**At the Center of Two Revolutions: Beit Yaakov in Poland and Israel Between Neo-Orthodoxy and Ultra-Orthodoxy**

Every *h[.]aredi* child knows about Beit Yaakov in Israel, the extensive network of *h[.]aredi* educational institutions for girls ranging from kindergartens to vocational seminaries. Similarly well-known is the story of these institutions’ beginning; indeed, the network’s founder, Sara Schenirer (1883-1935), is often considered the ‘Mother’ of *h[.]aredi* women[[1]](#endnote-1) and has become a symbol of *h[.]aredi* education complete with her own mythos within *h[.]aredi* society. However, renewed investigation into the history of Beit Yaakov reveals a much more complicated picture. In contrast to the mythos of Schenirer as the founding director of the institution from its inception until her death, we must attribute the great success of Beit Yaakov to additional factors. First among these were Dr. Shmu’el (Leo) Deutschländer (1879-1935), who spearheaded the advancement of the organization both financially and pedagogically, and Dr. Yehudit Rosenbaum (later Greenfeld, 1902-1998),[[2]](#endnote-2) one of his partners in these endeavors.

The first twenty-one years of Beit Yaakov’s development can be divided into three periods. In the first period, 1918-23, Beit Yaakov was founded and managed exclusively by Sara Schenirer. During the second period, 1923-35, Beit Yaakov was absorbed by Agudat Yisrael and put under the professional direction of Dr. Leo Deutschländer. Following this, the organization took on tremendous momentum. It grew from eight schools with 1,130 students in 1923 to fifty-five schools with 7,340 students in 1926. During this period, the organization adopted the educational philosophy of *Torah im derekh erets* (Torah study and secular knowledge). In the third stage, 1935-43, after the deaths of Schenirer and Deutschländer, R. Yehudah Leib Orlean (1900-43) was appointed director of Beit Yaakov. As I have shown elsewhere, this period marked a conservative turn in the development of Beit Yaakov.[[3]](#endnote-3)

In this study, I investigate the two earlier periods of Beit Yaakov, from its founding to the appointment of R. Orlean, identifying the most influential factors and figures in shaping its early development. Within this framework, I address the question of how and why the mythos of Sara Schenirer was cultivated to the exclusion of Deutschländer. Answering this question contributes to our understanding of the leadership and expansion of the Beit Yaakov system throughout Poland, Galicia, and other locales. Further, it expands our understanding of the educational revolution Beit Yaakov underwent during its development prior to the Holocaust. In this study, I focus primarily on the biography and activities of Deutschländer and on the character of Beit Yaakov in its early years.

**The Educational Crisis Leading Up to the Founding of Beit Yaakov: The Estrangement of Girls from their Families**

Before the establishment of Beit Yaakov, there existed an absolute differentiation between boys and girls in East European Jewish education. While the boys attended *h[.]eder* and yeshiva, girls attended public schools. Girls’ Jewish education was limited to what they received at home.[[4]](#endnote-4) Gute Shternbuch, a native of Warsaw, describes in her memoirs the schools of her hometown prior to the opening of Beit Yaakov in Warsaw in 1928, making special mention of her feelings towards Jewish tradition. She recounts that the Polish government opened schools for Jews that were closed on Shabbat, but which otherwise had no trace of Jewish character and which left the teaching of Jewish content to families.[[5]](#endnote-5) She writes about her education at home, ‘My mother would read to me now and then from the *Tsene-rene* in Yiddish, a teacher would come to our house and teach me how to pray out of the prayer book, and my father taught me the weekly Torah portion each week. That was all.’ She felt this was insufficient. ‘I grew up thinking that Judaism was the province of boys and men.’[[6]](#endnote-6) She continues, ‘We felt as if we had been pushed outside.’[[7]](#endnote-7) This feeling, according to Gute, was common to most girls, who, despite their strong religious background, felt an opposition to religion. They preferred the Polish language, which for them represented modernity and culture, to the Yiddish they spoke at home.[[8]](#endnote-8)

Eli’ezer Gershon Friedenson, who would later become editor of Beit Yaakov’s publication, describes the situation in the Jewish home:

In Jewish households in Poland fierce wars broke out. Mothers and daughters no longer understood one another. The ‘new’ daughter who learned to recite in fluent Polish the poems of Mickiewicz and Słowacki began to find her ‘stupid’ mother embarrassing. She began to rebel against her ‘zealot’ father and to make fun of her ‘idle’ brother, ‘the conqueror of the couch’, and dreamed not of a studious and pious husband-to-be but instead of a ‘knight’ like the ones she read of in the novels with which she spent so much of her time.[[9]](#endnote-9)

It is said that when the *rebbe* of Ger was asked if he supported Beit Yaakov, he answered, ‘Certainly everything must be done for the sake of educating the girls . . . thank God, we have thousands of properly educated and pious young men, but the girls – from where will their help come if not from Beit Yaakov?’[[10]](#endnote-10)

The educator Dr. Yehudit Rosenbaum, who would become a dominant force in Beit Yaakov,[[11]](#endnote-11) likewise describes the situation of the Jewish family in Galicia before the opening of the network as a dichotomous one, in which the father and sons took meaningful part in the life of the Jewish community, while the mother and daughters were excluded and denied any framework for cultivating a religious identity. She describes the spiritual situation and the yearning of the young Jewish girls:

The older women seemed to be withdrawing into a spiritual world of their own – the younger longed to be ‘modern’, untutored in Torah, and with a smattering of modern science. In the Polish gymnasium they seemed to feel that Judaism was merely a useless restraint, a fetter, a shell that obfuscated and that must be burst to let in the light.[[12]](#endnote-12)

She later attempts to explain the reasons behind this reality: the men inhabited a world filled with Jewish spiritual experiences, while for the women such opportunities were rare:

And we pass through the days of Elul. The trains which run to the little *shtedtlach* (towns) where the *rebbes* live are crowded. Thousands of hasidim are on their way to them to spend the *Yamim Nora’im* with the *rebbe*. . . eager to spend the holiest days in the atmosphere of their *rebbe*, to be able to absorb as much holiness as possible. Fathers and sons travel and those who can afford it make this journey several times a year.[[13]](#endnote-13)

In contrast, the picture of the holiday for the young women was the polar opposite:

And we stay at home, the wives and the daughters, with the little ones. We have an empty *Yom Tov*. It is bare of Jewish intellectual concentration. The women have never learned anything about the spiritual content that is concentrated within a Jewish festival. . . The young girls look upon them as beings of a different century.[[14]](#endnote-14)

Since the early 20th century, a ferocious debate had been waged in the pages of Jewish newspapers over the question of whether to continue the status quo or to create an Orthodox educational system, which would clearly include some level of religious studies.[[15]](#endnote-15) The proponents of change point to the failures of the current system. They claimed it weakened girls religiously and spiritually to the point that they were abandoning the tradition. Further, they claimed it created an unbridgeable gulf between boys and girls, which in turn created tension in marriages. Defenders of the status quo claimed that it was impossible to provide a religious education to girls because of the prohibition against women studying Torah, and so no change could be made. Rabbinical authorities also weighed in on the issue. In 1903, a rabbinical conference was called during which the issue repeatedly arose.[[16]](#endnote-16) Some rabbinical figures of the time called for a change in the system, those taking a conservative approach argued: ‘This law [the prohibition on women studying Torah] applies in every place and every time, including the current period. And if this law is true and abiding, then its application is eternal, and we consider this tradition as holy as all other true traditions of Israel.’[[17]](#endnote-17)

The religious education of girls at home was a deeply rooted practice in Jewish society. Most Jews did not consider the possibility of girls leaving home to study in public schools to be a serious problem. Rosenbaum explains that the sense of estrangement between husbands and wives may have prevented them from paying attention to the spiritual condition of their daughters: ‘And when the father comes home from the *rebbe*, he is too dazzled to sense what will one day emerge into the glaring light, revealing a breach that has grown beyond repair.’[[18]](#endnote-18) The fathers, unaware of their daughters’ situation, relied on the strength of the home to provide a deep-seated and meaningful Jewish education that would immunize them against the negative influence of their surroundings. The fact that girls are not obligated to study Torah further contributed to the idea that a public education was a legitimate option that posed no problem of *bitul Torah* (foregoing Torah study). In contrast, boys are religiously obligated to study Torah and are therefore be guilty of avoiding their duties if they engage in secular studies. What’s more, conservatives did not easily accept the argument that lack of organized religious studies contributed to girls abandoning their religion or weakened their religious and spiritual standing. To their minds, it is impossible that the ancient sages had not foreseen such problems with their divine inspiration. However, where the progressive rabbis failed, Sara Schenirer succeeded. Not only did she effect the sought-after change, but in doing so she was not scorned as a rebel but praised by the *h[.]aredi* community.[[19]](#endnote-19)

**Emerging from the Crisis: Sara Schenirer’s Role in Founding Beit Yaakov and in its Early Growth**

Sara Schenirer was born in 1883 into a family of Belzer hasidim, one of the most conservative and confrontational forms of Hasidism in Galicia. Prior to finishing her high school education, she became a seamstress and helped financially support her family. During the First World War she fled with her family to Vienna, where she encountered the teachings of R. Dr. Moritz Flesch, an Orthodox rabbi from the *Torah im derekh erets* school of R. Samson Raphael Hirsch. She later wrote in her memoirs that his teachings led her to understand what was lacking for the girls of her generation in Poland and how to return them to Jewish tradition. As Flesch explains it, girls were abandoning the ways of their ancestors because they did not truly understand them. If they did, they would surely wish to hold on to them. That being the case, all that needed to be done was to reveal to them the contents of the Jewish world: history, faith, Bible, ethics, and religious law.[[20]](#endnote-20) In a single concise sentence she describes the elation that occurred in her transition from seamstress to educator: ‘For the girls for whom I used to sew dresses I now sewed spiritual garments.’[[21]](#endnote-21)

The *Torah* *im derekh erets* approach granted women full permission to study Torah, only distinguishing between men and women in the study of *halakhah* (religious law). In Hirsch’s opinion, transmitting the law from one generation to the next is the responsibility of the men, and so it is their sole responsibility to study that law and its sources. Women are exempt.[[22]](#endnote-22) On the other hand, study of Bible, ethics, and other Jewish subjects are not only permitted to them but required of them.

Sara Schenirer began her educational career by holding afternoon meetings for high school girls in informal settings. However, she quickly discovered that, while it was beneficial for girls to meet and hear lectures, they were not truly internalizing the messages. The meetings were not yielding the results she hoped they would: the girls showed no signs of returning to tradition. Schenirer began to invest her energies in formal education. (However, she never totally abandoned informal education and also founded a youth movement for the girls of Beit Yaakov). She decided to open a school for elementary-age girls, the age at which they were most susceptible to influence. Since she was entering the world of formal education, she sought the support of religious authorities, earning that of the Hasidic leaders R. Yisakhar Dov Roke’ah[.] of Belz (1854-1927) and R. Avraham Mordekhai Alter of Ger (1866-1948), as well as R. Yisra’el Me’ir ha-Kohen of Radin (1839-1933), the *H[.]ofets H[.]aim*. The latter permitted women to study Torah as a concession. Hirsch, in contrast, actively advocated for it.

Sara Schenirer’s first school opened in 1917 with only twenty-five girls. However, substantial growth began with the adoption of Beit Yaakov by Agudat Yisrael in 1923. First, Beit Yaakov was adopted by the local chapter of Agudat Yisrael in Kraków in 1919. This was followed by the support of the broader Agudat Yisrael organization in 1922. In 1923, the Agudat Yisrael took partial financial responsibility for Beit Yaakov and dedicated some of the funds collected by Keren Hatorah (The Torah Fund) to the support of the school.[[23]](#endnote-23) Sara Schenirer sought counsel from R. Ben-Tsiyon Halberstam, the leader of the Bobov Hasidic community, and upon his advice transferred her school to the guardianship of Agudat Yisrael.[[24]](#endnote-24) In early 1924, Dr. Shmu’el Leo Deutschländer was sent by Agudat Yisrael to assist Schenirer.[[25]](#endnote-25) From that point on, Beit Yaakov grew at a dizzying pace. Following the rapid growth of the network, a central body was founded in Kraków that was tasked with overseeing a unified curriculum across the schools. This central body had committees with mandates to recruit teachers, open new schools, and serve as liaisons with the Polish government.[[26]](#endnote-26) The network of schools also opened a teacher training program, on which Schenirer focused most of her energies.[[27]](#endnote-27) Schenirer understood that, in order for Beit Yaakov to expand it was necessary to train teachers who could found new schools in communities across Poland. The Beit Yaakov schools operated under two formats. In the large cities, the schools generally ran full-day schedules, with a general studies program identical to that in the public schools (unlike the Agudat Yisrael schools for boys, which had limited general studies programs).[[28]](#endnote-28) These schools were recognized by the government, and so replaced the public schools for their students. In the small cities, however, most Beit Yaakov schools were supplementary. Studies were restricted to religious subjects and classes were held in the morning or afternoon. This was similar to public schools, which ran classes in two half-day shifts to accommodate the large numbers of students.[[29]](#endnote-29) Once the Polish government recognized the Beit Yaakov curriculum, Agudat Yisrael’s education center succeeded in receiving an exemption for its students from the religious studies classes in the public schools.[[30]](#endnote-30) Some years before the outbreak of the Second World War, additional tracks were opened, including professional studies programs[[31]](#endnote-31) and a track in preparation for immigration to the land of Israel.

Alongside the formal programs of study were additional programs that strengthened and enriched the Beit Yaakov ideology. In 1925, a youth movement was founded for graduates of Beit Yaakov over sixteen years of age, known as *Banot Agudat Yisrael* or simply *Banot* for short. Another youth movement, *Batyah,* was founded for younger girls. In some places, *Batyah* operated under the auspices of *Banot*. The relationship between the youth movement and the local school was close. The teacher from Beit Yaakov always served as the leader of the *Banot* chapter.[[32]](#endnote-32)

Over the years the Beit Yaakov network also established two journals that served as its mouthpieces. These were initiated and edited by Eli’ezer Gershon Friedenson (1899-1943),[[33]](#endnote-33) an active member of Agudat Yisrael.[[34]](#endnote-34) The journals served to spread the concepts behind Beit Yaakov and, at a later stage, of *Banot* and *Batyah* and provided a central literary platform for the publication of articles and various types of information in the *h[.]aredi* community. Some of the material in the journals even provided its student readers with textbooks and other reading material.[[35]](#endnote-35)

By the time of Schenirer’s death in 1935, less than twenty years after her initial steps towards founding the school, Beit Yaakov had become a fully-developed educational network comprised of more than 250 schools, in which about 35,000 students were enrolled; only two years later that number was 38,000.[[36]](#endnote-36) Beit Yaakov had expanded beyond the borders of Poland and now operated schools throughout Europe, across the sea, and even in the Land of Israel. It was an unprecedented success story in the annals of Jewish history.

Sara Schenirer’s work achieved much recognition in the *h[.]aredi* world, and she herself became something of a legend. Her portrait hangs in every Beit Yaakov school (despite her request to the contrary[[37]](#endnote-37)). A substantial amount of hagiographical material has been written about her, reminiscent of the books written about male *h[.]aredi* leaders. Special editions of the Beit Yaakov monthly periodicals have been dedicated to her and the day of her death (*yahrtzeit*) is commemorated annually in Beit Yaakov schools.

Given Schenirer’s activity, and especially her glorification within *h[.]aredi* society, a number of questions arise, some of which have been addressed in *h[.]aredi* publications and academic literature. On the practical level, we may ask how Schenirer in particular succeeded in launching this endeavor in girls’ education and, more precisely, how did a woman succeed where so many rabbinical leaders had failed. On the empirical level, it may be asked whether the astounding success of Beit Yaakov as an extensive, massive, and intercontinental network of schools be attributed solely to Sara Schenirer, a woman whose formal education ceased after eight years of study. On the conceptual level, it may be asked how *h[.]aredi* society came to glorify and even mythologize a female figure, especially given that it was reconstituted in Israel as a conservative and patriarchal culture that refuses to portray women in pictures or even mention the name of a bride in wedding invitations.

While it was indeed Sara Schenirer who launched Beit Yaakov, her endeavor did not take place in a vacuum. Various calls had been made within Orthodox Jewish society beforehand, and these had prepared the ground for her plans. For example, the Jewish press of the day devoted much ink to the question of girls’ education, bringing it into public awareness. Some acerbically pointed out the damaging consequences of the lack of a proper educational frameworks for girls, though the First World War cut short any steps taken to address that lack.[[38]](#endnote-38) Even *h[.]aredi* literature has attempted to explain this phenomenon, attributing it to Schenirer’s personality, the specifics of her plans, and her piercing yet realistic vision.[[39]](#endnote-39) Michal Shaul, who addresses the question of how the mythos of Schenirer developed within *h[.]aredi* society, raises the possibility that the memory of Sara Schenirer serves as a kind of counterpoint to the memory of the Holocaust. That is, *h[.]aredi* society prefers to immortalize Sara Schenirer rather than the victims of the Holocaust, since her memory can serve as inspiration and foundation for the rebuilding of *h[.]aredi* society. Rather than confront the darkest period humanity has known, with all of its theological and existential difficulties, *h[.]aredi* society prefers to preserve continuity with the period before the ‘destruction’ by emphasizing the spiritual strength of women during the Holocaust and attributing it to the education they received at Beit Yaakov.[[40]](#endnote-40) According to this explanation, Schenirer serves as not only the savior of Jewish girls from the dangers during her lifetime, but also as the savior of generations of girls she never met – the generation of the Holocaust and the one that followed.[[41]](#endnote-41)

The question remains whether Sara Schenirer was solely responsible for the tremendous success of Beit Yaakov. Investigation of contemporary literature reveals, as noted above, that Schenirer did not wage her war in a vacuum. The ground had already been prepared to a great extent by others, although it was indeed Schenirer who manifested the latent potential and set the process in motion. She deserves credit for starting the initiative, as well as for serving a crucial role in perpetuating it. However, the astounding success of Beit Yaakov and its transformation into an extensive network of schools across and even beyond Europe was made possible primarily by the efforts of other actors, first among them Dr. Deutschländer, who was active in both the financial and educational arenas, as I explain below.

Within a few years Beit Yaakov succeeded in spreading across Poland and large portions of Europe to an unprecedented extent. It became the largest Jewish educational network in Europe. Alongside the conventional methods used by Agudat Yisrael to spread its philosophy through the press and propaganda, Beit Yaakov employed another channel, in which Sara Schenirer played a central role. New schools were opened in response to local demand or upon the initiative of the network itself. In either case, Schenirer would travel to a town, accompanied by one of her young students, and deliver a an enthusiastic speech, praising the school and stressing the need for it. Afterwards she would ask the parents if they were interested in opening such a school in their town. If they answered in the affirmative, she would present a designated student, who also delivered a prepared speech, and who would facilitate the new program; and so a new Beit Yaakov school was opened.[[42]](#endnote-42) As mentioned above, most of the schools that opened in small cities were supplementary schools that taught only Jewish subjects, while the general studies would be learned in the local public schools.

Beit Yaakov appealed to a very broad population, including both the conservative *h[.]aredi* community and more modern religious Jews. The conservative population needed to be convinced that there was no halakhic issue with opening a school for girls in which they would learn Torah and that this was the most effective way to strengthen the girls and return them to Jewish tradition. The more modern-minded population needed to be convinced that a Beit Yaakov school could provide its students with general skills for learning and prepare them well for life and career advancement, while at the same time ensuring they stayed true to their parents’ traditions. It seems that Sara Schenirer appealed to the more conservative and traditional population, while Dr. Deutschländer and the Beit Yaakov teachers who came from Germany, with their secular educations and modern outlooks, appealed to the more progressive population.[[43]](#endnote-43) Rosenbaum’s description of Schenirer also portrays her as appealing to the ‘simple folk’, while Deutschländer found success in broader circles: ‘Her [Schenirer’s] voice could not reach to broader circles; her schools could not withstand the staunch criticism of the experts who sought a more basic curriculum and a leveled approach.’[[44]](#endnote-44) Likewise, as will soon become evident, Dr. Deutschländer appealed to the seminary’s teachers and students who possessed a secular education (from public schools or Jewish schools that were part of the *Torah im derekh erets* approach). In this way Beit Yaakov succeeded in appealing to a diverse population and in ensuring the satisfaction of the girls’ families.[[45]](#endnote-45)

The revolutionary nature of Beit Yaakov was not lost on the more conservative parents.[[46]](#endnote-46) These parents were wary of exposing their daughters religious studies as well as to secular studies. They preferred other educational frameworks – or to not educate their daughters at all. Sara Schenirer strongly opposed these parents who were unmoved by the fact that their daughters were straying from the Jewish tradition and the fact that they wore immodest clothing and enjoyed reading modern literature.[[47]](#endnote-47) Beit Yaakov needed to repel criticism from these conservatives. For this task, Sara Schenirer was the preferred spokesperson. Thirteen years after founding Beit Yaakov, she wrote the pamphlet *Vos darf zayn mit die yudishe tokhter?* (What is to be done with the Jewish girl?), which was later translated into German and Hebrew.[[48]](#endnote-48) Schenirer expresses astonishment: ‘Did religious parents not know that neglecting the education of their daughters would bring about the destruction and loss of many houses from Israel?’[[49]](#endnote-49) She declares unequivocally, ‘We cannot continue to send our sons to *h[.]eder* and our daughters to public schools.’[[50]](#endnote-50) She explains at length and in detail that Beit Yaakov is not contrary to the values of Hasidic and conservative households, and that it promotes fear of heaven and punctilious observance of the commandments.[[51]](#endnote-51) At Beit Yaakov, the girls learn to ‘take pride in their Jewish names, their modest clothes and their Yiddish language’.[[52]](#endnote-52) Religious parents, she said, who toil to sustain their daughters’ bodies, should also provide spiritual sustenance for their daughters’ souls. She detailed at length the diversity of Jewish studies awaiting girls at Beit Yaakov: Bible, laws, faith and philosophy, Jewish history, and Jewish ethics.[[53]](#endnote-53) And what of secular subjects? In the original Yiddish edition, Schenirer simply ignored them![[54]](#endnote-54)

**Expansion and Prosperity: Dr. Shmu’el Deutschländer and His Contribution to Beit Yaakov**

Who was Deutschländer and what was his contribution to the success of Beit Yaakov’s endeavor to educate *h[.]aredi* girls in Poland? If Deutschländer’s contribution was so central, why did *h[.]aredi* society glorify a woman over him? It seems it would have been more fitting to that society’s notions of gender to conceal or at least diminish her contribution and to focus on those of Deutschländer. However, *h[.]aredi* society chose to hold up *only* Schenirer as the heroine in this story. What’s more, it conceals Deutschländer’s part in the activities of Beit Yaakov nearly to the point of forgetting them entirely. None of his writings were translated into Hebrew, except for the eulogy he delivered for Sara Schenirer, and none of them were reprinted after the war. His name is not mentioned by students or teachers of Beit Yaakov. Why did Deutschländer not earn the same praise, and why in fact was he nearly erased from the collective memory of *h[.]aredi* society?

By reading between the lines of various testimonies to the genesis of the revolution that became Beit Yaakov we see that the erasure of Dr. Deutschländer was not incidental. As I will show, there are many reasons for this. The primary one is to be found in the differences in educational philosophies of Dr. Deutschländer and Sara Schenirer, and even more so between his and those of R. Yehudah Leib Orlean, who served as director of the Beit Yaakov seminary in Kraków after the death of both Deutschländer and Schenirer in 1935. These differences have their roots in the various stances taken towards the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy, which was rejected in Eastern Europe and, with even more force, in the Land of Israel after the Holocaust.

Dr. Shmu’el (Leo) Deutschländer was born in 1889 in Hungary. His father was R. Netanel Deutschländer, the rabbi of the Ahavat Re’im synagogue and director of the local school for the *h[.]aredi* community Eidat Yisrael in Berlin. Deutschländer was orphaned at a young age and grew up in an orphanage in Altona. At the age of twenty he founded the Berlin branch of Tse’irei Agudat Yisrael (Agudat Yisrael Youth). While studying in university, he taught Bible in the school of the local Orthodox Eidat Yisrael community and was a beloved and successful teacher.[[55]](#endnote-55) One important fact omitted from his biography is that, while teaching at the Eidat Yisrael school, he developed a relationship with a girl six years his junior, Resi Lindenberger. Her father was chairman of the board at the school and her family was a pillar of Berlin society. The two wanted to marry, but her family opposed the union. Resi was young and Leo had no means of financial support. Further, he suffered from tuberculosis of the testis. In those days, before the discovery of penicillin, the mortality rate from this disease was high, and those who survived were often left infertile. The family’s efforts to separate Resi and Deutschländer, which included taking Deutschländer to court (1913-14), did not succeed. At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Deutschländer was drafted into the German army and stationed in Lithuania, where he served as an officer, and was even used as a translator in interactions with the Jewish population. While under German occupation he founded the Realgymnasium in Kovno, together with R. Dr. Yosef Tsevi Carlebach (who much later became the chief rabbi of Hamburg). This school followed the philosophy of *Torah im derekh erets*. The school enjoyed great success, expanding over the course of the war. After the war, Deutschländer served for three years as the head of the Jewish educational board established by the new republic of Lithuania.[[56]](#endnote-56) Despite her family’s opposition, the physical distance, and the age gap between them, the connection between Deutschländer and Resi Lindenberger continued. Resi traveled to Vienna and the two married, but they remained childless.[[57]](#endnote-57) One source mentions that Resi taught in the teachers’ college that her husband had founded in Vienna.[[58]](#endnote-58)

During his stay in Eastern Europe, Deutschländer succeeded in drawing the Jews of Eastern and Western Europe together. He initiated and planned a mission by important figures from Western Europe to visit yeshivas in Eastern Europe and to meet with Torah luminaries and spiritual leaders of *h[.]aredi* Jewry in Poland.[[59]](#endnote-59) At the close of the war Deutschländer published his first book, *Ne’imot shir mimizrah[.] umima’arav* (Songs from East and West).[[60]](#endnote-60) Upon his return from Eastern Europe he studied at the University of Berlin, where he wrote his doctoral thesis on Goethe and Biblical narratives, which was published as a book in 1923 under the title *Goethe and the Old Testament*.[[61]](#endnote-61) Deutschländer’s writings reveal a consistent tendency to see the influence of the Bible and the Talmudic sages on universal spiritual phenomena, especially literature and poetry. Deutschländer was well acquainted with German works, as well as those inspired by German culture, and he frequently cites the writings of Kant, Herder, Schiller, and Hebel.[[62]](#endnote-62) Moreover, he displays open-mindedness and does not hesitate to respectfully cite or reference Jewish figures others – and certainly the average Eastern European Jew – would have found ‘problematic’, such as Mendelssohn, Buber, and Berdyczewski.[[63]](#endnote-63) In this sense Deutschländer was without a doubt a typical product of the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy. Dr. Rosenbaum, who worked beside him for many years until his death, describes him well as a man who was ‘educated in the best schools of modern Europe, who had picked up what was best in European culture, and had blended it with his own Jewish learning. . . Wherever there was beauty or goodness, he discovered it and held it up to be admired.’[[64]](#endnote-64)

After the first international assembly of Agudat Yisrael in 1923, he was invited to serve as the director of its Torah fund, Keren Hatorah, an institution dedicated to supporting Torah institutions throughout the world, a position he held for twelve years.[[65]](#endnote-65) About a year later, in the fall of 1924, the governing board of Agudat Yisrael decided to place the work of supporting Beit Yaakov under the mandate of Keren Hatorah. Deutschländer, who immediately recognized its importance, harnessed all of his energies for supporting Beit Yaakov, which until that point had remained essentially a local issue,[[66]](#endnote-66) and took personal responsibility for all related matters, whether financial, administrative, or educational. It is worth noting that Deutschländer was well acquainted with the dismal state of girls’ education in Eastern Europe, in part due to his visits to Jewish communities as the director of the Torah fund. He decided to address the situation. Precisely at this stage he met Sara Schenirer, who had already launched the same endeavor and he joined her existing initiative.[[67]](#endnote-67) However, unlike in his position at Keren Hatorah, which was essentially administrative and financial, at Beit Yaakov he was active in the educational sphere.

Even while serving the public, Deutschländer continued to write. In addition to a series of pamphlets on Beit Yaakov and Keren Hatorah, Deutschländer found time to write and publish his final conceptual work, *Ma’amarei hamikra vehatalmud besifrut ha’olam* (Biblical and Rabbinic Sayings in World Literature), published in 1931.[[68]](#endnote-68) This book, like its two predecessors, emphasizes the contribution of Jewish texts to European culture. Alongside Jewish sources the work cites Rückert,[[69]](#endnote-69) Schiller,[[70]](#endnote-70) Schopenhauer,[[71]](#endnote-71) Cervantes,[[72]](#endnote-72) Goethe,[[73]](#endnote-73) Carlisle,[[74]](#endnote-74) Thomas à Kempis,[[75]](#endnote-75) Shakespeare,[[76]](#endnote-76) Kant,[[77]](#endnote-77) Lessing,[[78]](#endnote-78) Chesterton,[[79]](#endnote-79) Dostoevsky,[[80]](#endnote-80) Pascal,[[81]](#endnote-81) Dante,[[82]](#endnote-82) Grillparzer,[[83]](#endnote-83) Klopstock,[[84]](#endnote-84) the Bhagavad Gita,[[85]](#endnote-85) Machiavelli,[[86]](#endnote-86) and many others. Over the course of eleven years Deutschländer directed a substantial number of activities, until his death on August 8, 1935.

Deutschländer filled a number of roles at Beit Yaakov. His responsibilities included the financial organization and building of the teachers’ college in Kraków (completed in 1931[[87]](#endnote-87)) and the founding of the seminary and school in Vienna[[88]](#endnote-88); the creation of a professional studies program that could successfully compete with other institutions; achieving official recognition of Beit Yaakov by the Polish education ministry; recruiting teachers to the Beit Yaakov in Kraków; and developing programs of study, examinations, and intensive summer courses.[[89]](#endnote-89)

As the Beit Yaakov network grew and its schools spread beyond the borders of Poland, Sara Schenirer’s training programs could no longer supply enough teachers for the new schools. The most acute problem was the lack of teachers who could found new schools and so bring Beit Yaakov to new communities outside of Poland.

According to various testimonies, the need for new teachers was so great that when the fifteen- or sixteen-year-old students arrived at a certain level of knowledge they were sent to other towns to open a new school there and to facilitate all studies as both teachers and directors of the new enterprise.[[90]](#endnote-90) The necessary solution, then, was to develop a system for training a staff of teachers. At the critical stage of transformation from a single school to a network of schools, dozens of girls needed to be trained as teachers for the new schools. In 1923, a short time before Deutschländer took his position, Schenirer began to train groups of teachers. Some of them were recruited from Germany while others were from Eastern Europe. Their training, however, was partial and insufficient. The first teachers were not adequately prepared to teach the higher grades.[[91]](#endnote-91) Deutschländer built a qualified program of studies in both Jewish and secular studies. This was a necessary step in the realization of Sara Schenirer’s dream, which would otherwise have been doomed to fail,[[92]](#endnote-92) in part because the curriculum needed to meet certain requirements set by the Polish education ministry in order to be recognized,[[93]](#endnote-93) and also because of the nature of the early graduates of the teachers’ program. It must be remembered that the Eastern European girls lacked a formal Jewish education, while the German girls received an education in the spirit of *Torah im derekh erets*.[[94]](#endnote-94) What both sets of graduates had in common was that each came from their own form of a ‘Jewish ghetto’ and now, entering the larger world, they needed more than traditional Jewish learning. Rosenbaum argues that Sara Schenirer was not able ‘to satisfy the desires of these Jewish girls who felt that the Jewish ghetto was too confining’.[[95]](#endnote-95)

In an interview she said: ‘His clarity of thought, coupled with his charismatic personality, attracted many an estranged Jew and proved instrumental in their return to Judaism.’[[96]](#endnote-96)

R. Binyamin Ze’ev Ya’akovson, who participated in the development of Beit Yaakov from the start, describes Sara Schenirer, despite his respect for her, as someone of ‘limited knowledge’.[[97]](#endnote-97)

Until 1924 there existed no official teachers’ seminary, nor was there an organized pedagogical approach. Even basic textbooks were lacking. Deutschländer saw the lack of trained teachers needed for the rapid growth of Beit Yaakov as the single most pressing problem and sought to found a teachers’ seminary in which the students would train for two or three years, or at least one. He warned against opening too many new schools without the ability to provide them with trained teachers, since the problem would take years, not months, to address.

Beyond developing a common program of studies, one of the first things Deutschländer initiated was summer courses at Beit Yaakov, during which the girls could meet with academicians and rabbis from Germany. This provided an opportunity which there was no time for during the busy study schedule of the academic year. This initiative became one of the central pillars of the educational program that would prepare the girls for teaching. Deutschländer introduced a set curriculum that included the necessary studies in pedagogy and psychology as well as general studies in Polish, German, world history and literature, geography, and Polish history (I will return to the curriculum below).[[98]](#endnote-98)

The program of studies was a success. It ran contrary to the religious norms of the Beit Yaakov girls, and introduced them to an open form of Orthodoxy in which they could obtain knowledge and skills not provided by the competing secular institutions. Further, it strengthened their sense of pride and self-awareness as traditional Jews. Rosenbaum writes about the ramifications of Deutschländer’s activities for the success of Beit Yaakov and the return of its students to Jewish tradition:

The spark that was kindled by a daughter of the Hasidic tradition was fanned by the methodical manner of a man who had been educated in the best schools of modern Europe, who had picked up what was best in European culture and had blended it with his own Jewish learning . . . There were many eager girls who had loved Sara Schenirer but needed him to clear their minds. They would never have found their way without him. He linked them to the intellectual world at large and made them stronger on their own ground. He himself radiated harmony. . . He seemed to exchange the plane on which we live for a worthier one. When he had finished, the spell endured. Jewish law had become one with the law of beauty and freedom, for which these girls longed so much; there was no more conflict, there was harmony in the universe. The ‘Thou shalt’ that some had felt as a burden had become transferred into a triumphant ‘I will’.[[99]](#endnote-99)

Additional testimonies leave the impression that Beit Yaakov had a significant impact on the teachers, especially those from the more educated and well-founded forms of Orthodoxy, who expected study of a more serious and basic nature. The comprehensive curriculum, along with teachers such as Yehudit Rosenbaum, who was well-dressed, a college graduate, and multilingual, made quite an impression on the teachers, allaying their doubts.[[100]](#endnote-100)

It seems that Deutschländer was the right man in the right place at the right time. On the interpersonal level, he succeeded in providing for the spiritual and academic needs of the girls, whether from Eastern or Western Europe. On the financial level, he succeeded in raising the necessary funds to found the Beit Yaakov seminary in Kraków. On the institutional level, he succeeded in building an organized, rigorous, and comprehensive program of studies that earned the official recognition of the Polish authorities.

Indeed, various sources describe Deutschländer’s critical role in the development of Beit Yaakov. Dr. Yehudit Rosenbaum, who witnessed the activities of both Deutschländer and Schenirer, expresses admiration for Schenirer’s pioneering spirit, and surmises that she had a decisive – but limited – role, while without the work of Dr. Deutschländer Beit Yaakov would never have achieved such success:

Sara Schenirer kindled the spark; the flame of enthusiasm came from her; but the first years, when she was on her own, meant no more than a romantic picture in a small frame; her voice could not reach wider circles and her schools could not stand scrutinizing criticism of the modern expert who demanded more thoroughness, more scholarship and well-graded system.

What would have become of Sara Schenirer's visionary fervor, had it not been joined by Providence with Leo Deutschländer's genius of organization and education? We don't try to imagine. It might have been a fire doomed to extinction for want of fuel to sustain it.[[101]](#endnote-101)

In other words, Sara Schenirer’s was the vision and the passion, the daring desire to return thousands of girls to their tradition – but she lacked the skills, the ability, and the education to do it alone. Yehudit Rosenbaum concludes that Dr. Deutschländer took the reins of institutional and educational leadership at Beit Yaakov and turned it into an international success story, a fact that places him in the same category as Sara Schenirer. In an interview Rosenbaum declared with sorrow and pain: ‘He was the “Father of the Beit Yaakov movement.” His part of the story, you feel, has not been sufficiently told – to be known in every corner of the globe where the name of Beit Yaakov now draws breath. His memory must be done justice to.’[[102]](#endnote-102)

Meyer Schwartzman (1901-80), one of the founders of Agudat Yisrael in Poland and an author in Yiddish and Hebrew, echoes Rosenbaum in his description of Deutschländer’s part in the transformation of Beit Yaakov into an educational superpower. In the eulogy he delivered after Deutschländer’s death, Schwartzman celebrates his contributions to the spread of the Beit Yaakov network beyond the borders of Kraków and Lodz and stresses especially his contributions in developing the pedagogic foundation that enabled Beit Yaakov to compete ‘against all the freethinking educational systems of all the heretic’,[[103]](#endnote-103) a conclusion to be drawn from various other sources.[[104]](#endnote-104)

At times the figure of Deutschländer overshadows Schenirer entirely. One salient example can be found in the description by R. Dr. Yosef Tsevi Carlebach (1883-1942), communal rabbi of Hamburg, of the Beit Yaakov institutions in the 1930’s. In 1931 a group of Western European and American Jews went on a mission to Jewish cultural sites in Eastern Europe. One of the mission’s purposes was to strengthen the connections between Jewish population centers.[[105]](#endnote-105) They visited Beit Yaakov institutions, including the teachers’ seminaries in Kraków and other locales. At the head of the mission stood Deutschländer and R. Carlebach, joined by some twenty fellow travelers, among them Yehudit Rosenbaum (the only woman). Carlebach, who later published a pamphlet documenting the mission, expresses admiration and tremendous love for the Jews’ traditional way of life, which he saw as authentic and as preserving all that enlightened Western Judaism was lacking. However, he criticizes the fact that the Eastern European Jews overemphasized the contrast between the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) and the ways of the Torah, which posed a serious ‘cultural problem’ that had yet to be resolved.[[106]](#endnote-106) In his criticisms, however, he reserves praise for the activities of Agudat Yisrael and its goals of uniting all of European Jewry, and celebrates its success in supporting Beit Yaakov.[[107]](#endnote-107) He gives credit for this success to German Judaism: ‘Keren Hatorah had the good fortune to find such resources as these for its two seminaries. The passion with which Dr. Leo Deutschländer, the director of Keren Hatorah, took on the impressive plan to create a suitable educational system for girls has also caught on with those responsible for executing that plan, especially the directors of the seminaries, Dr. Yehudit Rosenbaum and Mrs. Eva Landserg.’[[108]](#endnote-108) It is interesting to note that R. Carlebach makes no mention of the contribution of Sara Schenirer to the founding of Beit Yaakov. It seems that the envoy did not even meet her.[[109]](#endnote-109) Later in the pamphlet Carlebach stresses again, ‘It was Leo Deutschländer who lifted the education of girls out of the depths of oblivion and brought about its impressive development.’[[110]](#endnote-110)

Despite all of his efforts and contributions to the education of *h[.]aredi* girls in Poland, Deutschländer is almost entirely disregarded by the *h[.]aredi* establishment. We can attribute this to compromising circumstances that do not play in Deutschländer’s favor. First of all, Sara Schenirer deserves praise for her revolutionary idea, while Deutschländer never led Beit Yaakov on his own, but only beside Schenirer. Both passed away in the same year, 1935. Second, it was R. Yehudah Leib Orlean who filled the shoes of both. He was a faithful Gerer Hasid appointed to direct the seminary in Kraków.[[111]](#endnote-111) He was murdered in the Holocaust in 1943. Orlean was in some respects the polar opposite of Deutschländer,[[112]](#endnote-112) who sought to gradually overturn a number of Deutschländer’s most prominent innovations in the Beit Yaakov curriculum. Likewise, it may be that the fact that he was murdered in the Holocaust led to his heroization. *h[.]aredi* society was more anxious to commemorate his legacy than that of Deutschländer, who died a natural death some years before the war. Investigation into the various sources gives good reason to conclude that the primary reason why Deutschländer’s contributions were slighted is not incidental. It results from the differences in educational philosophy between Deutschländer and Schenirer and especially Orlean, and the differences in their approach to the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy, which was rejected in Eastern Europe while dominating in Germany. We can deduce that Deutschländer is seen as going too far in his attempt to use Beit Yaakov to import the philosophy of *Torah im derekh erets* into Eastern European Jewry.[[113]](#endnote-113) To do so would have gone against the principal of *nehara upashtei*, which holds that every country should keep its own traditions. Agudat Yisrael had adopted this at its foundation in order to avoid precisely such influences, which many leaders of Eastern European Jewry saw as dangerous.[[114]](#endnote-114)

***Torah im derekh erets* in Eastern Europe: Between Schenirer and Deutschländer**

One of the most salient features in Sara Schenirer’s program of studies for the Beit Yaakov teachers’ college and, even more so in Deutschländer’s, is the inclusion of the writings of R. Hirsch, and those of his grandson, Dr. Isaac Breuer.[[115]](#endnote-115) For example, six hours of class time a week were dedicated to study of the Pentateuch with the commentaries of Rashi and Hirsch. Hirsch’s monograph *Horev* and his hidden letters were also on the curriculum, along with Breuer’s *Be’ayat heyehudim* (The Jews’ Problem) and *Ikvot mashiah[.]* (Footsteps of the Messiah).

Another feature of the curriculum, no less noteworthy and perhaps even more surprising, serves as a measure of the desire to grant the students a mastery of German literature. To this end, Deutschländer uses the works of the great German poets and writers in the original language, as well as his own book, *Schem VaJephet: Westöstliche Dichterklänge* (Shem and Japhet: Songs from East and West).[[116]](#endnote-116) The Beit Yaakov curriculum in German included readings of Schiller’s ‘Lyrik’, Goethe’s *Iphigenia*, Hebbel’s *Herodes und Mariamne*, Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise*, Zweig’s *Jeremiah*, and Beer-Hofmann’s *Jaákobs Traum*[[117]](#endnote-117) – a selection of the best fruits of German culture from the past and his own time. The aim, as he defines it, was to arrive at a full understanding of German classics. In addition to fluency in Polish, Deutschländer wanted to give his students a mastery of German as a second language such that they could read in the original the writings of Hirsch and classical German literature.

The *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy was integral to the Beit Yaakov approach since its inception. Sara Schenirer, too, with her more traditional background, was influenced by Hirsch. Furthermore, the teachings of R. Felsch in Vienna ignited her passions. After every Shabbat and holiday she would document what she remembered of them.[[118]](#endnote-118) Isaac Breuer, who knew Schenirer, recounts that she told him that it was due solely to the influence of Hirsch’s book *Horev* that she founded Beit Yaakov.[[119]](#endnote-119) Schenirer did not hide the source of her inspiration to open a girls school; she wrote of it and spoke of it to various people.[[120]](#endnote-120) Even the program of studies she had initiated gave pride of place to Hirsch’s writings. She learned and taught his writings, along with other literature from western Germany, such as the works of R. Dr. Meyer Lehmann. For example, R. Binyamin Ze’ev Ya’akovson writes that in the early years, before Deutschländer joined, all that Schenirer taught she had taken from the books of Hirsch and likeminded thinkers.[[121]](#endnote-121) This can be seen in one of her letters to a teacher at Beit Yaakov who was living in Western Europe, Hennesy Rose of Frankfurt, a granddaughter of R. Hirsch. With the encouragement of Schenirer, Rose founded new schools in Germany. She requested that Rose ‘pass the letter to the secretary and to say to her . . . [that] our organization seeks to found a special library and to request a precise price index of all the writings of R. Hirsch, R. Lehmann, and all other books that belong in a *h[.]aredi* library.’[[122]](#endnote-122) That is to say, Sara Schenirer saw the writings of the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy as desirable in a *h[.]aredi* library and as fitting for the education of *h[.]aredi* girls. At the same time, it cannot be ignored that Schenirer took a different path from that of the *Torah im derekh erets* educators. This was unavoidable, since her limited knowledge would not have allowed her to follow in the footsteps of those who had been trained in that system, such as Deutschländer and Rosenbaum.[[123]](#endnote-123) She certainly internalized the values of the sheltered world of the Belzer Hasidic society from which she came. The virtue of modesty was dear to her heart,[[124]](#endnote-124) as seen in her letter to Hennesy Rose, in which she criticizes the relatively immodest dress of the west German teachers and gently requests that they improve their standards.[[125]](#endnote-125) Indeed, the topic of modest dress arises time and again in her letters.[[126]](#endnote-126) Likewise the Yiddish language was dear to her. She succeeded in setting it as the language of instruction at Beit Yaakov and also as the spoken language of choice among the girls in their free time.[[127]](#endnote-127) When the Beit Yaakov system needed to display more normative Orthodox credentials, it placed the figure of Sara Schenirer front and center.

Deutschländer absorbed far more of the *Torah im derekh erets* tradition than Schenirer had. He took the modern approach to education farther than she did. It is reasonable to assume that Deutschländer’s plan far exceeded what Sara Schenirer imagined when she set out to found a school for girls. Her upbringing was vastly different from that of Deutschländer. Although she undoubtedly must have been an intelligent woman with impressive skills to have reached such a level of self-edification, Schenirer possessed little formal education. By her own testimony she had been forced to abandon her schooling after only eight years in order to help support her family.[[128]](#endnote-128) Deutschländer, on the other hand, was educated in multiple disciplines. He attended university and even wrote a doctoral dissertation. She was a product of Eastern Europe and Belzer Hasidism, an especially conservative form of Hasidism that saw no value in secular studies and, at that time, also offered no Torah studies to girls. Deutschländer came of age among the supporters of integrated secular-religious education and comprehensive schooling for girls. Furthermore, Schenirer had no curriculum for her school and no experience in developing or facilitating one. Deutschländer had a proven record from his educational endeavors in Kovno and as director of Keren Hatorah.

Nevertheless, despite their vast differences, Schenirer and Deutschländer succeeded in working together. Although tensions between them were alluded to occasionally in the sources, they continued to work together until their deaths, which occurred only a few months apart. It can be said with certainty that their shared leadership left Beit Yaakov with an open, Orthodox educational system, close to that of the German *Torah im derekh erets* approach, if its expression was more reserved, and valued the integration of Judaism and secular culture.

The differences between Deutschländer and Schenirer were liable to lead to disputes over the proper curriculum for the girls. We can detect hints to this effect in the testimony of Binyamin Ze’ev Ya’akovson, who worked alongside Deutschländer at Keren Hatorah and was a close friend of his as well as an admirer of Schenirer:

It was not in Sara Schenirer’s nature to seek power over others, but her influence was so great and so deep, in matters both large and small . . . that she became queen over the kingdom of Kraków. Even if there were at times differences in educational approach between her and Dr. Deutschländer, or between her and Yehudit Rosenbaum, she always had the upper hand due to her wondrous power of influence.[[129]](#endnote-129)

Ya’akovson’s words reveal two central facts. First, there were indeed ideological-pedagogical arguments between Schenirer and Deutschländer, and even between her and other teachers who came from Western Europe. Second, Schenirer won these arguments and her opinions were implemented. (Ya’akovson attributes this to her ‘wondrous power of influence’, but we must be skeptical about this given the author’s harmonizing tendencies). Sara Schenirer is portrayed as a dominant figure who ran the school with a strong hand.

Ya’akovson also expressed indignation at those who pointed to the differences in their respective educational philosophies in order to cast doubts about the amicable nature of Schenirer and Deutschländer’s relationship:

I do not know if it is accidental or intentional, but they are incorrect if they say that she was a ‘zealot’. I know that she knew how to bring others close, time and again, through her warm and tremendous sense of motherhood, her inner strength and her piety. She was not a ‘zealot’ but a thoroughly ‘pious’ (*h[.]asidit*) woman. One other thing I want to make known is that she would sometimes say, ‘God save me from the *deutschländers*’, meaning the unwanted influence of certain philosophies that were dominant at that time in Germany; but the false narrative made it seem as if she saw a threat in Deutschländer, of blessed memory. Everyone who was close to her knew how she adored Dr. Deutschländer. Nevertheless, ‘interested parties’ twisted her words.[[130]](#endnote-130)

Ya’akovson criticizes those who attempted to portray their relationship as a wrestling match between two different worldviews, with Sara Schenirer, the conservative ‘zealot’, on one side and on the other Deutschländer, the openminded bannerman of *Torah im derekh erets*. In his opinion, such people erred in their judgment of Schenirer as a zealot and of Deutschländer as seeking to run Beit Yaakov according to the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy. According to Ya’akovson, Deutschländer was careful not to impose that approach on the institutions of Beit Yaakov.

In order to further dull this potential thorn, Ya’akovson rushes to qualify his words and to show that there were no differences of opinion regarding the essential educational goals, only the methods to obtain them:

Dr. Deutschländer, with his great knowledge in a number of different fields, and Yehudit Rosenbaum, the educated woman, and all the other successful educators, all stressed that it was not the quantity of knowledge that shaped *the* Beit Yaakov teacher – rather it was her heart, her character, her soul, her righteousness and her innerness, her virtues that were decisive. So almost all the teachers-to-be in Kraków saw their future work not as a way to earn a living but as holy work.[[131]](#endnote-131)

Elsewhere he states more explicitly that, though Deutschländer was a representative of the *Torah im derekh erets* approach, he did not apply it at Beit Yaakov: ‘And I testify to this in public, that Dr. Deutschländer o.b.m., who himself held to the principles of *Torah im derekh erets*, was **exceedingly** careful not to introduce that system into the Beit Yaakov institutions that were under his charge.’[[132]](#endnote-132) Ya’akovson repeatedly claims that ‘whoever thinks that Beit Yaakov in Poland based its educational work on *Torah im derekh erets* is mistaken’.[[133]](#endnote-133)

Despite Ya’akovson’s allusions to disputes among the leaders of Beit Yaakov, he stresses their unity of opinion: according to his testimony, not only Sara Schenirer saw *Torah im derekh erets* as inappropriate for Beit Yaakov, but Deutschländer and the entire staff chose not to put it into effect, even if on principle they agreed with the philosophy. At the same time, he was undoubtedly aware of the vast differences in worldviews between Deutschländer and Schenirer and of the change that Orlean effected when he stepped into his role.[[134]](#endnote-134) He stresses that there was no place for *Torah im derekh erets* in *h[.]aredi* education in the Land of Israel, not for girls and certainly not for boys.[[135]](#endnote-135) Ya’akovson makes an illuminating statement about the approach of *h[.]aredi* society to Deutschländer’s memory, words which dovetail perfectly with the explanation proposed above: ‘Perhaps this is the reason why in the land of Israel they have also forgotten [Deutschländer’s] blessed memory, whose merit was equal to hers [Schenirer’s] in the building of Beit Yaakov in Poland and all the world and in the land of Israel.’[[136]](#endnote-136) Ya’akovson, seems to regret the fact that H[.]aredi society has ignored the tremendous contributions to Beit Yaakov made by Deutschländer. He attributes this to the fact that the *h[.]aredim* incorrectly saw Deutschländer as applying the *Torah im derekh erets* approach in Eastern Europe. We must read Ya’akovson’s statements in light of his – and others’ – negative view of the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy, a view which only grew stronger in the land of Israel after the Holocaust.

Beyond the ideological debate, Ya’akovson openly points to another factor: the idea that Hirsch and his contemporaries in Western Europe overvalued Western civilization and there was a sense of betrayal by that civilization, which reached its apex in the Holocaust. First he explains that the evaluation of the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy made in the land of its birth cannot be made outside of that time and place. Its proponents at the time believed that ‘without [secular] studies it is impossible to hold fast against the innovators’, but in hindsight it becomes clear ‘that only unadulterated study [of Torah] can keep us strong’.[[137]](#endnote-137) However, he goes on to refer to an additional and perhaps decisive factor leading to the fierce opposition to the Haskalah. To this end, he cites a speech delivered by Yeh[.]ezkel Avramski in 1964 in the Kol Torah Yeshiva in memory of the victims of the Nazis, in which he points out the absurdity of the fact that it was the most ‘civilized’ nation that conducted the murder of the Jewish people: ‘He was delivering his speech in Hebrew, when suddenly he cried out in a fiery voice in German: “The nation of poets and scholars was turned in one night into the nation of murderers and hangmen! This is their wondrous culture. We must hold by our source, and not move from it for even a moment!”’[[138]](#endnote-138) It is understandable, then, why Ya’akovson found it painful to see people whom he admired spreading an illegitimate culture.

Similarly, Miriam Dansky, who interviewed Rosenbaum, describes the irony of Germany representing enlightenment and humanism: ‘Ironically, it was in the very citadels of humanism that the Nazis’ inhuman plan to annihilate the Jewish people was conceived and brought to fruition.’[[139]](#endnote-139) His contemporaries in Western Europe overvalued Western civilization, though the two cultures – Jewish and European – were polar opposites that could not be integrated.

Ya’akovson attempts to diminish the role of *Torah im derekh erets* in Deutschländer’s actual running of Beit Yaakov. In contrast, Rosenbaum does not hesitate to describe Deutschländer as operating fully according to the tenets of that philosophy, though she too hints that perhaps Deutschländer did not receive the credit he deserved because of this. Today, she explains, it is hard to view the intimate integration of Judaism and secular culture as a positive development:

That period seems today so far, far away, and yet it did exist, and Dr. Leo Deutschländer was a towering example of those men who combined great Jewish learning and a dedicated Torah-true life with a wide range of cultural and literary involvement. In this combination he represented a rare example and was recognized as such in all circles, both Jewish and beyond.[[140]](#endnote-140)

The attempt to rewrite history to meet contemporary norms brought about the ‘disappearance’ of one of the architects of the greatest educational success that *h[.]aredi* Judaism has ever known. It stands to reason that a similar struggle over how to remember the past began עטד before the Holocaust, between Deutschländer and Orlean.

**The Legacy of Sara Schenirer: Between Deutschländer and Orlean**

Soon after Schenirer’s death, a debate broke out over her approach to *Torah im derekh erets*. The eulogies given by Deutschländer and Orlean vary in their representations of the extent to which Schenirer chose to follow that philosophy in the early years of Beit Yaakov, whether her choice was made freely or only for lack of a better option,[[141]](#endnote-141) and how aware she was of the ramifications of her choice.

In Deutschländer’s memorial essay, which appeared in the neo-Orthodox German-Jewish journal *Nah[.]alat Tsevi*,[[142]](#endnote-142) he attributes Schenirer’s success to the fact that, *inter alia*, she exposed the girls of Eastern Europe to Hirsch’s writings and worldview in a comprehensive way, paving the way for the introduction of his philosophy to Jewish women there. He testifies that Sara Schenirer emphasized that Hirsch’s teachings came to her as a revelation, and that she was passing this revelation on to her students, along with the passion that accompanied its arrival. He points out that hundreds of Hirsch’s essays were often distributed to the Beit Yaakov girls and that Hirsch’s commentary on the Torah, Psalms, and the prayer book, and his collected works in German were among the most frequently used books in Beit Yaakov libraries.

Deutschländer writes that no intellectual or spiritual force had such an impact upon Schenirer as Hirsch’s teachings. Deep in the soul of the founder of Beit Yaakov one can find the synthesis and harmonization of the early impressions she had received in her Hasidic family’s home with the teachings of Hirsch, the German neo-Orthodox leader. In Deutschländer’s evaluation, the living path of Sara Schenirer serves as further proof of Hirsch’s undying influence, which is not limited to a single time and place but is relevant for all Jewish history and all of the Jewish people. According to him, the fact that the exponential growth of Beit Yaakov cannot be described without referring to Hirsch’s writings is due to divine providence, carried on the wings of the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy.[[143]](#endnote-143)

An opposing argument comes from Orlean, who echoes Ya’akovson in saying that *Torah im derekh erets* was simply not the Beit Yaakov way. Orlean, who also wrote an essay in honor of Sara Schenirer,[[144]](#endnote-144) claims that she would have preferred not to make use of that approach, and she did so only out of necessity. Orlean does not deny Schenirer’s source of inspiration and does not overlook her encounter with Hirsch’s teachings in R. Flesch’s sermon in Vienna during the First World War. However, he claims that it was not the content of Flesch’s words that moved Schenirer but rather the way in which he delivered them. Schenirer believed, he argues, that such words would also speak to the Jewish girls of Poland who had strayed from their traditions. ‘Was it the content of the sermon itself that she found so appealing? Certainly not! The old Yiddish book was all she needed. Her concern was entirely for the girls of Kraków, who were not moved by the old book.’[[145]](#endnote-145)

Throughout the essay, Orlean repeats that Schenirer understood that the books of Hirsch and Dr. Meyer Lehmann, both German rabbis, could answer the needs of the Jewish girls in Kraków who had strayed from traditional Judaism after studying in the public schools. She understood that, just as these writings had affected the nearly-assimilated Jews of western Germany, so too could they affect the Jewish youth of Kraków. , He adds that she was also aware of the dangers in that philosophy. She shared the suspicion that ‘this modern spirit’ would introduce many foreign concepts and damage the ‘original’ form of the Jewish people. In his opinion, she never thought this approach was truly suitable for the Jewish girls of Poland, as it was for the Jews of Germany. So, he explains, Schenirer set clear boundaries and practiced extreme caution: ‘She sensed where to set the borders . . . With all of her strength she fought for true Hasidic behavior, for modest dress, for a living Jewish language [Yiddish], for the simple Judaism of their fathers’ homes.’[[146]](#endnote-146) He describes all general and secular studies at Beit Yaakov schools as ‘a necessity of life’, a means of linking peoples and lands.[[147]](#endnote-147)

In Orlean’s opinion, Sara Schenirer did not see *Torah im derekh erets* as the preferred path and neither did Hirsch. In his eyes, that approach has more potential to do harm than bring benefit, and so should be used with restraint, if at all. However, in contrast to Germany, where the approach fit the circumstances of Jewish life,[[148]](#endnote-148) in Poland the approach had no place at all. He stresses that there is certainly no reason to set *Torah im derekh erets* as the governing philosophy of world Jewry or as a founding principal of Agudat Yisrael.[[149]](#endnote-149)

If this is how Orleans understood Schenirer, how did he view the work of Deutschländer and his contribution to Beit Yaakov? It is surprising to discover that Orlean makes no mention at all of Deutschländer in his writings, and when he confronts the *Torah im derekh erets* philosophy, he prefers to debate Isaac Breuer.[[150]](#endnote-150) The first signs of the erasure of Deutschländer from the collective memory of Beit Yaakov can be found in Orlean’s book, *Be’ayot hah[.]inukh*. First published in 1960, the book contains a large portion of Orlean’s essays from the 1930’s. In all the collections of his essays that have been translated into Hebrew, there is not a single mention of Deutschländer. His name is likewise absent from individual essays that have been translated, such as Orlean’s introduction to Hirsch’s book.[[151]](#endnote-151)

This practice of ignoring Deutschländer and his work became more extreme over time. For example, in the essay in memory of Orlean written by Hillel Zeidman (later included as the introduction to Orlean’s collected essays),[[152]](#endnote-152) a number of Deutschländer’s important activities are attributed to Orlean, including even the summer courses instituted and directed by Deutschländer.[[153]](#endnote-153)

**Summary and Conclusion**

Beit Yaakov, from its first and second stages through the deaths of Leo Deutschländer and Sara Schenirer, operated under Hirsch’s educational approach. Schenirer was more conservative while Deutschländer was more modern, and it occasionally tensions broke out between them, but in general they worked together in harmony. Schenirer was presented as the face of Beit Yaakov when the institution was addressing parents with a more traditionalist orientation, while Deutschländer was the institution’s face for more openminded and educated audiences. In fact, they complemented each other and served as the face of Beit Yaakov together. *H[.]aredi* historiography seeks to erase the memory of Deutschländer, seeing him as a ‘foreign actor’ who inserted himself into the world of East European Jewry from the West and sought to convert it to the ways of *Torah im derekh erets*.

This picture is not entirely divorced from reality. Indeed, in the first stage Schenirer had already been influenced by that approach in her leadership of Beit Yaakov. However, it is exceedingly clear that Deutschländer was the one primarily responsible for implementing this approach. It could be argued that Schenirer opened the door to the educational values of *Torah im derekh erets*, and through this door marched Deutschländer with all the vigor, imagination, and talent that characterized him. Deutschländer was also the prime mover behind the transformation of Beit Yaakov from a local network of small institutions into an extensive system that straddled the Jewish world. It is quite reasonable to assume that Deutschländer’s organizational talents contributed to this success, as did the educational program he adopted, which attracted girls from the educated population and opened a window for them onto European culture and provided them with tools for future careers.

However, all of this changed in the next stage of development of Beit Yaakov. After Deutschländer’s death in 1935, the leadership of the Beit Yaakov network passed into the hands of Orlean. The new director sought to a large extent to reverse the direction in which Deutschländer had begun to take Beit Yaakov. Orlean complained that ‘we are trapped in the psychosis of the Haskalah’,[[154]](#endnote-154) and decided to fix the problem. In his opinion, abstract ‘education’ (*haskalah*) should be replaced by the obtainment of ‘knowledge’ (*da’at*), which can be gained only through observing the commandments.[[155]](#endnote-155) While Deutschländer attached much importance to study of pedagogic method, Orlean saw this as marginal.[[156]](#endnote-156) This low valuation is implied in the decision to include the study of pedagogy only in order to give the impression of serious education, not as a value unto itself.[[157]](#endnote-157)

Beit Yaakov, in its first two stages, served as a symbol of the victory of the *Torah im derekh erets* method and its spread into the Orthodox camp even beyond the sphere of influence of German culture. After the arrival of Orlean it symbolized the decline of that system. Even if the extent to which the values of *Torah im derekh erets* were applied at Beit Yaakov can be debated, there is no question that those values were central to Beit Yaakov at its inception. With Orlean’s appointment, however, they were replaced by a dedication to cultivating a conservative *h[.]aredi* form of Judaism which would take firmer shape in Israel after the Holocaust. Within a short time Beit Yaakov underwent two revolutions. The first was a turn to the ‘left’ that created a Neo-Orthodox movement. The second was a turn to the ‘right’, resulting in a move towards ultra-Orthodoxy.

1. On Sara Schenirer see, among others: J. Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, in L. Jung (ed.), *Jewish Leaders 1750-1940* (Jerusalem, 1964), 405-32; P. Benisch, *Carry Me in Your Heart: Life and Legacy of Sarah Schenirer* (Jerusalem, 1991); M. Shaul, ‘*Dor yatom meh[.]apes ima: “moreshet sarah shenirer” kekli leshikum hah[.]evrah hah[.]aredit ah[.]arei hasho’ah’*, in K. Kaplan and N. Shtadler (eds.), *Mehishradut lehitbasesut: temurot beh[.]evrah hah[.]aredit uvah[.]akarah* (Jerusalem, 2012), 31-54; R. Menkin, ‘*Mashehu h[.]adash legamrei: hitpath[.]uto shel re’ayon hah[.]inukh hadati labanot ba’et hah[.]adashah*’, *Masekhet* 2 (2004), 63-85; S. Yarh[.]i, ‘*Sarah shenirer:* *Toldoteiha umifal h[.]ayeiha*, in *Em beyisra’el* (Tel Aviv, 1956); (??missing name of editor*,) Em haderekh: Me’asaf al demutah shel hagev’ sarah shenirer a’’h meh[.]olelet tenuat beit ya’akov* (Jerusalem, 2005); *Sefer hayovel 25 shel beit hasefer hatikhon vehaseminar leganenot ulemorot beit Yaakov betel aviv 1936-1961* (Tel Aviv, 1961); S. Shenirer et al, in Y. Rothberg (ed), *Em beyisra’el* (Tel Aviv, 1956). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Rosenbaum was one of the first Jewish teachers who recruited Deutschländer from Germany to serve in the new schools. She became Dr. Deutschländer’s right-hand-woman and had a decisive influence on the development of Beit Yaakov. Unlike in the case of Deutschländer, her work for Beit Yaakov was written about in a number of books and articles and was even dubbed ‘The Queen of Bais Yaakov’ (the title of one of the biographies about her, cited below). This attention was paid to her not in Israel but in England, where she fled before the outbreak of the Second World War. Rosenbaum saw it as a mission to write about Deutschländer in an attempt to bring attention to his forgotten work. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. I. Brown, ‘Triumphs of Conservatism: The Ideological Change in the Polish Beit Yaakov as Prologue to the Israeli Case’, in T. Tsurumi, B. Nathans, and K. Moss (eds.), *Mediating Israeli History and East European History*, forthcoming. R. Orlean was appointed the administrative assistant to Schenirer in 1930, but his influence on the educational philosophy of the institution at that time was slight. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. G. Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland 1916-1939* (Jerusalem, 1996), 165-6. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. G. Shternbuch, *Zikhronot me’olam ah[.]er* (Jerusalem, 2017), 23. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Idem, 33. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Idem, 33-5. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Y. Friedenson, ‘*Batei hasefer lebanot beit ya’akov*’, in Z. Scharfstein (ed.), *Hah[.]inukh vehatarbut ha’ivrit be’eiropah bein shtei milh[.]emot olam* (New York, 1957), 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. M. Prager, *Sarah shenirer em beyisra’el* (Jerusalem, 1961), 12. Similar wording appears in his article ‘*Sarah shenirer*’, in *Sefer krakow* (Jerusalem, 1959), 369, attributed to an anonymous Jewish mother. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Miriam Stark writes that Rosenbaum had doubts about how to proceed after her studies and how to fulfill her longing to make a contribution, even considering immigrating to the land of Israel. She took counsel with Yaakov Rosenheim, who raised the possibility of going to study in a teachers’ college in Poland, where she would be needed. At first she dismissed the idea outright, but after receiving a number of letters from Deutschländer she accepted the challenge and decided to travel to the city of Robove, where summer courses initiated by Deutschländer were being held. After six weeks she returned to complete her doctoral studies in Frankfurt and four years later returned to teach at the teachers’ college in Kraków. (See M. Stark Zakon, *The Queen of Bais Yaakov, the Story of Dr. Judith Grunfeld,* pp 71-4.) From that point on, Rosenbaum was very engaged in the spreading of Beit Yaakov beyond Poland, and she served as Deutschländer’s right-hand-women in both educational matters and fund-raising to build a new school in Kraków. (Miriam Dansky, *Rebbetzin Grunfeld: The Life of Judith Grunfeld, Courageous Pioneer of the Bais Yaakov Movement and Jewish Rebirth* (Brooklyn, N.Y,‎ [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sarah Schenierer’, 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Idem, 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid. It appears from other sources that the Jewish girls despised the tradition and disparaged the idea of marrying Torah scholars (see Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition*, 165-6; the Hebrew edition of Bacon’s book contains important references on page 135, note 73. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Menkin, ‘*Mashehu h[.]adash legamrei’.* [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. A. Sorsky, *Toldot hah[.]inukh hatorati batekumah hah[.]*adashah (Bnei Brak, 1967), 422-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. ‘*Lashon medaberet gedolot’*, *Mah[.]zikei hadat* (Lemberg), 13, 23/3/1900. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sarah Schenierer’, 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. See Shaul, ‘*Dor yatom meh[.]apes ima’.* [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Schenirer, *Em beyisra’el*, 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Idem, 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. S. Hirsch, *Shemesh merape* (New York, 1992), *h[.]iddushei hashas*, 158. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Friedenson, ‘*Batei hasefer lebanot’*, 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Sorsky, *Toldot hah[.]inukh hatorati*, 430. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Shternbuch, *Zikhronot*, Appendices, 189. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Friedenson, ‘*Batei hasefer lebanot’*, 69. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Shternbuch, *Zikhronot*, Appendices, 187. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. The compulsory education law passed in Poland in 1919 established that school-age children were required to attend government schools or their recognized counterparts. Following this decree, Agudat Yisrael sought official recognition of its *h[.]ederim*, and to this end included a few hours of secular studies into its Jewish studies curriculum. In 1923 the Polish education ministry recognized the Jewish *h[.]eder* as a suitable alternative to government schools. Students of the *h[.]eder* learned a limited amount of secular studies. The earlier model of integrated secular and *h[.]aredi* studies, which was opened in German-occupied Warsaw during the First World War by representatives of the German Agudat Yisrael, R. Dr. Kohen and Dr. Carlebach, was now recognized throughout the country. See Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition*, 142-52, 167-8; Y. Friedenson, ‘*Reshet mosadot hah[.]inukh shel “agudat yisra’el”* bepolin’, in Scharfstein (ed.), *Hah[.]inukh vehatarbut*, 43-60. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Friedenson, ‘*Batei hasefer lebanot’*, 69. The funding for the full-time schools was provided by the local communities, local advisory boards, and tuition. See also Idem, 69-70. It appears from memoirs that the girls’ parents found it difficult to pay their tuition and were not always able to do so. Beit Yaakov was very strict about payment of tuition, and on more than one occasion students were sent home for not paying. See Shternbuch, *Zikhronot*, 9-30. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Friedenson, ‘*Batei hasefer lebanot’*, 70. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Idem, 69-70. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Idem, 76. Prior to WWII, there were about 300 girls’ groups in Poland comprised of roughly 15,000 students. For the activities of these movements, see Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition*, 154-76. Similar groups were also founded for boys. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. On Friedenson, see Y. Levin, ‘*R. eli’ezer gershon fridenzon – Lodz’*, in Y. Levin (ed.), *Eleh Azkarah*, *i* (New York, 1956), 99-105. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Friedenson, ‘*Batei hasefer lebanot’*, 65. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Shternbuch, *Zikhronot*, Appendices, 180-1. For the activities of the Agudat Yisrael girls’ youth movement, see Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition*, 171-6. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. H. Kazdan, *Di geshikhṭe fun yidishn shulṿezn in umophengiḳn poyln* (Mexico, 1947), 485-6. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. See the excerpts from her ethical will in ?? (ed.), *Em haderekh*, 25. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. R. Menkin, ‘*mashehu h[.]adash legamrei*’. Menkin claims that Schenirer’s success did not occur in a vacuum but rather followed public debates, some of which were conducted in the newspapers, and which prepared the ground for the opening of a girls’ school. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. See, for example, Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, 427; M. Blau [sp??], ‘*Shekamti em beyisra’el*’, in *Em beyisra’el*, *iii*, 29-30; T. Tovyomi [sp??], ‘*H[.]akhmat* *nashim’*, in *Em beyisra’el*, *iii*, 18. See also other articles in that collection. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, 40. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Shaul, ‘*Dor yatom*’, 50. Shaul expresses amazement that the names of the teachers who became the local leaders during the Holocaust were also not included in Beit Yaakov textbooks and that their names are not known to the students today. She explains that this phenomenon is not surprising since the public commemoration of the Holocaust in *h[.]aredi* society was shaped over the years by men (Idem, 42). However, the question to be asked, which Shaul ignores, is how a woman came to be included at all in the communal memory of *h[.]aredi* society, rather than being passed over, when there was a man who could have reaped the ‘fruits of praise’ instead. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Shternbuch, *Zikhronot*, Appendices, 185-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Binyamin Ze’ev Ya’akovson, a native of Hamburg, Germany and active member of Agudat Yisrael, was a close friend of Deutschländer. After the latter’s death, he was appointed director of Keren Hatorah, and even served for one year as the director of Beit Yaakov alongside Orlean. See B. Ya’akovson, *Zikhronot* (Jerusalem, 1953), 108. During the war he emigrated to Sweden, where he served as the communal rabbi of Stockholm. He founded a rescue committee and strove to bring many survivors of the concentration camps to Sweden. Along with his wife, he founded a h[.]aredi girls’ school on the Norwegian island of Langøya, [THIS IS THE ONLY NORWEGIAN ISLAND BEGINNING WITH L] where some one thousand girls studied and boarded. After his immigration to the land of Israel he cofounded the Poalei Agudat Yisrael neighborhood in Jerusalem and served as the neighborhood rabbi. In his memoirs, Ya’akovson describes the early Beit Yaakov, its development, its teachers, and its institutional philosophy. He writes that Rosenbaum was one of the first teachers to bring Deutschländer to the seminary and was ‘the ambassador of Beit Yaakov in all the lands of the West’ (Ibid). [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Rosenbaum writes that ‘Schenirer’s powerful longing to return thousands of girls to their tradition, would have earned only a limited response from within a narrow circle of simple folk, had Dr. Deutschländer not come to her aid.’ See Rosenbaum, ?? שרה שנירר ספורה של תנועה דגולה, עמ' כ.====הנוסח האנגלי [??please include English bibliographic details] [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. The seminary was an elitist institution that refined its students. The young women who attended came there from Poland and Lithuania, and were chosen for admission from among hundreds of applicants. See Rosenbaum, ??ראו: רוזנבאום, שרה שנירר: סיפורה של תנועה דגולה, עמ' יד === [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition*, 168. See the references in the Hebrew edition (Bacon, *Masoret upolitikah*, 138, note 84). [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Schenirer, *Em beyisra’el*, *i*, 45. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. S. Schenirer, ‘*Vos vet zayn mit di yudishe takhter?*’ (Lodz, 1930). [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Idem, 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Idem, 4, 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Idem, 6-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Idem, 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Idem, 6-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. In this important matter, we find a dramatic variation among the different versions of the essay. In the Hebrew and German translations – which were both published in the land of Israel – Schenirer seems to adapt herself to her audience and perhaps even evince pride in secular studies: ‘The level of study in a Beit Yaakov school is as high as any school [??אין למוד נגרע.] Our program is based on a comprehensive general education. We divide the subjects into the following categories: 1) religious studies – Torah and Prophets, laws, explanations of prayers and blessings; 2) general studies – arithmetic, engineering, Jewish history, geography, [?? ]מולדת הסתכלות; 3) languages – Hebrew and English; 4) vocational studies – physical education, singing, handiwork, drawing, laundering (S. Schenirer, *Mah tafkidah shel bat-yisra’el* [Tel Aviv, 1934], 4; S. Schenirer, *Die Aufgabe einer judischen Tochter* [Jerusalem, 1934], 4). However, as mentioned above, in the Yiddish original, which was published in Poland, we don’t find these additions! Though Schenirer does not deny the teaching of secular studies, she makes no mention of them. I believe the Yiddish version was the one actually written by Schenirer, and it expresses her desire to convince the parents from the conservative community in the land of Israel. Evidence to this effect is the mention of English studies, which were not part of the curriculum in Poland, and the omission of Polish and German studies, which were included in the curriculum there. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Y. Levi, ‘*Zikhronot ne’urim mikehal kadosh “eidat yisra’el” berlin*’, *Hama’ayan* 4, 4 (Tammuz, 1964), 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. A. Kaplan, *Divrei Talmud, i* (Jerusalem, 1958), 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Documents to this effect can be found in the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem. Documents on the young woman Resi Lindenberger [??]. Additional illuminating details can be found on the facebook post of David Shor on 28 Dec. 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/145859619204549/permalink/405343233256185>. Likewise, Resi Deutschländer is mentioned by Yehudit Rosenbaum, who describes her dedication to her husband, the pain she felt at the thought of Deutschländer dying without children and with no one to say kaddish for him or remember him, in contrast to Sara Schenirer, who also died childless but whose memory lives on. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. B. Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak* (Bnei Brak, 1967), 232. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. B. Ya’akovson, ‘*Zikharon larishonim: Dr. shmu’el doytshlander – hapedagog veha’askan’*, *Beit Ya’akov* 3 (1959), 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. L. Deutschländer*, Schem VaJephet: Westöstliche Dichterklänge :jüdisches Lesebuch*, Breslau,‎ [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. L. Deutschländer, *Goethe und das Alte Testament*, Frankfurt a.M.,‎ [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. For example, *Schem veJephet*, 19-20 (Herder), 124-5 (Hebel), 125-6 (Herder). The list of figures cited in the book appears on pages 170-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. For example, Idem, 63-4 (Berdyczewski), 76-7 (Mendelssohn), 119-20 (Buber). More appear in the list of figures cited in the book on pages 170-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. === [??] [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. He must be credited with the system of raising funds even from donors who were not religiously observant, which prevented the collapse of the yeshivas in Eastern Europe. See Ya’akovson, *Zikharon larishonim*, 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. See for example Ya’akovson, *Zikharon larishonim*, 107; Gershon Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition:* 167-8. Bacon describes the gradual process that brought this about, from the local decision of Agudat Yisrael in Kraków until the national decision by the Polish Agudat Yisrael. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Ya’akovson, *Zikharon larishonim*, 107. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. L. Deutschländer, *Biblisch-Talmudische Sentenzen und Motive in der Weltliteratur :ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Gnomologie,* Frankfurt a.M.,‎ [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Idem, 9, 21, 27, 35, 65. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Idem, 9-10, 20, 33, 38, 50, 61, 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Idem, 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. Idem, 16, 24, 28, 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. Idem, 16, 26, 33, 58. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Idem, 17, 33, 43, 47, 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. Idem, 19, 24, 34, 53. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Idem, 19, 35, 39, 44. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. Idem, 20, 65, 70. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Idem, 20. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. Idem, 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Idem, 24, 44, 47. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Idem, 32-3, 35, 39, 53, 67. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Idem, 35, 38, 58, 59, 61. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. Idem, 42, 50, 54, 66. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Idem, 45. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. Idem, 50. [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. Idem, 61, 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. Friedenson, *Batei hasefer labanot*, 72. [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. He founded the seminary in Vienna along with R. Yoel Pollack, who was the director of the *h[.]aredi* school for boys in Vienna, but the seminary did not reach the same level of success as the one in Kraków, and suffered from educational problems. See Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak*, 232. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, 426-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. Shternbuch, *Zikhronot*, Appendices, 188-9. Rosenbaum describes one of the fifteen year-old girls who was sent to be a teacher and tells how they tried to make her look older. See Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, ??. [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. Friedenson, *Batei hasefer labanot*, 66. [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. M. Dansky, *Rebbetzin Grunfeld*, 158-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. M. Stark-Zakon*, The Queen of Bais Yaakov*, 71. See also Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, 426-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. Friedenson, *Batei hasefer labanot*, 73. Friedenson describes the teachers of Beit Yaakov after Schenirer’s death and writes that almost all of them possessed a secular education. [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, 428. [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. Dansky, *Rebbetzin Grunfeld*, 156. [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. B. Ya’akovson, *Divrei ben shlomoh* (Jerusalem, 1957), 456. [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. L. Deutschländer, *Bajs Jakob – Sein Werden und Wesen* (Wien, 1928), 39-40, 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, 427-8. [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. Stark-Zakon*, The Queen of Bais Yaakov*, 69. [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. Grunfeld-Rosenbaum, ‘Sara Schenierer’, 426-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. Dansky, *Rebbetzin Grunfeld*, 153. [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. M. Schwartzman, ‘*Dr. shmu’el doytshlander z’’l’*, *Darkeinu* 43 (1935), 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. See for example S. Sheinfeld, Tekufot ve’ishim (Tel Aviv, 1952), 47-9; B. Ya’akovson, [?? Not in note 13!], 18; B. Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak*, 95. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. Y. Carlebach, *Hamasa shel keren hatorah el atarei hatarbut hayehudit bamizrah[.]* (Ramat Gan, 2015). The pamphlet was first published in German in Vienna, 1934, by Merkaz Keren Hatorah Press. The introduction was written by Deutschländer. The pamphlet was translated into Hebrew in 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. Idem, 21-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
107. Idem, 50. [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
108. Idem, 51. [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
109. The fact that the envoys did not meet with Sara Schenirer during the visit, and even more so the fact that Carlebach makes no mention of her contributions to Beit Yaakov, is astounding. Perhaps this can be attributed to the above-mentioned tensions between Deutschländer and Schenirer. Below I will show that those who took issue with Deutschländer’s ways, such as Orleans and Zeidman, made no mention of him. [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
110. Carlebach, *Masa*, 52. [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
111. As Hillel Zeidman has testified, Orlean received his position only after a lengthy correspondence between the *rebbe* of Ger and Ya’akov Rosenheim concerning the problems of placing a man in charge of a girls’ institution: H. Zeidman, *Ishim shehikarti* (Jerusalem, 1970), 198. [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
112. I will point to one example, not necessarily a central one, of the different measures of openness of the two men: Deutschländer praised Moses Mendelssohn most highly, referring to him by the well-known moniker ‘the Jewish Socrates’, while Orlean writes of Mendelssohn that ‘blind faith [in the values of the Enlightenment] surrounded his circle’ (Y. Orlean, [?? שם], 191. [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
113. The suspicions of Deutschländer are evident in the statements made in his defense. For example, in a story cited by Dansky, according to which the father of a Beit Yaakov girl who was a Torah scholar defended Deutschländer in the presence of one of the hasidim, saying, ‘Good man, I have seen this “Herr Doktor” in our *beit midrash*. I have seen his humility, his deference to and respect for Torah scholars*.* To such a man I can safely entrust my child’ (Dansky, *Rebbetzin Grunfeld*, 165). [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
114. On the principle of *nehara nehara upashtei*, see Y. Shpiegel, *Baderekh hamelekh: Pirkei iyun vehistoriyah bemasekhet agudat yisra’el* (Jerusalem, 1982), 69. On the approach of the rabbis and *rebbes* of Eastern Europe, see M. Friedman, ‘*Mifgash yahadut torah im derekh erets im hah[.]arediyut hamizrah[.]-eiropit*’, in M. Breuer (ed.), *Torah im derekh erets: Hatenuah, isheihah, ra’ayonoteihah* (Ramat Gan, 1987), 173-8; I. Bloch, ‘*Harav Shimshon b’’r rafa’el hirsh veshitat “torah im derekh erets” be’einei rabanei mizrah[.] eiropah*’, in *H[.]okrei yerushalayim bemah[.]shevet yisra’el* 24 (2015), 273-300. [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
115. Deutschländer, *Bajs Jakob*, 40, 41, 43. [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
116. Deutschländer*, Schem VaJephet*. [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
117. Deutschländer, *Bajs Jakob*, 43. [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
118. Shternbuch, *Zikhronot*, Appendices, 187. [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
119. I. Breuer, ‘Hashpa’at sifrei harav hirsh al sarah shenirer’, in Schenirer, *Em beyisra’el, iii*, 31. Deutschländer’s eulogy of Schenirer leaves the same impression: L. Deutschländer, 'Sara Schenirer ', *Nach'lat Z'wi* 7/8 (Marz-Mai 1935), 170-1. [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
120. See for example Deutschländer, 'Sara Schenirer ', 170-1. [↑](#endnote-ref-120)
121. Ya’akovson, *Zikhronot*, 209. [↑](#endnote-ref-121)
122. Schenirer, *Em beyisra’el, iii*, 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-122)
123. Ya’akovson, *Divrei ben shlomoh*, 456. [↑](#endnote-ref-123)
124. See for example S. Schenirer, ‘*Tarbut hatsni’ut*’, in *Em beyisra’el*, 162-4. [↑](#endnote-ref-124)
125. She writes, ‘I told my students that there [in Germany] you are just as strict in matters of modesty as we are, but now they see that it is not exactly so . . . I don’t wish to preach, but it is not worth destroying the whole building over such a small matter as this . . . I hope you understand me. In my travels I was very happy to see that those women who first came with their heads uncovered now came with them covered’ (Schenirer, *Em Beyisra’el*, i, 59-60). [↑](#endnote-ref-125)
126. For example, Idem, 63, 67. [↑](#endnote-ref-126)
127. For example, it is told that the Beit Yaakov Journal in its early years was published in Yiddish but with a supplement translated into Polish, for the girls could not read the Yiddish and understand it, while in the later years before the WWII, the journal appeared solely in Yiddish (Friedenson, ‘*Batei sefer labanot*’, 78); according to one of the writers who described Schenirer, ‘she realized that the linguistic assimilation was leading to spiritual assimilation. If Polish was spoken in a Jewish household, Polish culture and literature would automatically reign. . . . A war must be waged against linguistic assimilation, otherwise the Jewish child will not be saved from the claws of assimilation’ (Yarh[.]i, *Sarah shenirer*, 13). On the use of Yiddish in Beit Yaakov see also Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition*, 173-6. [↑](#endnote-ref-127)
128. Shenirer, *Em beyisra’el, i*, 21-2. Ya’akovson discusses her natural intellectual abilities in *Divrei ben shlomo*, 456. [↑](#endnote-ref-128)
129. Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak*, 231. [↑](#endnote-ref-129)
130. Idem, 456. [↑](#endnote-ref-130)
131. Idem, 231. [↑](#endnote-ref-131)
132. Ya’akovson, *Divrei ben shlomoh*, ii, 458; Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak*, *ii*, 239. The emphasis is in the original. [↑](#endnote-ref-132)
133. Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak*, *ii*, 239. [↑](#endnote-ref-133)
134. Fir example, when Ya’akovson discusses the founding and development of Beit Yaakov, he nearly always mentions Schenirer and Deutschländer together, but when he speaks of Orlean he describes him as someone who ‘rooted even more deeply in the hearts of the students the longing of this wondrous woman [Schenirer]’, and makes no mention of Deutschländer (Ya’akovson, *Zikhronot*, 108). [↑](#endnote-ref-134)
135. Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak*, *ii*, 241. [↑](#endnote-ref-135)
136. Ya’akovson, *Divrei ben shlomoh*, 456. [↑](#endnote-ref-136)
137. Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak*, *ii*, 241-2. The statement is cited in the name of Ya’akov Rosenheim, the head of Agudat Yisrael for over four decades, who also grew up within the *Torah im derekh erets* environment; Rosenheim’s words are cited to strengthen his position. At the same time it is worth noting that Rosenheim was among those who were reconsidering the value of the *Torah im derekh erets* approach as early as the 1930’s, in the face of the intellectual crisis confronting German Jewry following the rise of the Nazis and the apparent impossibility of integration into German society. [↑](#endnote-ref-137)
138. Ya’akovson, *Eisa de’i lamerh[.]ak*, *ii*, 242. Emphasis in the original. He continues, ‘A number of years have passed since then, and yet in every moment I still hear words ringing in my ears.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-138)
139. Dansky, *Rebbetzin Grunfeld*, 167. [↑](#endnote-ref-139)
140. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-140)
141. It appears that this argument preceded the argument that would develop within the Orthodox community years later over the *Torah im derekh erets* approach as a whole, between those arguing that it was only used out of necessity and those who argued it was freely chosen as the best approach. See Friedman, ‘*Mifgash yahadut torah*’ and Bloch, ‘*Harav shimshon*’. [↑](#endnote-ref-141)
142. Deutschländer, ‘Sara Schenirer’, 168-71. A shorter – and rather banal – memorial essay by Deutschländer on Schenirer was published in a document submitted to the Third International Assembly of Agudat Yisrael: Leo Deutschländer, ‘Sara Schenirer S.a.’, in: *Programm und Leistung: Keren HaThora und Beth Jakob* (London un Wien, 1937), 90-1. A memorial essay on Deutschländer himself, by Louis Veiler [sp??] had already been published in the same issue (92-4). [↑](#endnote-ref-142)
143. Deutschländer, ‘Sara Schenirer’, 168-71. [↑](#endnote-ref-143)
144. Orlean, ‘*Eshet H[.]ayil*’, in [ed.??], *Em beyisra’el, iii*, 36-57. The essay is structured on the chapter of Proverbs referred to by the same name; Orlean takes each line and shows how Sara Schenirer was herself the ‘woman of valor’ described in the Bible. [↑](#endnote-ref-144)
145. Idem, 37. [↑](#endnote-ref-145)
146. Idem, 39. [↑](#endnote-ref-146)
147. Idem, 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-147)
148. Idem, 102. [↑](#endnote-ref-148)
149. Idem, 103. [↑](#endnote-ref-149)
150. Orlean, *Be’ayot hah[.]inukh*, 119-97. [↑](#endnote-ref-150)
151. Y. Orlean, ‘Introduction’, in [??ed.], *Harav shimshon rafa’el hirsh, yesodot hah[.]inukh: sih[.]ot pedagogiyot*, ii (Bnei Brak, 1968), 9-42. [↑](#endnote-ref-151)
152. In the original there is no mention of the introduction’s author but in Hillel Zeidman’s book *Ishim shehikarti* the identical essay appears. [↑](#endnote-ref-152)
153. Zeidman, *Ishim shehikarti*, 199; Orlean, ‘Introduction’, 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-153)
154. Orlean, *Be’ayot hah[.]inukh*, 192. [↑](#endnote-ref-154)
155. Idem, 181. [↑](#endnote-ref-155)
156. In his opinion, the first priority is the person, that is, the teacher; the second, the curriculum; the method only comes third (Idem, 40). See my article, ‘Triumphs of Conservatism’. [↑](#endnote-ref-156)
157. Orlean, *Be’ayot hah[.]inukh*, 41. For more on the Beit Yaakov curriculum, especially in the later years, and on the distinctions between the different types of school in the network, see Kazdan, *Di geshikhṭe fun yidishn shulṿezn*, 489-99; Brown, ‘Triumphs of Conservatism’. [↑](#endnote-ref-157)