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**EDUCATION IN THE COLONIES OF
THE JEWISH COLONIZATION
ASSOCIATION IN ARGENTINA**

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MARCH 2016

ABSTRACT

The philanthropic activity of Baron de Hirsch was clearly marked by one characteristic: not providing charity but attempting the economic rehabilitation of the beneficiaries. Hirsch systematically suggests that education and professional training were the only way to break the vicious circle of poverty. For instance, for more than a decade Baron de Hirsch spent his time and money in the economic rehabilitation of his coreligionists, both in the Ottoman Empire and in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, through education and professional training. In 1891, after discarding the possibility of improving the quality of life of Jews in the Russian Empire through the establishment of an educational system, similar to what was done in other societies, Hirsch founded the Jewish Colonization Association (J.C.A.) through which he would manage the immigration of thousands of people to Argentina and their settlement in agricultural colonies. The original rules of the J.C.A. gave Hirsch full control over the activities of the Association; therefore, this paper hypothesized that the educational actions of the Jewish Colonization Association in the colonies should have been all consistent with Hirsch's vision on education. The evidence presented clearly supports this hypothesis.

JEL classification codes: D64 (Welfare economics, philanthropy)

Key words: Barón Maurice de Hirsch, Jewish Colonization Association, education

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EDGARDO ZABLOTSKY

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“History of the jewish colonization in Argentina can’t be written without paying a well-deserved tribute to the educational work performed by the jewish schools since the foundation of the colonies until nowadays”

Iedidio Efron

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1891 Barón de Hirsch founded the Jewish Colonization Association (J.C.A) through which he would conduct the immigration of thousands of people from the Russian Empire to Argentina and their settlement in agricultural colonies. Those immigrants would have the right to access land ownership, but not for free, and after having paid for it, as well as the travel expenses and all the loans received. A clear example of non-welfare philanthropy.

The normative of the J.C.A., which defined the obligations and powers of the Council, gave Hirsch full control over the activities of the Association, that was born due to his willingness to incorporate the entire Jewry of Western Europe to his project in order to negotiate with the government of the Zar and not because of an economic need, since virtually the entire equity was provided by Hirsch, who was to lead the company, down to the smallest details, until his unexpected death.

For that reason, in order to understand the reasons for the actions of the J.C.A. towards education in the colonies it is necessary to study Hirsch’s own vision on education.

Because of that, this paper is organized in the following way. In the next section I will recall Hirsch’s vision on education as an instrument of his philanthropic activity and I will exemplify it with illustrations of Hirsch’s educational actions at the countries of residence. The following section will focus on education in the colonies of the J.C.A. Finally, closing the paper there is a short section dedicated to highlight the main conclusions.

II. BARON DE HIRSCH VISION ON EDUCATION¹

Hirsch's philanthropic activity was clearly marked by a distinguishing feature: not providing charity but attempting the economic rehabilitation of the beneficiaries².

Hirsch's vision of philanthropy is signaled by the most diverse sources. For example, the day after his death the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, Vienna's morning newspaper, published the following obituary: "His dedication to philanthropy was even more important for its objective rather than for the magnitude of his donations: the economic rehabilitation of the beneficiaries"³.

Hirsch himself publicly expressed that vision on several occasions. For example, in July 1981, he published at *The North American Review* a paper in which he made the following statement: "I strongly oppose against the old alms system, which only generates many more beggars; I consider that the biggest challenge philanthropy faces is turning into human beings capable of earning their own livelihood individuals that otherwise would be chronically poor, and so make them useful members of society"⁴.

What does he propose? Hirsch systematically suggests that education and professional training are the only way of breaking the vicious circle of poverty. In E. Zablotsky (September, 2011) I have presented various quotes, interviews and articles, written by the Baron de Hirsch, in order to let him explain "by himself" his position on philanthropy, his motivations, the features of his character, and his way of carrying out the immigration company towards Argentina, which was to be constructed as the icon of his philanthropic activity. I am selecting three of those quotes that will let us illustrate Hirsch's vision of education as an instrument for his philanthropic activity:

1) Conversation between Hirsch and Adolf Jellinek, President of the Grain Exchange and Trade of Budapest, November, 1868,

"It would give me the liveliest satisfaction if the Yiddish jargon disappeared from Galicia, and if the Jews of this province became competent craftsmen and farmers, and abandoned all the traditions, not related with religion, that unnecessarily keep them

¹ This section is based on E. Zablotsky, August 2013.

² E. Zablotsky, 2004.

³ *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, April 22, 1896, in K. Grunwald, 1966, pag. 63.

⁴ Barón Maurice de Hirsch, 1891.

apart from their Christian compatriots [...]. The only thing I wish is that the Jews receive the necessary culture and training so they can earn a living”⁵.

2) Letter from Hirsch, dated 1873, addressed to the Direction of the Alliance Israelite Universelle (A.I.U.).

“During my various, long visits, to Turkey I have felt painfully impressed by the misery and ignorance in which the Jewish masses inhabit in this Empire [...]. Progress has left them aside, poverty stems from the lack of education, and only education and training of the new generations could remedy this unfortunate situation”⁶.

3) Letter from Hirsch, dated 1889, in response to Pobiedonostsev, Head of the Holy Synod of St. Petersburg, forgoing the possibility of improving the conditions of the Jews in Russia, given the impositions of Pobiedonostsev.

“I consider myself happy to note that your ideas are consistent with those I conceived [...]. Raising the youth’s intellectual and moral level, this is, indeed, the noblest form of beneficence, and the most precious gift you can give to mankind is to make available for the new generations the basic knowledge necessary for the performance of their future tasks”⁷.

Now let’s see some evidence about the use of education as an instrument of his philanthropic actions at the countries of residence.

Education in the Near East⁸

In 1873 Hirsch donated 1,000,000 francs to the A.I.U. in order to alleviate the situation of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), through the establishment of primary schools in Constantinople, vocational schools (technical schools), and the provision of subsidies to move abroad in search of professional training.

Actually this was only the beginning of his collaboration with the A.I.U.; afterward he would make numerous contributions. His ideal of economic recovery is

⁵ S. Lee, 1970, pag. 163.

⁶ N. Leven, *CinquanteAns*, Vol. II. pags. 23-24. Source: K. Grunwald, 1966, pag. 66.

⁷ Kohler’s Papers. Source: D. Frischer, pags. 411-412.

⁸ Europe at the east of the Balcanes, Minor Asia, and the north of Africa.

reflected in the fact that these donations were not performed with a general purpose, but were explicitly dedicated to education, mainly vocational, which aimed to provide professional training to the beneficiaries. This event was resisted by members of the community; for example, by the ultra conservative community of Salonica, which considered that this kind of training could not be classified as education.

Education in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Baron de Hirsch Kaiser Jubilaums Fund.

In 1878 Hirsch settled in Vienna the center of its activities, extending his interest about the education of his coreligionists to the poor provinces of the east of the Empire (Galicia and Bukovina), in which Jews faced similar living conditions to those described in Turkey. In 1888, in order to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the accession of Francis Joseph, Hirsch established the fund Baron de Hirsch Kaiser Jubilaums Fund for the purpose of establishing schools, from kindergartens and primary schools to vocational schools and job training. The Fund would also be devoted to provide food and clothing to the poor children that attended school, grants to teachers, and small loans to artisans and farmers.

Once again, the goal that Hirsch had in mind, economic rehabilitation through the formation of human capital, met opposition in the Jewish community, mostly Orthodox, which saw the project as a sort of Trojan Horse that could lead to their assimilation into Western culture.

Many thousands of children and adults acceded to elementary education and/or vocational schools, thanks to the fund, which would allow them to earn a decent living, breaking the vicious circle of poverty. It is noteworthy that for 1899, 50 schools were in operation and in 1914, when First World War started, 45 of them were still in activity⁹.

Baron de Hirsch Fund, New York

Maurice de Hirsch was motivated to establish the fund by Michael Heilprin, renowned writer and intellectual leader of the community in U.S.A., who, like Hirsch, opposed the traditional concept of charity. As S. Adler-Rudel says: “Michael Heilprin didn’t believe in unproductive charity. He had a strong social conscience and was

⁹ K. Grunwald, 1966, pag. 69.

convinced that social work was meaningless unless it taught those who were assisted to fend for themselves”¹⁰.

Among the main objectives of the fund we find education and professional training of the immigrants: 1) Professional training in handicrafts and maintenance for the duration of the training in vocational schools; 2) Professional training in manufacturing and provision of scholarships for the purposes of attending vocational schools; 3) Creation of schools of English and maintenance of the immigrants while acquiring knowledge of the language; 4) Teaching and training methods of agricultural work.

As Samuel Lee points out, the Baron de Hirsch Fund was created “to educate immigrants from Russia, Romania and other countries in Eastern Europe, to teach them different jobs and keep them while learning, to provide the tools required to work in the jobs they have learned, to afford instruction for those interested in agriculture, and to give everyone the teaching of English language”¹¹.

To sum up, for over a decade Baron de Hirsch dedicated his time and money to the economic rehabilitation of his coreligionists, both in the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, through education and professional training.

He tried to repeat this strategy in Russia. The impossibility of carrying it out resulted in the creation of the Jewish Colonization Association, which would accomplish the immigration of thousands of Russian Jews to Argentina and their settlement in agricultural colonies.

Failure of the Educational Project in Russia

Identified with the aim of A.I.U. to raise the cultural and social level of the Jewish masses, Hirsch formulated a plan to improve the living conditions of Russian Jews burdened by restrictive laws that deprived them of much of their civil and political rights. Hirsch had decided to invest in it the sum of fifty million francs, making them available to the Russian government for the establishment of schools in the Pale of Settlement, just as he had done in Turkey and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The government set as a condition to manage the fund itself and not to integrate the new

¹⁰ S. Adler-Rudel, 1963, pag. 43.

¹¹ S. Lee, 1970, pag. 274.

schools to the formal education system, which was unacceptable to the Baron de Hirsch, so the project would not take place.

The following letter, from Hirsch to Minister Delianov dated 1888, referring to his offer of the donation to improve the living conditions of the Jewish in Russia, testifies this event: “It was my understanding that all schools that my foundation created would, in every way, have the same status as other public Russian schools [...] since my goal is to lift the barriers that separate the Israelites from the rest of the Russian nation [...]. It is clear that the main condition that must be followed to reach that goal and make it happen is that schools where the Israelites are educated are not excluded from the common law, but are subject to the same obligations and enjoy the same privileges as other establishments of the empire [...]. By insisting that future schools should be completely outside the Empire’s general system of training establishments, His Excellency has hinted that for the imperial government, equal treatment is not possible nowadays [...]. Consequently, and with the keenest regret, I am forced to resign”¹².

In this way the Russian Jews lost a potential network of model schools and cultural institutions. The failure of the negotiations with the Russian government had an unintended consequence: the creation of the J.C.A., initiating the actions of Hirsch outside the countries of residence. This is of central importance to assess Hirsch’s vision of education as a tool to carry out his philanthropic actions. Jewish agricultural colonization in Argentina stems from the inability to offer a better quality of life for the Jews in Russia through education and professional training.

This is recognized by Wilhelm Loewenthal himself, intellectual promoter of the immigration project to Argentina, who believed that the ideal would be to have 50,000,000 francs to settle 5,000 families in the short term, not ignoring the fact that two years ago the Baron de Hirsch had tried to invest precisely that amount in the creation of technical and agricultural schools in the Pale of Settlement; which is why he thinks of him to finance the project¹³.

¹²Kohler’s Papers. Source: D. Frischer, 2004, pag. 382.

¹³ “Pour le capital - dice textualmente Loewenthal en su memorándum – j’ai pensé aux 50 millions de francs que M. Le Baron Hirsch, dans un élan de générosité superbe, a mis á la disposition du gouvernement russe pour les écoles israélites en Russie, et que ce gouvernement á eu la bonne idée de laisser échapper.” L. Schallman, 1971, pag. 27.

III. EDUCATION IN THE COLONIES

The philanthropic activity of Baron de Hirsch was clearly marked by one characteristic: not providing charity but attempting the economic rehabilitation of the beneficiaries. How do I get there? Hirsch systematically suggests that education and professional training are the only way to break the vicious circle of poverty.

For over a decade Hirsch spent his time and money in the economic rehabilitation of his coreligionists, both in the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, through education and professional training. He tried to replicate the experience in the Russian Empire; the failure led him to the foundation of the J.C.A., which bought large tracts of land in Argentina, creating agricultural colonies.

These facts explain the careful attention paid by the J.C.A. to the education of the settlers' children. We will dedicate the rest of the paper to support this hypothesis, presenting testimonies of settlers and historians of Colonia Mauricio, the first colony established on a land acquired by the J.C.A., of officials of the J.C.A. and of researchers of the Jewish agricultural colonization process in our country, which coincide in their evaluation of the actions of the J.C.A. in the educational field.

1) Boris Garfunkel was born in Russia in 1866. He emigrated to Argentina in 1891 with one of the first contingents of J.C.A. He settled in Mauritius and lived in the colony during its first 15 years; he settled in Buenos Aires in 1906, opening a furniture store and, over the years, would become an icon of Argentine businessman. Unlike the vast majority of immigrants, Garfunkel didn't emigrate escaping poverty and it wasn't the same for him to emigrate to any country in the world, whatever were the proposals from the philanthropic institution which sponsored the emigration. Boris Garfunkel emigrated to Argentina by choice, following an ideal, wanting to become a farmer and the project of Baron de Hirsch would allow it. That's why he wouldn't settle in Buenos Aires until 1906, living with his family in Mauricio a life absolutely different from his past in Russia. These facts give his memories a special interest in order to understand the history of Colonia Mauricio, being the memories of a wealthy, cultured and highly observant man, who participated in the project of Baron de Hirsch by choice, and not by necessity. Garfunkel didn't get to Colonia Mauricio by chance, but gave up a comfortable lifestyle to realize his ideal of becoming a farmer; therefore his memories

are the testimony of a settler, but also of a critical observer of the project, given his genuine interest in it¹⁴.

Let's see his opinion on the education in the colony: "The amount of things that can be censured to the J.C.A. is not few, but at the same time there are some reasons for praise. Among these certainly is the way in which education for the settlers' sons was faced [...]. From the beginning the J.C.A. was determined to provide good teachers, both in relation to Jewish education and also to the subjects of grades of primary education in place by the standards of the General Directorate of Schools of the province of Buenos Aires.

To provide basic universal knowledge and teach Argentinean history and geography, Sephardim teachers who had completed their studies in normal schools in Izmir and other cities in Turkey and the Middle East -funded and subsidized by the Alliance Israelite Universelle, largely supported by the Baron Hirsch himself- were hired and had completed their training in Argentina. They knew the Spanish language and its consubstantiation with Argentine is attested by the externalized patriotism emanating from the celebration of May 25 and July 9. These dates were always remembered by all the gringos that over time were aware of the profound significance it holds for the persecuted to find a welcoming country with democratic roots"¹⁵.

2) Our second testimony is from a member of the J.C.A., Demetrio Aranovich, who was the first Jewish doctor to graduate in the University of Buenos Aires in 1903. Aranovich was hired by the J.C.A. to meet the health needs of Colonia Mauricio in 1904; he practiced his profession in Carlos Casares between 1905 and 1916 and was a prominent leader of the local Jewish community. His History of Colonia Mauricio is a detailed statistical report that helps us understand life in the colony¹⁶.

Regarding education in Mauricio, the information provided by Aranovich is consistent with Boris Garfunkel's vision: "During the early years of the colonization education was given to the kids of Colonia Mauricio by improvised teachers and was somewhat deficient. Only in 1895 a professional teacher arrived from Europe, Mr. M. Benchimol, who took over Alice's school, located in the hillock of the same name.

¹⁴ E. Zablotsky, February 2012.

¹⁵ B. Garfunkel, 1960, pag. 275.

¹⁶ E. Zablotsky, March 2012.

Under the auspices of the J.C.A. the educational aspect in the colony gradually expanded. In 1904 the two schools of Alice and Algarrobo already have 296 students, whose education is in charge of eight teachers [...]. In 1909 the schools in the colony are four, with a total of 18 teachers and 407 students of both sexes¹⁷. (This number is consistent with population growth, doubling the number of establishments and teachers with respect to 1904, when there was a school in Alice and another in Algarrobo, and increasing the number of students by 38%).

3) Now let's see a testimony from Marcos Alpersohn, fairly considered the dean of Jewish literature in Argentina¹⁸ and the principal chronicler of Colonia Mauricio. While his family was poor, Alpersohn came to possess a regular culture formed in traditional classical Jewish instruction. Settled by the J.C.A. in Mauricio, his observant spirit allowed him to collect data and impressions that would compile as a basis for the development of the most important of his works, *Colonia Mauricio. Thirty years in Argentina*. Alpersohn harshly criticized the men who led Hirsch's project in Argentina, and maintained with the J.C.A. a long controversy, always defending the settlers's rights.

His honest and negative view of the laic education proposed by the J.C.A. is itself an acknowledgment of the interest of the J.C.A. in providing this kind of education in decline of the traditional religious education; fully consistent with Hirsch's vision of education: "Why did they take it out on us, education and trade, those destroyers of colonization? I know that many readers when reading these lines will laugh a lot or at least smile [...]. Considers education a defect, when it is precisely our pride! [...]. During the early years all our senses were busy in getting the essentials. Who paid attention to the education of the children? With schools of the J.C.A. taking charge of teaching it was sufficient. The kids between 8 and 12 years old we brought with us from the old world were the first victims of the schools of J.C.A. [...]. They were taught Spanish, and from Judaism only the blessings over the bread and thunder, and that's it! What can we do, a whole generation wasted!"¹⁹

¹⁷D. Aranovich, 1931, pags. 12 and 20.

¹⁸ Salomón Resnick, who incentived Marcos Alpersohn to publish his memories.

¹⁹ M. Alpersohn, 1928, pag. 2

4) Susana Sigwald is undoubtedly the most important researcher of the history of Colonia Mauricio. In one of her many papers on the topic she explicitly addresses education in the colony. She notes, for example, that "the northern part (of the colony) - up to 1892- didn't have any educational institution. During this year, the void left by the lack of formal education supply is filled by the concerns of the newly established settlers. So when within the limits of the current party of Carlos Casares there were no schools yet, the J.C.A. creates two [...]. The J.C.A. has materialized, midway through the first decade of the 20th century, the operation of four schools in Colonia Mauricio. These are visited in 1909 by the Director of the Schools of the Province of Buenos Aires, and what he visualizes leads him to report: I must add that the visit revealed good organization, advancement and discipline"²⁰.

5) This vision is shared by several historians of Jewish agricultural colonization in our country. For example, contemporaneously with the facts, Leonard Robinson, in his study "The Agricultural Activities of the Jews in America" says: "Schools in the colonies were excellent. In 1910 there were 50 schools, with 155 teachers and 3,558 students. One of the most important courses was agriculture"²¹.

6.a) Let's compare this vision with two appreciations of Jedidio Efron, who arrived to Argentina as a child with his parents, and settled in the Baron Hirsch colony. His prestigious reputation as a great teacher made his name transcendent at his time in the Argentine Jewish world. He was the founder in 1911 of the first yeshiva in Argentina, in the colony Fainberg, Entre Ríos. He was also director of a mixed primary school of Spanish and Hebrew, then inspector of schools in Basavilbaso, Entre Rios and Moisesville, Santa Fe. He was named inspector of Religious Courses of the J.C.A. and became its Director in Buenos Aires, where he would settle. He dedicated his life to Jewish education in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay; the Jewish school network that he organized, directed and inspected, was the only one in the diaspora, awarding him with the name of the "Sarmiento" of Jewish culture.

The first of the quotations that I have selected comes from his work "The Educational Work of the Jewish Colonization Association": "Since the J.C.A. began its

²⁰S. Sigwald, October 1991, pags. 121-122.

²¹ L. Robinson, 1912, pag. 30.

colonizing work in the provinces of Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, Entre Rios and other areas of Argentina, it did not neglect the relevance of primary education in their colonies - either laic, and religious or Hebrew. A total of 78 mixed schools were built. For a quarter of a century they were entirely held by the J.C.A., except for a few years before being granted to the national government, during which the settlers had to contribute 30 pesos per year for the support of the common teaching. In these schools the kids were provided with secular education, according to the program of fiscal schools in the country, and the Hebraic, under a plan established by the body of regional school inspectors of the colonies of the J.C.A.

With the introduction of the lay school in Jewish settlements, the J.C.A. had to deal with a difficult problem at that time: the number of teachers. Being the colonies completely inhabited by Jews who knew nothing of Spanish nor even the sound of this language, accustomed as they were in their country of origin to the Russian, Yiddish or Hebrew diction, the need for teaching the country language to teachers of Jewish origin, who could communicate in the first half with their students in another language was imposed, and also that they had to understand the mentality of the students parents too. Not having been possible, at that time, to get the staff from within the Jewish ecommunity of the country, I asked the A.I.U. to make available for their schools in Argentina a number of Sephardi Jewish professors graduated from the Ecole Normale of Paris, who had the advantage of knowing the primitive Castilian, as this is the language used in their birth countries.

As soon as the Jewish school increased in the colonies of the J.C.A. it started selecting its teachers from the sons of the colony, either between the alumni of their schools or among young people who entered the country and possessed enough knowledge to transmit certain subjects of laic education, with prior preparation in both cases.

Wishing the teaching staff of schools was placed within the Law of the common teaching of the respective provinces and in order that all teachers had Argentine titles that enable them to dictate laic education, the J.C.A., according to the General Director of General Education of the Province of Entre Rios, Manuel Antequeda, ordered that all teachers of rural schools, especially those of Entre Rios, were transfered to the Alberdi Rural Teachers School with the aim of graduating in the aforementioned Institute.

Many statesmen and Argentinian governors had the opportunity to meet Argentina's Jewish school operating in the colonies, fully realizing the noble effort

lavished by the J.C.A. along with the settlers to contribute to the “argentinizing” work of the children who had the happiness of being born in this republic or stepping on Argentinian land during childhood”²².

6.b) The second quotation that I have selected is from his work “School Development in the Jewish Colonies”: “History of the Jewish colonization in Argentina can’t be written without paying a well-deserved tribute to the educational work performed by the Jewish schools since the foundation of the colonies until nowadays.

To synthesize the interest shown by the leaders of the J.C.A. in the laic and religious education in the colonies it will suffice to recall the words of the unforgettable President of the J.C.A., Narcisse Leven, which served as a motto for many years in the financial areas of that Association: For me, there isn’t a budget limit for schools. This explains the huge expenses that were made by the J.C.A. to strengthen the common teaching in their colonies, never looking at the tyranny of the budget.

The current General Director of the J.C.A. in Paris, Louis Oungre, who assumed his position in 1922, a time when Jewish settlement in the country greatly increased, contributed enormously with the construction of a school for both teachings in each group, with the common education in the colonies reaching its height during his time.

Tens of thousands of Jewish children received their first letters in Jewish schools of the J.C.A. Hundreds of intellectuals, professionals and renowned writers graduated from the classrooms of these schools and a considerable number of public figures, talented writers and leaders of our societies, served as teachers in rural educational institutions in the colonies of the J.C.A.”²³.

7) Contemporaneously, Diana Epstein, Researcher from the CONICET, coincides with Efron’s vision in her work “Moroccan Teachers, Education Strategy and Integration, 1892-1920”: “The lands acquired by the J.C.A. to organize their colonies were located in almost uninhabited areas. The shortage of schools and teachers in these regions demonstrated the need to create establishments in the colonies that would provide, on the one hand, religious instruction required by members of the community and, on the other, laic elementary education, since the provincial governments weren’t covering that

²² I. Efron, 1934, pags. 71 a 79.

²³ I. Efron, 1939, pags. 241-262.

function because of a lack of resources. Therefore, the J.C.A. decided to install schools in all its colonies and to designate and pay teachers.

The J.C.A. had to face the difficult task of getting the right staff in the area of laic education, for a population that completely ignored the language of the country. It was necessary then to locate teachers who could teach Spanish, but at the same time were Jews. This last aspect also had the virtue that teachers could communicate from the beginning with their students, and they knew and shared the mentality and religion of their parents.

Given these requirements, the J.C.A. implemented a unique strategy that would, at the same time, enable faster integration of immigrants into the host society. He resolved to contact the A.I.U. from Paris, which had extensive experience in the education topic, suggesting sending teachers, of Sephardi origin, graduated from the Normal School of Paris, whose native language was Spanish. So in the early 1890s, the first teachers sent by the A.I.U. gradually began to arrive in the country.

The directors of the J.C.A. in Buenos Aires also expressed concern about the future of the educational enterprise. In 1895 they resorted to A.I.U. for the hiring of another 15 teachers, recognizing that this institution was the best to provide them. These teachers should cover the needs that involved the opening of at least 15 schools that would be created in order to avoid the long distances that students had to walk in order to attend schools.

In the mid-1910s, the J.C.A. had founded 78 educational institutions in which children were taught primary education according to the program of fiscal schools. The purpose in creating this network of schools was to train the next generation within the Jewish tradition, but also as genuine settlers rooted to the ground. This educational ideal that has appeared coincident with the nature of the Argentinean Republic as they conceived it: a country of freedom whose bases had room for the emancipation and equality of the Jews”²⁴.

8.a) We close this section with two opinions collected in the official publication of the Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations (D.A.I.A.), *Half Century in the Argentine Land*, on the 50th anniversary of the beginning of colonization. The first one reflects the institution’s view on the educational actions of the Jewish Colonization Association: “It

²⁴ D. Epstein, 1997, pags. 2-14.

should be noted that not for being the fundamental aspect of J.C.A. the cultivation of land, has neglected the cultural factor. When installed in the country, fifty years ago, the poverty that schools from the campaign were suffering is recalled. The J.C.A. also took over this side of the matter, as it is to be imagined, given the environment, the conditions, and the prolific settlers, and built about 70 buildings for schools, which were maintained for around 20 years, transferring them, when it was appropriate, to the National or Provincial Education Council, depending on the case. Even today, when the J.C.A. creates a new colony, when constructing buildings for the settlers the school is built simultaneously, making it immediately available to the National Education Council or a Provincial Council”²⁵.

8.b) The second quotation transcribes the speech of the Governor of Santa Fe, Manuel de Iriondo, on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary: “That fruitful work of adaptation, or rather of Argentinization, has been effectively aided by the guidance and standards to which the J.C.A. adjusts its colonizing action, and which include, in order to assimilate the settlers to the new environment, the creation of schools oriented towards respect for institutions - laws and traditions of the province and the nation, and the dissemination of the Spanish language and books of our most celebrated writers. All this has made it easier and faster for the identification of the settlers and their homes with our environment and customs”²⁶.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The philanthropic activity of Baron de Hirsch was clearly marked by one characteristic: not providing charity but attempting the economic rehabilitation of the beneficiaries. How to get there? Hirsch systematically suggests that education and professional training were the only way to break the vicious circle of poverty.

For more than a decade Baron de Hirsch spent his time and money in the economic rehabilitation of his coreligionists, both in the Ottoman Empire and in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, through education and professional training.

In 1891, after discarding the possibility of improving the quality of life of Jews in the Russian Empire through the establishment of an educational system, similar to what

²⁵ D.A.I.A., 1942, pag. 12.

²⁶ D.A.I.A., 1942, pag. 20.

was done in other societies, the Baron de Hirsch founded the J.C.A. through which he would manage the immigration of thousands of people from the Russian Empire to our country and their settlement in agricultural colonies.

The original rules of the J.C.A., which defines the duties and powers of the Board of Directors, gave Hirsch full control over the activities of the J.C.A.; therefore, this paper hypothesized that the educational actions of the Jewish Colonization Association in the colonies should have been all consistent with Hirsch's vision on education. The evidence presented clearly supports this hypothesis.

This is why I want to close this short paper with a final quotation of the Baron Maurice de Hirsch himself, 1889, which highlights the role of education as an instrument of philanthropy: "Raising the intellectual and moral level of the youth is the noblest form of charity, and the most precious gift you can give to mankind is to make available to the new generations the knowledge necessary to perform their future tasks"²⁷.

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²⁷ Kohler's Papers, 1900-1920, A.J.H.S., New York. Source: Dominique Frischer, *El Moisés de las Américas*, Editorial El Ateneo, 2004.

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