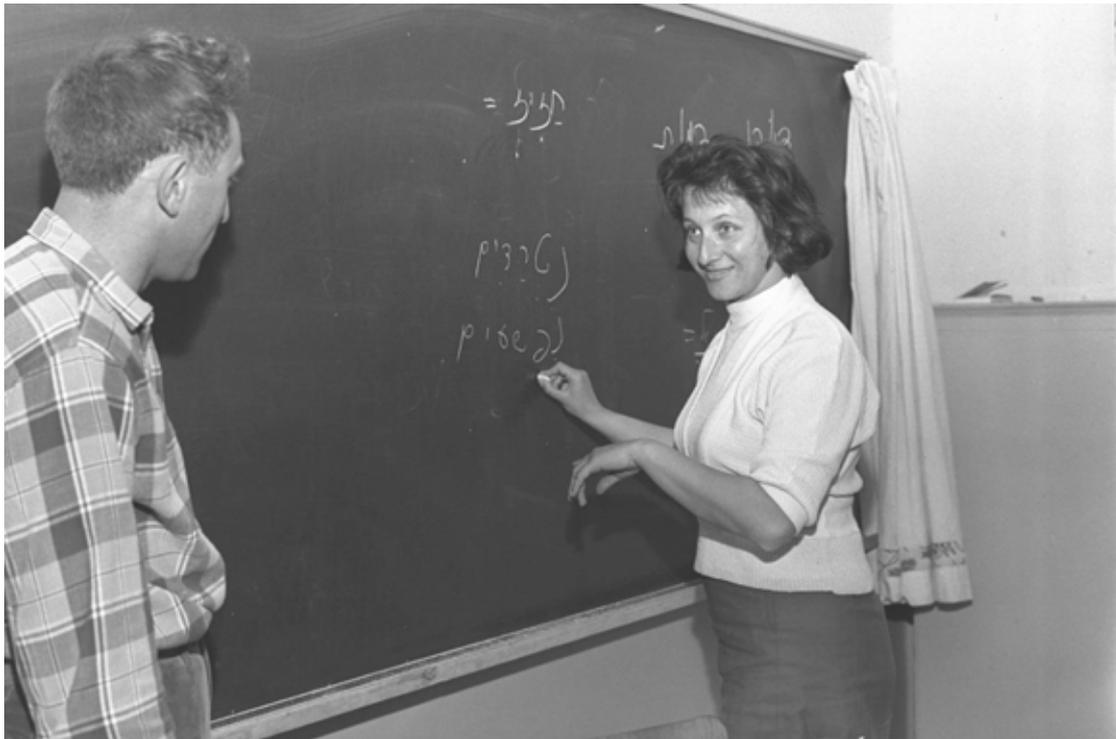
committee and the members' committee. In addition, there were notices of congratulations to **Karl (Alexander)** and **Lisbet (Elisheva) Neumeir** on the birth of their daughter **Esty** and to **Bruno** and **Marcelle Levi** on the birth of their son **Ya'acov**. There was also a memorial, titled *Askara*, in the German-language version of that issue, which made note of the first anniversary of the death of the young member **David Sahn**.

In December 1962, the nine-page first issue of the *Moshav Newsletter* was published after what seems to have been a long interval when no newsletters were written and distributed. In the single example of that revived all-German newsletter held in the archives, we read, "The moshav newsletter--again we're going to see if it's doomed to failure as some of the members have been saying". But the anonymous editor added that it was to be hoped that reading the newsletter and listening to the explanations regularly made in the members' assemblies, would prepare members to better understand the workings of the moshav and would lead to improved leadership and productive developments. In 1963, the newsletter began to appear under the name *The Echo of our Farm*. Although the archives does not contain anything resembling a complete series of *The Echo*, the extant issues tell us that at least some of the issues, for a certain time, were published in Hebrew and German.

In May 1982, the reanimated *Beineinu* newsletter printed material under the heading "Seite für die älteren Chaverim", that is, a page for the elderly members. In fact, that issue contained a single experimental, supplemental page in German for those members who did not know Hebrew. The material included a notice from the local WIZO chapter, posted by **Friedlise Stern**; excerpts from the minutes of the management committee from discussions concerning improvements to members' houses and the addition of a room to houses in the "Bor" neighborhood; and an announcement of the planting of ten dunams (one hectare, or two and a half acres) of "Eshkoliot" in "the east", that is, grapefruit trees in the citrus plantation east of National Road 4. As long as the newsletter in this iteration was published, until 1987, it included occasional material in German: a notice from the culture committee; a photocopy of an article from a German newspaper; an article by **Elisheva Neumeir**; and lengthy greetings to **Elisheva** and her husband **Alexander** from **Edna Wolf** with congratulations on their 50th wedding anniversary (or, as **Edna** put it, on the 18,250 days of their marriage).

As we've read, new members who were native Hebrew-speakers and new immigrants accepted to membership in the moshav in the 1940s and 50s, were expected one way or another to get at least a working knowledge of Swabian

Shavei Tzion-style German. The parents and grandparents of those children who arrived here in 1938 and 1939, had been overburdened with the work of building the cooperative so that whatever Hebrew they learned, they tended to learn not experientially as the children had, by living the language, but rather by investing effort in studying the language over many years. Whoever succeeded in acquiring proficiency did so through both enthusiasm and tenacity.



Hana Levi at an evening Hebrew lesson, with teacher **Shlomo Nisan**. **Shavei Tzion**, 1962. Photo by **Moshe Pridan**. Courtesy of the National Photo Collection, State of Israel.

In the booklet "Schavej Zion, 1938-1960", **Leopold Marx** talked about the settlers and the children who had immigrated with them, and the first generation of nativeborn children in **Shavei Tzion**. "All the children here," he wrote, "have learned to speak and to understand the language of their parents (*that is, German, but*) they don't speak standard German but rather a kind of Swabian." In the Englishlanguage version of the booklet titled "Schavej-Zion Experiment and Promise", published in 1963 to mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of **Shavei Tzion**, **Mr. Marx** wrote candidly that the children spoke, in effect, "a kind of Hebrew-Swabian gibberish", the use of which allowed them to talk with their elders only about everyday things. **Hans Jörg Klink** who visited **Shavei Tzion** in 1975 wrote, "The new generation wants to shake off the name 'Swabisch Zion' " (Swabian Zion), and he added that, "...even in the villages (*in Israel*), the young

people refuse to speak German with their parents. They will persist in using Hebrew."

Yet, a spark of interest in German perseveres among some of the third and fourth generations of settler families. **Shimrit Stern Barak**, born in 1978, tells us that as a small girl, she heard classic German children's songs from her Opa and Oma, Grandpa **Lothar** and Grandma **Friedlise Stern**, and those songs and rhymes sounded "pretty and pleasant" to her. Although **Lothar** and **Friedlise** spoke Hebrew with **Shimrit** and her sisters, she sometimes identified and understood a word or two in their German conversation. For example, **Lothar** typically rose from his chair to move on to his next task saying "Also!", that is, "So!" Because of her early exposure to German, says **Shimrit**, she even took pleasure in listening to German rock music, and when she traveled in East Asia, she sometimes found herself using German in places where no-one seemed to speak English. Later, during her university studies, **Shimrit** and her sister **Dorit** took several courses in German at the Goethe Institute in Haifa and they were very glad to practice their conversational skills on the weekends, when they saw their grandparents on visits home.

On April 15, 1938, two days after the Tower and Stockade camp was erected here, **Dr. Arthur Ruppin**, the co-chairman of the Jewish Agency's Central Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews, wrote in Hebrew to the people of **Shavei Zion**. "I am very gratified," he said, "by the fact that an entire community from Germany has moved to the Land and I see this as a remarkable event in our settlement..." That both the German language and certain European behaviors survived in the moshav for so many years may have been predictable when we consider the particular, insular nature of the **Rexingen** immigration scheme. Within the "Gemeinschaft", the **Shavei Zion** co-operative, the conjunction of Hebrew and German and the friction between them tell us a great deal not only about the character of the village as a whole but also about the formation and conservation of personal identities and the work of adapting oneself to life in the Land.