ISH YEHUDI

The Life and The Legacy of a Torah Great

RAV JOSEPH TZVI CARLEBACH

SHEARITH JOSEPH PUBLICATIONS

RAV SHLOMO CARLEBACH
GENERAL EDITOR

kitchens on its overseas steamships. During his later years, Dr. Rosenak endeavored to bring about greater coordination between the German and American emigrant aid associations. He traveled to America early in 1923, and negotiated successfully with the responsible authorities. This labor of love and charity overtaxed his strength, however, and he died suddenly, aboard ship, on August 15, 1923, the first night of his return voyage to Germany. Contrary to the prevailing custom on North German Lloyd ships, the captain brought the rabbi's body back to Germany for a proper funeral, instead of arranging for a burial at sea. Out of respect for the deceased, the passengers and crew canceled all concerts and entertainment for three days. More recently, the city of Bremen named one of its streets after Dr. Rosenak.

Chapter 14 BRINGING TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ TO LITHUANIA

The lack of proper schooling for Jewish youngsters was a matter of great concern to the Occupation authorities. The traditional *cheder* provided schooling only at the elementary level; there was no organized educational system for high school and beyond. To address that need, Dr. Rosenak was asked to recommend an experienced educator who combined Jewish and secular scholarship, to establish and direct a school in Lithuania's capital city of Kovno.

Dr. Rosenak could not think of anyone better qualified for such an assignment than his brother-in-law, the Rav. The educational experience of his years in Jerusalem and at the Margareten Lyceum in Berlin, had the Rav's status as a first rate educator firmly established. With doctorates in mathematics and philosophy included in his resumé, he received the call. Reporting to the High Command - North East, he was promoted to captain with the title of advisor on educational matters, and invested with full authority to proceed with the schooling plan.

Following extensive consultations with the local rabbinical authorities, including some of Lithuania's foremost Torah scholars, the Rav laid the foundations for a gymnasium-type school, based upon the principles of *Torah im Derech Eretz*, combining Torah lessons with secular subjects. Since the German authorities limited the number of weekly hours of instruction for religious subjects, the Rav introduced Hebrew as a foreign language, thus doubling the hours available for



Kovno Gymnasium, the Rav with Faculty and Students

limuday kodesh, including Talmud for the boys and *Tenach* (Bible and Prophets) for the girls. The Rav was able to persuade a number of highly qualified teachers from Germany to join him, in his pioneering effort on behalf of the *chinuch*-deprived Jewish youth in the occupied territories. Notable among them was Dr. Leo Deutschlaender, whose name became famous, some years later, for his enormous contribution to the Beth Jacob school system.

Known locally as the Carlebach Gymnasium, the school began with fewer than a hundred students, as many parents were reluctant to entrust their children to the new educators who wore German army uniforms. The more religious-leaning among them were afraid that the new school might secularize their children, while the more secular minded were afraid of religious indoctrination. The Rav went from house to house to introduce himself and his program, winning over the parents of potential candidates. The enthusiastic reaction of the initial student body further dispelled any doubts about the quality of the education and the spirit in which it was guided. Ultimately, the whole-hearted endorsement of the community leadership, both religious and communal, soon made enrollment in the gymnasium a sought-after prize.



Kovno Gymnasium, the Rav with Faculty and Student Body

With separate schools for boys and girls, enrollment in the second year grew to more than five hundred, soaring during the third year to almost one thousand. The Rav invited heads of *yeshivah* seminaries and local rabbis to test the students. The verdict was unanimously favorable, with expressions of amazement regarding the scholastic achievements and pervasive spirit of Yirat Shamayim (true religiosity) in the schools. He conducted Friday night oneg shabbat gatherings in his home, and debating sessions for older students during after school hours. In time, he was adored by his students, and respected by colleagues and parents alike. A prominent lawyer and author who served in Kovno at the time, as part of the German Orthodox contingent, wrote a summary, several years later, of his impressions of those years, singling out the Rav in a short paragraph: "Dr. Carlebach, a brilliant educator, was, to his pupils, not a strict rule-maker, but rather like an old friend and comrade, loving his duties and his young friends. The educational program allowed for consideration of the students' individual backgrounds. The result was a labor of love and joy. Before long the educational authorities of Oberost (the military high command) admitted that 'the achievements of this school were greater than those of similar schools in Germany."

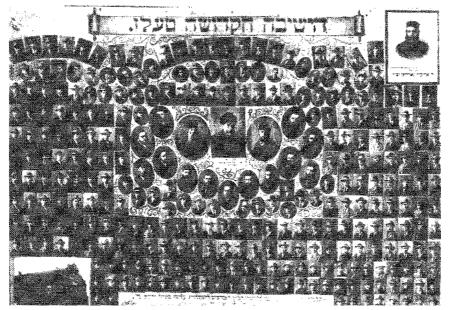
Years later, the Rav described his wartime experiences at the Kovno schools in a number of articles. He marveled at the amazing speed with which his students absorbed the secular knowledge denied them under the Czar. With freedoms granted by the new regime, students completed eight years of high school in five years. The remarkable progress made by the Jewish youth astounded their non-Jewish instructors and supervisors. They had to admit that this was proof of the effectiveness of the Cheder, for, despite its old-fashioned methods of instruction and primitive facilities, it had done much to sharpen the wits of its pupils. When at last they had the opportunity for an academic education, they were able to learn with incredible speed.

The Kovno Gymnasium left a deep impression upon the Lithuanian Torah leaders, who could not help but notice the enthusiastic response to the *Torah im Derech Eretz* educational approach, on the part of students and parents. They realized that this approach caused no compromise in *Yirat Shamayim*. The enormous upheaval in the political and social structure of Jewish society throughout the land, in the aftermath of war, threatened the stability and loyalty of Jewish youth. Under those circumstances, these Torah leaders felt an urgent need to introduce a similar educational program, on a broad scale, by reorganizing existing schools and establishing new ones, where subjects in *Derech Eretz* would be taught alongside *Limuday Kodesh*.

At the behest of the Telzer Rav, Rav Joseph Leib Bloch, a worldrenowned gaon and Rosh Yeshivah of the equally renowned Telzer







Reb Yosef Leib Bloch (left) Rosh Yeshiva Reb Avrohom Yitzchok Bloch, Rosh Yeshiva Faculty and Student Body of Telzer Yeshiva (bottom)

Yeshivah, Dr. Deutschlaender, director and guiding spirit of the Keren Hatorah Central Office in Vienna, was summoned to Kovno to organize, in consultation with the Rav such an educational system, to be called "Yavneh." Deutschlaender succeeded beyond all expectations. Ten years into its existence, in 1930, under the leadership of this brilliant and totally dedicated Torah educator, a teachers' training course was conducted in Polangen, a sea resort town in Lithuania. The Rav headed the distinguished faculty of the course, which was established to "teach the teachers" of the Yavneh schools. The Rav devoted a full month of intense work to this summer program. At its conclusion, he published a summary of the "Yavneh educational project" in the "Israelit." He reported that separate teachers' seminaries for men and women had been established in Kovno, in addition to "gymnasium-style high schools in Tels, Kovno and Ponevesh, and approximately 100 elementary schools spread throughout the land."

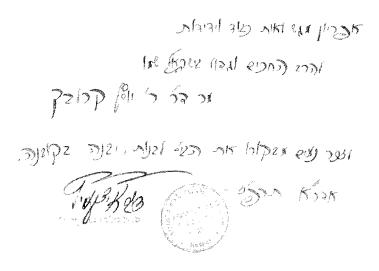
"The teachers at these many schools, serving a widely diverse parent and student population, felt inadequately prepared for their mission. Theirs was a pioneering calling, to introduce their charges to a whole range of secular subjects based on governmental guidelines,



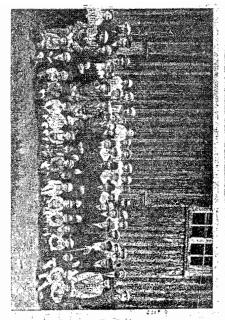
"Yavne" School in Kovno

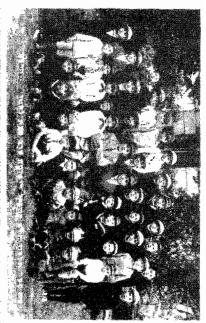
while maintaining the intense level of Jewish scholarship and Talmudic proficiency which was a time-tested hallmark of Lithuanian Jewry. In response to their urgent request, the central office in Kovno devised a plan for a summer refresher course, which would offer a comprehensive program to address these concerns. As part of the course, the Rav lectured on a wide variety of subjects in the field of Torah-chinuch, and delivered *shiurim* on Torah topics relevant to the program. Other members of the faculty, rabbanim and mechanchim, lectured on their specific areas of competence.

The final days of the summer program were devoted to a general conference on Torah education, with the additional participation of several Lithuanian Torah giants, like the Ponevesher Rav, Rav Kahaneman, and the Suvalker Rav, Rav Bakst. The conference was graced by many *rabbanim*, as well as guests of the sea-side resort. Its culmination was a banquet honoring the visiting faculty members, for their extraordinary effort on behalf of Torah education, with the organizers and participants resolving to repeat a similar summer program in Hamburg, under the Rav's aegis. It was further resolved to establish a mobile library, which would bring Torah literature to small Jewish



Laudatory inscription by principal of Yavne School





Behrern geleitet, gilt als Musterichuse in der Gegend. Im Anschlift an die Lehrerkonferenz und die Lehrer-fung, die unter Leitung von Beerrabbiner Dr. Carle-gach aus Altona und Dr. E. Deutschländer in

Schule, wom Ortsrabbiner und mehreren bewährten men Eltern gegrundet murbe und erhalten mirb.

Inspettion sprochen fich die Herren in vollster Anerten-Polangen gegen Sommerende stattsonden, begaben sich biele Herren und Metowa, um die genannse Talmud-Koraschuse zu destätzen. In einem Bericht über diese

- über ben Unterrichtebetrieb und ben Geift ber

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Sin Studichen Abetow'a erhebt fich unweit ber Bornalte

Mach Begrützungen bließ den Oberräckbeiner und den diesen Lehrer sand der unter starter Beteiligung der Bevösserung-eine öffenkliche Kristung, im Zenach wie im Talknud statt. Die Verkrauftigt der Kinder mit der Materie mat. erstauntich. Sie behörrichen Jackien das Anderie mat. erstauntich. Sie behörrichen Jackiendime einiger Rapitet aus Jirmejahn ither die Beschichte bes Die profenen Bucher merben ebenfalls in hebruilcher Interganges bes erften libficen Reiches Befcheib geben. Unfangern bis bu ben Mefteften, gleich gu-Der Erfolg ift in allen Gruppen,

The Rav in center of picture A model school in Rhetova

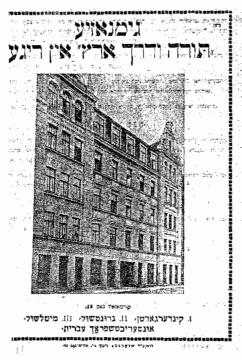
Rabin A. Bakst suwaks. Suwaks. Suwaks.
מום להיים בת למו" שכם שות הרבה
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Letter regarding Teachers Training Course in Hamburg

communities throughout Lithuania that did not have the resources for a permanent library of their own.

The repercussions of the conference were profound. The prominence of the faculty members, joined by *Gedoley Torah*, and the participation of more than fifty teachers and observers from other Baltic countries, turned the conference into a major event in the Lithuanian Jewish arena. Even the Lithuanian Ministry of Education officially declared its satisfaction with the conference's aims and accomplishments.

When the Soviet government rose to power, it staged a public "trial" in Vitebsk, at which the "defendant" was the institution of the Cheder. The Czarist government had outlawed the Cheder, of which it was contemptuous, and because it feared that Talmudic training might eventually incite the students to revolt against its despotic regime. The Soviet authorities, on the other hand, had their own particular reasons for attempting to put a stop to Cheder instruction. They felt that



מן רי קיניקר זום פול נעבנדים ווי א נות פיקע וכמזיקלוננ. די מורת ודרך ז-רץ שולן לאכן כונה של נשותון גים נשר טאנו ראבן דין פאראינטשרעפירם אין רוב אופבף. פון די שלה נאכושע באציאנגען ראבן אין איונגעי שבעלם כים דער ליפוף שני שולארגעניואצי עיבנהי. מים דער ארסאראקביישער דערציאפנס, צלנסקאלע מינה מען האם לאשלאםן אין לישע שאניפיראן דיי (וין. בשנה מען האם לאשלאםן אין לישע שאניפיראן די איכותי קאומערונון דאים ויינל באוכם דיקה. דירוניף מאר פון קאומער שיכותי ניפנאניע זה קראן מים מעלכן די רינער של-לייטות דאת אפגערואלקן כעי רקדע העומנקן אוף וועלכן מיכן האם באהאכרלם בעיר. מיינאסע פראגן פון פעוואנאניטן און ארנאניאוראס נעלן מאראקפער, אף רער שלנווא קאנערענץ האם בקין השהאנשתה הי האן שבחיר פוני על מחדה יניך באכרילינים אידו א האריכשיוני פון בי מחדה זיים דעד האפערועים זיינען די מחדב נדענים בחיים ליסע אמן לעסלמנה אמן נעפים פון ארנאדאקטישנר ליסע אמן לעסלמנה אמן נעפים פון ארנאדאקטישנר רערציאוננס ארבעם בעווארן נאן נעענמעד, אף דינר סאנסערטנץ אל אחד אנגעמסען כערשרן א רעואלא ציק הענן נעם יכורה ארבלם זק די עיכורי שולן מים די שחורה ודוץ ארוף סולן. אין חבים תשובאל דקם יאר זיינען לחם רעד איינלארוגג פון שמרה יררך ארץי ניטנאיע אין רינע ניעטמטן אומר רי האריםאע פורער און ארגאי בינאפארן פון אינפאראקטיפוני של אינפעל אין בימשמפרן פון אומטראקייפני של אינ אינ באפקל און דר א זיינע משרבערוני. בדרים לו איני איני באפקל און דר א א דיאני, רועם האיני באיינע משרכם די איני בעמשקפר ולא א דיאני, רועם האיני באיינע משרכם די איני בעמשקפר ולא היינע משרכם די איני א דיאני, רועם האיני באיינע משרכם די איני א דיאני, רועם האיני באיינע באייני באיינע משרכם די איני באיינע האיני באיינע משרכם באיינע האיני באיינע משרכם באיינע האיני באיינע משרכם באיינע האיני באיינע משרכם באיינע האיני בא באיינע האיני בא באיינע האיני באיינע האיינע ה שירודים פעראנאנן אין אניסלאנרי וועלכע דעלפן אינו בע יקרעה נעלענוניים סים האם אין אינו בע יקרעה פניתום אינו בא יקרעה נעלקנוניים סים האם אין אינו בא אינו בע יקרעה בין ייקרענוניים סים האם אינו בא יקרעה געלקנוניים רי ליישונג פון פראנקפוריםער ארבאראקטיפער דעאלשול.

א אינטקרעט צום פול חגם בא ויין דורכרייה. ארניסגעורון איך רעד ארנאראקטיפער לפקן זה יפן

"Torah Im Derech Eretz" Gymnasium in Riga

this kind of study would stupefy the minds of children who, drugged by religion, the "opiate of the masses," would be willing tools for the capitalists in exploiting the "downtrodden masses." At the Vitebsk "trial" the Cheder was publicly "sentenced to death" as the official organ of capitalism for the perpetration of tyranny against the poor and oppressed.

In defense of a venerated Jewish institution of learning, the Rav wrote a report about the "Cheder Trial" in Vitebsk. With biting polemic, he exposed all the hypocrisy, falsehood and anti-Semitism that the Soviet regime employed, in order to discredit the cheder and justify its destruction. The Rav concluded his report with recommendations for the cheder schools, to help them improve their educational programs and further the welfare of their charges. This report was published in 1924 in the "Yeshurun," and eventually distributed as a separate brochure. It deserves a prominent presence in the historical review of the Soviet government's war against Jewish institutions of learning.

The Rav remained with the gymnasium in Kovno, until the end of the war. He then took a short leave, to return to Berlin and marry

גדרניק גד משוה עלנם ואור המוכה מקרבם אם לא אתו אלופנו (מיודענו היא אוצרי נאני הורש ונאה מקים יודע לאחר פורך. ומדעים וכלכור נ אה לבות שומעי ליוח לאביאם שבשמים ומי כמוך איש המודות אוהם יכ"די ישרון היפים והנחנהרים בככ" לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך התכמידים והתכמידות מבן תמשועד עשרים שנה בזי גדכ מי סמוך האזי ישראל איש האשכולת הונג הנמנו ודאף ויראף ז

אל כבוד מנהלנו הנכנד כשת מל דו ייסף צבי קללבן אי

רינפי העה ונהפי הטרני עודה עטר אום! המשמל הטנני אפר יסרם ונהלת מלך מרישוני מינותות עמין מהיינה העיטני המאלשיני שמכני של יח נחיים כישר וכבור הינצאות מפיות חבריך יהברותיך לראש לוסף מלמקסיר וישוריף נזים וננות נאמנים לעמם ורתם מעלירוים וכקורן אוול אחיוול יוסף טכיוהן אכף פטחים ויצאו מריאנ מכל דרכיהם ומעשיהם מהנאים מתורת ישראל והכחתו לשמדורד לגך המגור ולשטחת למנו המורים נהמורות החופמים בכצור גמוו שא ד", נכבד ברכה מרובה ברכה טהורה וצרופה הנובעת מילובון מלאים

אבר'ך מבלי בניה בעיה ושונומה מבלי בהי ספר לתורה ודרך ארק ועיני על כב' אעד ושעל ואתנו ביון ד' בפחן יהדיל בראונן הכמיך ובתכסיסך החלה לפרק את כלי הגולה מעליה ולהתנטר מעפר שפלותה בחמר וברוח לקורום הואת תחת ידו הופעת אתה אדוננו הועלה ככוכם מוהיר עכ שעת יהי ובהו הרת מלחמה עולם הרבך מלאה התמנגם נגורי נונשול אשר כנה אלדים מורחפת עליו ומסבים ליבל הדת נהחיים אשר הרימורד פנסת לללקטור חצנב קוכגיום גדול של יותר מעשרים מורים ומורורו מכונים פאר בהיכל האמונה והתנונה ומאות נערים פערות שהלכר אך נישוח עבנה מן הנים שבערה היהודים הקומואים. אשל הגלתה גלני שלש הריטות משכנות ישראל ולהשיב את אהלי יעקב ובעוד היא יושבה ודלאגרד העדה גשואות כאיש רב פעלים אשר ידין רב כו כקחה את החכשיב די שמים המדרים המערפלים והאמר יהן בלת הספר והשעה הנפלא פלסה כך במיב ויפא זרוקי ידיך ליהי בית הספל המנה ולתקווה מטיל ימינו רוומ לילא תורה וללא רפע מצאו עאר מינו הלים לרוופ אוצ

צוראים שכ הפוכחמה העוכבויה לך אני נשארוני כברי האמר טדתישראל הקונואים ואכל מאורד ושים שבל וכל אלה כוונו ידיך בן פלה יוסף במישך שנו: אחר, בינליות

יפקח שעיהם ויראן מראות האירים ויקראו בתנ"ך ומתכמוד מפרש

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Scroll of gratitude and appreciation to the Rav from Faculty of Real - Gymnasium in Kovno

Lotte Preuss, daughter of the legendary physician, Dr. Julius Preuss, whom he greatly admired and in whose house he was a frequent visitor. He stood under the *chupah* in his army uniform, with his father, the family patriarch, officiating. The Rav then returned to Kovno with his new wife. With redoubled energy, he strengthened and expanded the school which he had founded and nurtured against difficult odds. Not long afterward, circumstances beyond his control persuaded the Rav to leave Kovno, handing over his beloved school to well qualified educators. The school continued to function as a highly regarded institution of *chinuch*, proudly displaying the name of its founder as the "Carlebach Gymnasium," until the Nazi invasion, which destroyed Lithuanian Jewry together with that of the entire European continent.

In addition to his educational work, the Rav was deeply involved in securing the economic survival of struggling Torah institutions in Lithuania. Dislocated in the course of shifting military and political fortunes, the great Torah schools were faced with disruption and dissolution. The Rav interceded with the German authorities on behalf of the Yeshivot. With the advantage his high military rank and position as advisor on educational matters, he was able to secure continuity for these most important institutions. He also arranged for financial support from sympathetic sources in Germany and other Western European countries, which was a greater feat, because of the wartime economic turmoil in Europe.

This additional aspect of the Rav's blessed activities during World War I remained unreported for decades, until a number of years after World War II. At that time, the gaon and tzaddik, Rabbi Eliezer Y. Finkel, dean of the world famous Yeshivat Mir of Jerusalem, came to New York to raise funds for the rebuilding of his Torah institution. He visited the gaon, Rabbi Reuvein Grozovsky, a former talmid of Slobodka Yeshivah and eminent Lithuanian Torah leader, who had already established himself as one of the outstanding Torah personalities in the U.S. Among Rabbi Finkel's entourage was the Rav's younger son. Upon being introduced, Rabbi Grozovsky became very excited. Turning to Rabbi Finkel, he exclaimed, "I can bear witness that if not for the intervention of this young man's father, the gaon Rav Joseph Tzvi Carlebach, may HASHEM avenge his blood, Slobodka Yeshiva would have ceased to exist. And not only Slobodka, but all the great Torah institutions in Lithuania, were saved through his intervention, and his strenuous efforts to provide for their sustenance."